

Wilmington Centinel,

AND GENERAL ADVERTISER.

Eleanor Owen WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 1788.

MISCELLANY.

To the Electors of the town of Wilmington.

FOR some years past, I have been honoured with your confidence, and unsolicited, you have trusted me with your best interests. Though I have been opposed by different persons, and under different pretences, by your uniform conduct in my favour, opposition had at last ceased, and its existence seemed to be no more.

The public business interfered so much with my professional duty, as well as with my private interest, that I was induced to decline all further thoughts of accepting a seat in the legislature; but the approaching convention being fixed at a time favourable to my private pursuits, a bare intimation was sufficient to ensure me your unanimous suffrages, to the most important of all trusts; yet as I knew that a continuance in office would be incompatible with my professional concerns, it became necessary to look forward to a proper representative for the town of Wilmington, in case Mr. Potts should decline the trust. Several gentlemen who would otherwise be well qualified, and probably acceptable to you, are under legal or constitutional disabilities. Some time ago, I took the liberty of suggesting to Mr. Jones, that if Mr. Potts should decline, which I then had some reason to believe, the former might probably be acceptable. Under this presumption, I have since understood, that Mr. Jones made his intentions known, and conditionally offered his services.

As to Major Walker, whatever may be his merits in other respects, as a person holding a public office, the emoluments of which may depend upon his own vote, and his own influence in the assembly, I look upon him altogether as improper for a member of assembly, as a collector of public money, or a clerk of a court; for though a naval officer is not within the letter of the constitution, he is expressly excluded. People who are not accustomed to reason upon the subject of government, are apt to think lightly of such a circumstance, as a matter of little consequence; but when they are acquainted with the case of Mr. Coor, the naval officer of port Beaufort, they may possibly be of a different opinion. That gentleman was a member of the senate, in the first assembly held under the present government; and owing to some contention between the two houses, he escaped being excluded with the delegates to Congress. He has found means to hold his election ever since, and subsequent to that; and whilst he was a member in the general assembly, he has held five different offices, most of them of profit, and three or four of them at one time; in two of them he was a receiver of public moneys. At one assembly his seat was unsuccessfully disputed on account of some of those offices. During the session of 1785, three different bills were introduced in the house of commons, all tending directly, or indirectly, to the exclusion of naval officers from seats in the legislature. The address and dexterity of Mr. Coor, although the bills were opposed with opposition, they were rejected. It has been the consequence of having an individual in the legislature! Almost every session, Mr. Coor has introduced a new bill to regulate the duty of naval officers. Some of them calculated to leave his own emoluments, and the emoluments of his office, to be applied to other use than to pay a tax upon trade.

As I have not hitherto presumed to give my advice or opinion, in the choice of a member for Wilmington, it is probable I should have continued silent, had I not discovered something, with respect to the ensuing election, which it is not easy to account for in a satisfactory manner, not only as there is an opposition which appears to be very inconsistent with professions, but as I understand I am myself the object of it. During the term of the last Wilmington Superior court, Mr. Potts having been explicit, it became known that Mr. Jones was a candidate for the representation. I favoured his intentions—and that a considerable number of the electors had agreed to support him. The very gentleman to whom this was communicated by Mr. Jones, proposed Mr. Mackenzie, and persuaded the latter to declare himself, or suffer himself to be declared a candidate for the representation. Had this gentleman's name been mentioned at an earlier period, instead of opposing, I certainly should have supported him; but so far from conceiving that he would accept of the trust, I believed that he would, as he had formerly done, decline it. I did not then consider that his situation, with respect to his private affairs, was materially changed. Whatever motives influenced the gentlemen who first patronized Mr. Mackenzie, it is astonishing to consider, that they should thus endeavour to create a division which will give the only chance to that candidate whom they profess to oppose in all events. That they should oppose the man with whom they live in terms of intimacy and apparent friendship, so as to leave the only opening for him whom they acknowledge to be altogether improper, is not a little mysterious. "There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out." It will not, however, be very difficult. The gentlemen have saved me the trouble of conjecture. They have very honestly avowed, as a reason that Mr. Mackenzie will be elected, that the people would no longer bear Mr. Maclaine's usurpations. Some apology might be made for attachments, for

prejudices, or for passion; but what can be said to extenuate deliberate and conscious slander for those who are guilty of it know it to be such. It would have been more just to have acknowledged (but that would frustrate their intentions) that Mr. Maclaine acted upon principles, and would not countenance those who avow in conduct what they conceal under specious pretences, that their own aggrandisement is the spring of all their actions. What power have I assumed?—of what usurpations have I been guilty?—what honor or profit have I sought or obtained, either for myself or connections?—whose ox or whose ass have I taken?—whose right have I invaded?—as a professional man, have I oppressed the widow or the orphan? have I taken advantages of the distresses of my fellow-citizens to accumulate wealth?—have I enriched myself by the spoils of the public or by private peculation?—have I even solicited your votes that I might be your representative?—I have indeed of late years been obliged to encounter an host of enemies—ambition, avarice, and persecution have been let loose upon me.—What has been the consequence of this formidable combination? Has malice been able to fix one stigma upon me, either in public or private life? Has ingratitude, with all his industry, and in his zeal to obliterate the debts he was unwilling to discharge, left the slightest stain upon my character?

If any one person has an accusation against me, let him produce it in open day, and avow it like a man. A generous mind disdain the invidious arts of a coward, and the concealed attack of an assassin. I might be qualified in saying, that my accusers have convicted their own hearts, and, in attempting to draw my character, have very fairly drawn their own.

Among those who have had an opportunity of forming any judgment of my character, I have no enemies but such as are the enemies of virtue; and among my friends, I can boast the first characters in the state. This is no vain boast. It is the honest effusions of conscious rectitude, indignant of ingratitude, and undeserved reproach; and justly proud of friendship, which would do honour to the most exalted characters.

To the charge of usurping upon your rights, you are told (what amounts to the same thing) that neither me nor my connections are to dictate to you in the choice of a member. This is an insidious implication. How far the charge is true, must be left to yourselves to determine. But admitting the facts, I beg leave to ask a simple question, which perhaps will carry its own answer with it. Whether, if you must receive your political rule of conduct from any, which to me appears highly improper, will you receive it from me and my connections, or from the gentlemen who have started the opposition.

Nothing will so effectually contradict what has been thrown out on this occasion, as a simple narrative of facts. Almost as soon as I was informed, that a third candidate was proposed for the town, though then busied in the hurry of a court, I separately proposed to two or three gentlemen, who I conceived were in favour of Mr. Mackenzie, that, to avoid a clashing of interests, and to obtain a representative who would be agreeable to a majority of the votes, that Mr. Jones and Mr. Mackenzie, with a few of their respective friends, should meet and number their several adherents, and that whoever appeared to have the weakest interest, should decline in favour of the other. This was uniformly approved, and afterwards, upon application, by Mr. Mackenzie himself. But I soon found, that this apparent acquiescence in my proposal was not real, and that time was only wanted to pervert and bring over those who had engaged to vote for Mr. Jones. This was confirmed soon afterwards, by Mr. Mackenzie refusing, upon Mr. Jones's application, to adopt that expedient. The grand stroke of policy to effect the purpose of the opposition, was this—a positive and warm assertion, bearing all the appearance of truth, that Mr. Jones had no chance of succeeding, and that the contest would lie between Major Walker and Mr. Mackenzie. The reverse of this is the fact. But if Mr. Jones's interest is so weak, why is so much trouble taken to convince us of it? It cannot injure Mr. Mackenzie; but should he decline, it certainly would, as many of Mr. Jones's voters, if he were out of the question, would undoubtedly vote for Major Walker.

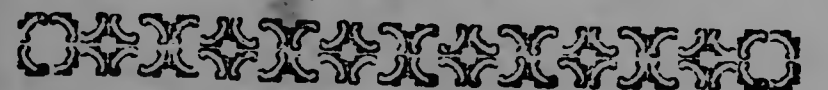
I gladly embrace this opportunity to declare, that I never have endeavoured to influence the vote of any elector, not even any of those whom I esteem as my firmest friends; nor did I mention Mr. Jones's intention to more than two or three of my friends, who casually fell in my way. Had I been more disengaged from business, it is probable that I should have acquainted others with it. This might have been attended with good consequences, as one of the gentlemen who oppose Mr. Jones, gives as his reason for so doing, that he was not consulted in the business. In plain language, it amounts to this—"I will oppose Mr. Jones, not that I have any real objection to him, but because he and Mr. Maclaine have had the presumption to propose him for a member, without paying that respect to my opinion, which my station and importance in the town demands." It is unlucky that we were not earlier apprised how very necessary it is, in all public matters, to pay a proper deference to a great man.—May it not be asked, who is now the person who dictates and usurps?

My own opinion is, that Mr. Jones would at any time have been a proper choice for the town, as any one that offers; and under all the circumstances attending the present contention, is greatly superior. As far as I am able to form a judgment from a considerable degree of intimacy, he has at least as much understanding, and is possessed of as much information as either of his opponents; and there is one trait in his character which I esteem—his temper is candid and free from duplicity. But, agreeably to my known principles, I think every man should

vote as his judgment shall direct. All I intended by this address was, to remove the effects of any gross and very unjustifiable misrepresentations; to express my contempt for those who have meanly and unjustly attempted to vilify my character; to convince them that they are not concealed; and to make my grateful acknowledgements to the electors of Wilmington, for the unrestrained confidence with which they have repeatedly honoured me.

A. MACLAINE.

Wilmington, July 13, 1788.



TO BE SOLD CHEAP,
For Cash or Produce,
TWO valuable PLANTATIONS
at the White Marsh, Bladen
County, containing 900 acres, the property of the late Robert Rowan, Esq. deceased. For further particulars apply to H. J. Richards, or
ARCHIBALD MACLAINE.
Wilmington, July 16, 1788. 20—

TO BE RENTED,
The HOUSE
where the late Mrs. LYON resided.
Inquire of
A. MACLAINE.
June 25. 17—

TO BE LET,
A Convenient DWELLING-
HOUSE, with a Wash-House,
Yard, and Garden.
For terms apply to
WILLIAM HOOPER, jun.
Wilmington, July 16. 20—

THE JOURNALS of the
last Assembly are now ready to be delivered at the Superior Court Office.
JOHN HUSKE, Clerk.
Wilmington, July 16. 20—

THE Administrators of the late
Mr. SWANN, request those who are indebted to the Store in Wilmington, kept by Mr. JAMES MILLS, to call upon Mr. ISAAC BERNARD, who is authorized to settle and receive the debts, and to give discharges.
Wilmington, July 16. 20—

BLANKS,
OF VARIOUS KINDS,
For sale by the printers hereof,