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Thomas Person to John Lamb Goshen Courthouse, N.C., 6 August 1788

Your favour of the 19th. May last, was only received the 23rd. of July & then Open, the third day after our Convention had Assembled, whose Conclusions on the extraordinary Change of Governmt, proposed for Our Acceptance I transmit to you with pleasure,¹ firmly persuaded that our proceedings which were temperate & Calm as well as the Result of our political Contest in the cause of republican Liberty, will be highly pleasing to you & our friends in your State & thro' the Union—

It is my decided opinion (& no man is better Acquainted with the publick mind) that nine tenth of the people of this State are opposed to the adoption of the New System, without very Considerable Amendments, & I might without incurring any great hazard to err, assure you, that a very Considerable Number conceive an Idea of a Genl. Government, in this extensive Country, impracticable & Dangerous.—But this is a Subject on which I feel myself more disposed to concur with better Judges than to Dogmatically decide & only State it as a doctrine gaining ground in this part of the World—Our Convention met at Hillsborough on the day appointed & on the 22nd. resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole house, & continued their discussions from day to day (Sundays excepted) untill the 1st. Inst. on which we called the decisive question when there appeared, for non-concurrence 184—& 83 for Adopting—but recommending numerous amendmts., which were repugnant to their Eloquence & reasoning in debate; a Circumstance something surprising, but that proves nevertheless, that even its advocates think the plan radically bad, by these exertions to render it Virtually better.

Howevr. I can assure you if the total rejection had been proposed, even in terms of Reprobation, the motion would have succeeded, but we conceived it more decent & moderate to refer it in the mode you will see prefixed to our bill of Rights & Amendments, in Confidence that the Union & prosperity of America may yet be preserved by temperance & Wisdom, in defiance of precipitation & some Arts which I suspect tho' I cannot enumerate or trace them—There is so little Security left now for obtaining Amendments, especially if your State is adoptive, that it probably may be wise in those States, or the Minorities in them, to oppose all representation untill Amendments are obtain'd or to send into the New Congress only such men of unequivocal Charectors as will oppose every operation of the System untill it is render'd consistant with the preservation of our Liberties too precious to be Sacrificed to *Authority, name, ambition, or design*,—Your proposition for opening a Correspondence I embrace with great charfulness, it meets wth. my Cordial approbation as well as my Friends, urged only by Motives for the prosperity

of the Union—And I have only to lament that such measures were not persued earlier, as they would in my opinion have prevented or abated the mischief which the public cause has already received—I take the freedom to request, that you may forward the proceedings of your Convention, & any thing else you may think conducive to the public weal; our Assembly will meet the 1st. monday in Novr. next at Fayetteville where we would easily as well as Charfully receive any thing wch. you might think interesting to the good people of this State.—I have the Honour to be with profound respect to you Sir & Thro you to the Federal republican Committee Yr. & Their Assd. Frd. & Hbl. Servt.

P.S. I forgot Sir, to advert to a letter read in our Convention (which in the first Instance I opposed) from our Delegate Williamson, in which he Arristocratically complain'd, that Congress is perpetually interrupted by a York Delegate (who he says was once a Shomaker—)² calling the Yeas & Nays, on which Occasions he says he was *obliged to retire*, as representing a non adopting State;—Some of his Constituants remark that delicacy Shd. have suggested his Voluntary recess-ion; and more particularly as his Nasal Organs were so offended with the Society of a Mechanic.—But some persons are said to have taken his case into Consideration & have *positively determined* not to send *him* again, untill the president of Congress, shall send us Satisfactory attestations, that the Honble. Congress of the States are Composed altogether of the *WELL BORN*

NB. I wrote you a Similar letter to this some time ago and in it Inclosed the proceedings referd to but least you Should not get *that*, I have sent *this*, which is a duplicate, of the former one, Save only that I have not with me another Coppy of the Proceedings of the Convention—I expect you will receive this by my Friend Doctr. Mitchell, & by him I Shall Safely receive any Answer you may think proper to Send.—

1. Person probably sent Lamb a broadside that included the North Carolina Declaration of Rights and the structural amendments to the Constitution recommended by the Hillsborough Convention on 2 August 1788.

2. The New York delegate to Congress was the combative Abraham Yates, Jr., who had been a shoemaker in Albany when he was young. Yates, a leading New York Antifederalist, insisted that the Constitution be amended before it was ratified.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XVIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private [6] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1995), 59–61, 68.