

Thursday March 9th 1802-

Dear Sir-

I avail myself of your being at Albany for transmitting to you sufficient information to prevent the bad effect of certain misrepresentations intended to be made to the Council of Appointment by some Individuals, a number of whom you know sufficiently to appreciate their Worth. I mean our good Neighbours of the Mountains.

I am informed that, what is called among those Folks a Grand Frolic, took place last Saturday at Cronk's, where they repaired with their wives to spend the day & to draw a Petition to the Council of Appointment, praying that a Justice of the Peace be appointed in the Neighbourhood of West point, & proposing for Candidates Th^s North, Silas Aldridge or Jam^s Ring. what has been the result of the Frolic I know not, but having been informed that it was intended to put my name to the Petition, I beg if you can ascertain that it is the case, that you would make the Imposition be known.

Since the Practice has proved successful in some parts of our County for People to draw petitions for their own Appointment & subscribe them with the names of substantial Characters who had tempted & refused to sign them, we have reason to fear that others have recourse to the same expedient, and tho' the Appointments made under that predicament have been revoked since, still the nuisance of a vicious Magistrate has been some time felt.

whether my name be, or be not to the above mentioned Petition made at Cronk's, I consider it my duty to give what information I think necessary in the premises.

if there is

if there is no Magistrate at West Point, I admit the necessity of the Appointment of one, even in the case of M^r Bell, who has been recommended to the Council of Appointment by Respectable Characters, being appointed at Queensborough, for you know that the peace is often broken by our Mountaineers, and that Justices within 6 miles of one another are not too near. but at the same time you will acknowledge that it was better to have no Justices than to appoint to that office the Promoters of Riots, thefts, & of disorders of all kinds.

that a man who has been broke from the office of a Justice of the Peace for prevarications in the exercise of said office; who during the period of his appointment has been guilty of keeping tavern at his own house, & evading the Law by taking the license in the name of the Jullion of the Garrison; of receiving Property belonging to Government & stolen by soldiers, in pledge or payment for liquors; of marrying Women whom he knew had husbands alive, of issuing precepts to his own benefit & in support of his acts of Wickedness, is not fit to be reappointed a Justice of the peace will certainly be pronounced by the Council of Appointment on ascertaining that those assertions are founded, and as I am able to bring Evidence of those charges against M^r North, I hold him as unfit for the appointment.

The Two other Candidates M^r Aldridge & M^r Ring, may be, in point of principles, fit for the Appointment and I am not possessed with sufficient information to pronounce to the contrary, but I think, if it is the case, that they will be able to procure some persons of discernment & Character to support their Petition.

your devotion My dear sis, to the Public Good & your acceptance near his Excellency Governor Clinton, has occasioned me thus to trouble you for a Circumstance wherein the intent of the Law may be evaded.

Had you favored me with a visit at the Hermitage, I would have had the pleasure of introducing to you M^r Dan^l Bell who but that of being acquainted with your brother General Courtland, and who has now been settled twelve months at the Queensb^r Landing that Gentleman who is born of Respectable Parents, & has received a very liberal Education owns property among us & is likely to continue all his life time on these premises would you know him personally you would certainly recommend him for a Magistrate, persuaded that the Town would become benefited by his appointment but if your opinion of the validity of my assertions justifies it, I think your support for him. I do it in Justice to his merit ^{only} being myself to derive no advantage from it, since I am going away from the Country.

Believe me with particular Esteem

Your serv^t & Friend

E. J. Bell

If Joseph Travis Esq^r is acquainted with M^r Bell, please to ask his opinion of him.

Pierre Van Courtland Esquire

not paid

Paid 12 $\frac{1}{2}$

Pierre Van Coertland Esquire

Albany

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a Major in the Army
found the enemy
Cavalry