

GREENSBORO', Ga. March 14, 1823.

The Hon. Augustin S. Clayton,

SIR—Having been already referred to in relation to an address to President Adams by the young men of Augusta, in 1798, in which Mr. Secretary Crawford and myself were concerned, I feel it my duty not only in compliance with your request, but to prevent misconstruction, to state briefly the facts concerning it, so far as it involves political principles.

The general policy of the then French government towards the United States had been mainly intended to involve us in a war with its enemies. And after various and fruitless attempts to accomplish this object, other plans and most disgraceful schemes were devised, which now seemed as if war was inevitable. In this situation of things, President Adams by a wise and energetic course preserved our neutrality, and was a measure rendering almost universal satisfaction. And it is well known that addresses from every section of our country, uniting the feelings of both the political parties, were at that time pouring in to the President, loudly applauding the firmness and decision of the administration in relation to the belligerent powers of Europe.

The young men who composed the meeting in Augusta, were of different political sentiments, and the committee selected by the chairman to prepare the address in question, were also so considered, and consisted of Messrs. Wm. H. Crawford, Nathaniel Cocke, Samuel Barnett, Isham Malone and John McKinne—the three first of whom were known as Republicans. In making this choice, the chairman was influenced by a desire, that the address should manifest the feelings of Americans, without regard to the distinction of political parties then existing. The draft reported by the committee underwent some trivial and merely verbal alterations in general committee. The transaction in relation to this address was previous to those acts of that administration which seemed not to be acceptable to the great body of the American people.

Viewing things as I then and now do, I must in candor say that I cannot conceive how any part of the address can be alleged as ground for charge of fickleness in Mr. Crawford's political sentiments. For my part I have no recollection, nor has any thing come to my knowledge to induce a belief that any change has since taken place;—On the contrary that it has always been considered he never belonged to what is termed the Federal party; and such has ever been my opinion.

The original report of the address by the committee together with the President's answer having been preserved among my papers, I do myself the pleasure to furnish a copy of each for your perusal, or for publication, as you may deem expedient.

Dr. Abbott has been pleased to refer to me as a federalist of 1798, and still remaining so. Be this as it may—To use the language of President Jefferson, it would seem as if we were now "all Federalists, all Republicans."

Feeling, now and at all times, a deep and permanent interest in the welfare of my beloved country, I have the honor to be, with sentiments of esteem, your most obedient servant,  
GEO. WATKINS.