

1810 August 4 *Foreign Correspondent and Georgia Express* (Athens, Georgia), p2, "To the voters of Clarke County."

Fellow-Citizens,

It is but too common when an individual stands candidate for any appointment, but more especially for the State or Federal Legislature, that the calumniating and slanderous part of the world, deem him a fit and lawful prey, for the [isvenous] indulgence of their cruel and bloody malevolence, and never leave him, until they drop gorged from the [seaft] of defamation. –On a late occasion I have been one of the unhappy subjects of this shameful and cannibal propensity – A late writer in the *Georgia Express*, under the signature of Voter, has in the most wanton and unprovoked manner assailed the feelings, and traduced the reputation and character of one, who fondly flattered himself, had lived an irreproachable life, at least freed from any other, than the common indiscretions which belong to youth and inexperience.

This hidden and unworthy slanderer, after three attempts to draw me out, has induced me to lay before you the present address, not from any anger or irritation which his malice could provoke, not from any desire of revenge upon him, by unfolding his character, for though he works in the dark he is not unknown to me, but from a respect which is due to you, fellow-citizens, in repelling the false and wicked charges and insinuations levelled at my character & conduct. –Among the various charges exhibited against me (and indeed align to prove that fact) I am called a *Federalist*, or in other words I am not a *Republican*: I will here candidly own to you, that I do not, nor ever have known, the real and exact difference between the terms –But if the writer of Voter means, by the term Federalist, that I am an enemy to my country and government, that I am an enemy to the rights, the privileges and the liberties, both civil and religious, of the people, that I am not a friend to the Federal and State Constitutions, and that I am opposed to the Laws of the County – he has insinuated a falsehood, which for wretched meanness and black depravity, can only be equaled by the heart that conceived it. But on the contrary if a pure regard for our Republican institutions, conducted with fidelity and uprightness, it a hearty and unfeigned attachment to the Constitution of the United States, and the State in which I live – If a belief that a free representative government, allowing universal suffrage, and bottomed on the will and voice of the people, is the best government the world ever saw, and finally that the greatest happiness of the greatest number, in any society, ought to be the chief care and object of every government, I say, if all these are evidences of Federalism, why then I am a Federalist – And although I may not have ascribed infallibility to men, and believed that it was impossible for them to err, yet I defy any living being to face me, and shew one instance, or point out one evidence, where I have departed from, or ceased to maintain and defend the above principles. –It is nt men but principles that ought to govern us, I have always believed, and shall ever believe, if my life depended upon it, (lay aside an election) that it is the very life and soul of Republicanism, so far as relates to matters of government, *to speak what you think, and to think what you please*, provided it does not injure the reputation or wound the feelings of your neighbor. If ever a government was ruined, and tumbled to the dust, it was from placing too much confidence, bestowing too much flattery, and giving too unlimited adulation to men –If men in any office, whether a constable or president, for they are both useful and indispensable officers, in our government, –discharge their trust with fidelity and integrity, they deserve alike in proportion to the magnitude of their several services, the credit and praise of their fellow-citizens, but that praise should never be unbounded, for each officer has done no more than his duty, and he has been recompenced by the emoluments and honor of his office. These, fellow-citizens, are my sentiments, and I appeal to any one, to say, I have ever avowed any other.

Oppressive indeed do I conceive it, that because designing and evil disposed men, choose to apply a term or a name that is odious to the people, to an individual seeking their favors, that therefore without enquiring into his conduct or life, he is deemed unworthy their confidence or regard – This is not liberal, it is not Republican. –My character is and must be known to many of you, and I shall not hesitate a moment, to place it by the side of the writer of voter. I have called upon the Printer* for the author of Voter, but he declines making him known – I here most solemnly pledge myself to the people, that if the writer of voter is given up, I will prove unquestionably to them, in a court of justice, if he will afford me an opportunity, that he is a man, who has lived a most dissipated and dissolute life, who, nursed in the lap of every demoralizing vice, has bro't upon himself by his vicious practices, and prodigal habits, almost every disease, which is incident to a life of abandoned profligacy, that he is without reputation, that with shattered health, and a still more tattered character, he now lives upon the courtesy and bounty of others, that he is not a citizen of your county, that he has affixed a glaring falsehood at the foot of his productions, by calling himself a Voter, when he has not been in this county five months, especially at the time he wrote; nor has he paid to this county, or any other, agreeably to the constitution, his lawful taxes – All this, I aver I will prove. It is now, fellow-citizens for you to choose between us – I, who have been raised and educated among you, & who am well known to the greater part of you – or this man, who immoral, unsettled, & itinerant life, bespeaks the idler, the loungeur, and the debaucher.

Augustin S. Clayton.

*Mr. Clayton called on me to give up the author of Voter, which at that time I declined doing, not knowing positively who was the writer, but promised to ascertain the fact and inform him at another day. Mr. Clayton certainly must know that I could have no interest in screening the Author of Voter from his view – He is in full possession of the name of the writer of Voter
Printer