

## James Gadsden to Andrew Jackson, April 15, 1819, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### JAMES GADSDEN TO JACKSON.

New Orleans, April 15, 1819.

*My Dear General*, I have this moment received your two letters of the 7 and 8 Ultmo. accompanied with General Smyths speech etc.<sup>1</sup> The report of the Committee in the Senate, has as you may suppose been read with

<sup>1</sup> Speech of Jan. 21, by Alexander Smyth of Georgia, in defense of Jackson.

much indignation in this Country. The gentlemen who perused it were unfortunate for themselves in betraying their malicious feelings, and whatever may be their protestations to the contrary, the general belief is that they were actuated by the most diabolical views, and individual antipathies. I am happy however that you did not notice them as well as many other disappointed wasps of Congress, not that they did not merit chastisement for the licentiousness of their remarks, but that it would have been descending in you to have put yourself on a level with those who would have considered themselves enobled by a personal controversy with you. You[r] conduct was therefore a disappointment to them; for believe me General there are too many in this country who have mistaken your real character, and believe you not capable of commanding yourself; They would fain think that all your acts have been the impulse only of the moment, and that in all your military operations you have been controuled more by feeling, than by correct judjement, that your victories have been the happy blunderings of feeling, more than the result of judicious plans, and boldness of design. Hence it is my opinion they believed that you would commit

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yourself at Washington, They attempted therefore to irritate you and had you noticed their indicorous remarks they would have exulted.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The impression that Jackson's lack of self-control would probably lead him into unbecoming conduct was partly due to the nervous fears of shallow friends. It is characteristic of him that he was not offended by their adulation, and perhaps not influenced by it. Gadsden's plan to write a life of Jackson was only the fancy of an impetuous mind. Nothing further was heard of it.

I thank you General for the interest you have taken in my behalf at Washington. The appointment would be gratifying to my feelings because I wish to abandon a military life as one in which there is in peace nothing to gain and the Collectorship will afford me a comfortable support.<sup>3</sup> If Mr. M. is sincere in his promises, I will most willingly undertake the work you wish me, though I would prefer it to fall into hands of an Individual more capable of doing justice to the subject, and to yourself. I know that I have not a talent for historical writing, and as my genius is rather slow I would have to substitute industry for poverty of intellect. It would give me more pleasure to see your papers in the hands of some able Literary Character and if you have some one in view, or can fix your mind on any one you will I hope not hesitate giving your papers to him. You will not let the promise of presenting me with your papers, interfere with this design, or permit delicacy towards me to operate on your judgement. When I made the request of the transfer of your papers it was with a view of preserving them, and of doing justice to your Actions at some future period through the Assistance of some of the Literati of this Country. Under existing circumstances I could execute nothing, my duties are of the most arduous character and require my continued application, but if I obtain the appointment you have recommended me to, much leisure time will fall to my lot which I would most willingly devote to arranging the matter and putting it in form for a history if I do not write it myself. You may therefore pack up your

<sup>3</sup> Gadsden however remained in the army till 1822.

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papers in readiness to be sent to this Country, unless you can find some Individual near you who will undertake the narrative. . . . .