

**Andrew Jackson to H. W. Peterson, February 23, 1823,
from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by
John Spencer Bassett.**

TO H. W. PETERSON.1

1 Copy. Seems to be the handwriting of Maj. W. B. Lewis.

Nashville, February 23, 1823.

Sir, Your letter of the 3d instant, with the Harrisburgh paper entitled the Commonwealth, containing the address you have alluded to, has been this day received. The complimentary manner in which my fellow citizens of Pennsylvania have been pleased to notice my military services, and their voluntary expressions of respect and confidence in me, has excited on my part a proper sense of gratitude.

As a member of a Committee appointed to draft an address to the People of the U S on the subject of the next Presidential election, *and by the request of that Committee* you ask to be informed "whether I can or do approve of my "name being used at this time as a candidate for the Presidency of the U States"² I shd have consulted my own feelings by continuing to avoid speaking on the subject but the respectable source from whence the inquiry emanates, prohibits any but a candid notice of your communication. My undeviating rule of conduct through life, and which I have and shall ever deem as congenial with the true Republican principles of government, has been neither to seek, or decline public invitations to office. For the services which I may have rendered and which have, it is hoped, proved in a degree beneficial to my country I have nothing to ask. They are richly repaid with the confidence and good opinion of the virtuous and well deserving part of the community. I have only essayed to discharge a debt which every man owes

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his country when her rights are invaded: and if twelve years exposure to fatigue and numerous privations can warrant the expression: I may venture to assert that my portion of public service has been performed and that with this impression I had retired from the busy scenes of public life: with a desire to be a spectator merely of passing events.

2 Peterson's letter of Feb. 3, 1823, announced that "a few days since" a meeting at Harrisburg, Pa., had unanimously nominated Jackson as a candidate for the presidency.

The office of Chief Magistrate of the Union is one of great responsibility; as it should not be sought by any Individual of the Republic: so it cannot with propriety be declined when offered by those who have the power of selection. It is interesting to the American People alone and in the election they should exercise their free and unbiased judgement. It was with these impressions I presume and without any consultation with me, that the Members of the Legislature of the State of Tennessee as an additional testimony of their confidence in me: thought proper to present my name to the consideration of the American community. My political creed prompts me to leave the affair uninfluenced by any expression on my part: and to the free will of those who have alone the right to decide.

Yr