

Felix Grundy to Andrew Jackson, January 2, 1819, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

Nashville, January 2, 1819.

Dear General, Ever since I discovered the late attempts in Congress in relation to you and particularly since our late conversation, I have reflected much on your situation, and at last, submit to your Judgment, the following, as the result—You have earned a high and distinguished reputation, too high to remain unenvied. If assailed by an individual in his private capacity, you know, the people would do Justice to your conduct and character but this is not the case. your conduct is seriously questioned on the floor of the Congress of the U States, where I know, any man's character can be literally talked down. The speeches there made are read throughout the Union, and elsewhere, and when members are resolved on an object, their motives may be concealed, and the public misled. I am myself satisfied, that in regard to the execution of Arbuthnot and Ambriestie [Ambrister], 1 your conduct can be Justified not only upon principle but upon precedent, and as a matter of expediency, it has rendered to our frontier more service than any act that could have been done. At first, I hesitated, whether it would be discreet for you to go to Washington, but on reflection, it seems to me, that no other course would be correct. It is natural that you (now near the close of an illustrious life) 2 should feel sensibly for your fame—and to be idle, while others are indulging themselves in attempts to injure you, would be inexcuseable. I have no doubt but yr. presence, would inspire many with correct sentiment. Altho it may be said, that a vindication written or before a Court Martial, might answer every perpose, I do not think so; public opinion will be more influenced by what is said and done in Congress, than any where else. If as you suspect, your greatest adversary be on the spot this forms an additional reason for your presence. To know that injury is

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contemplated and not to use the most efficient means to avert it is to manifest too little regard to a name acquired thro a series of labors and dangers. I feel a solicitude on this subject not confined to you, alone. If your enemies succeed, it will affect the American character. If the conqueror of the Creek Indians in two wars, If the Hero of New Orleans, has his military reputation tarnished (however unjustly) the brilliancy and splendor of those great atcheivements are in a great degree lost to the American people—besides it will create intrigues of State and the enemies of our political Institutions will be furnished with an additional argument in favor of the ingratitude of Republics.

1 See Bassett's *Jackson* , pp. 254–260.

2 Jackson was now in his fifty-second year.

yr. friend