

Athens Gazette, July 6, 1815, p 3, editorial describes Augustin S. Clayton's oratory at Watkinsville

The anniversary of American Independence which can never fail to excite general and lively concern, was celebrated with more than usual animation at Watkinsville in this county. Connected with the honors due and offered to the occasion, the citizens at large had, by previous arrangement resolved, to bestow on their fellow citizens who had lately served in the various state expeditions, a public testimony of that sense of gratitude which is so warmly felt for their faithful and valuable services – Accordingly a most abundant entertainment was prepared for, and was honored by the presence of nearly two hundred of those brave men – every possible distinction was paid them by a very numerous and highly respectable assemblage of citizens.

The solemnities of this ever memorable day were introduced by the Rev. Doctor Brown, President of Franklin College, with a few hortatory observations well adapted to lead the minds and excite the feelings of overflowing gratitude, toward that divine source, when has flown all those inestimable blessings, of which this day is commemorative – these were succeeded by a suitable and impressive prayer, distinguished by piety and pathos The honor of reading the Magna Carta of America, the Declaration of Independence, was assigned to Mr. Asbury Hull, which he did with feeling and emphasis adapted to the importance of the occasion.

The arrangements of the day were continued by Col. A. S. Clayton, (the Orator of the Demosthenean Society of Franklin College, but relinquished by them in compliment to their fellow citizens of the county at large) delivering an oration meeting all the objects of the occasion.

The difficulty of investing, a thrice told, tho' never to be forgotten tale, with novelty an powerful interest, is proverbial and may readily be appreciated by any who will take the trouble of perusing the ephemeral effusions, common on such occasions. The Orator rose superior to his difficulties, and by a skillful management of his subject, bestowed on it all the graces of novelty; and the interest excited may be judged of, by the time of delivery, being generally estimated fifteen minutes, whereas it actually occupied forty-five. Indeed, for well judged choice of materials, skillful arrangement and proportion of parts, for richness of fancy and felicity of language, for manly indignation against the **SHORTLAND GOVERNMENT**, for sound politics and energy of patriotism, it would not be easy, to praise this composition too highly. Often may the sylvan scenes of our country return their glad echoes to such sounds. -> Our first impulse was to have attempted an outline of the oration, for two reasons we have forbore, conscious inadequacy and a hope that the Orator would favor his fellow citizens by allowing the whole to be published.

The troops were led from the rostrum to table, abundantly furnished by the affection of their fellow citizens with an excellent repast. They were waited on, during dinner, by many of the first citizens of the county. The remaining part of the day presented in a happy mixture of festivity, harmony and patriotism.

The toasts given on this occasion will be published in our next.