

AN

**ORATION,**

**DELIVERED AT**

**RUMFORD, (OXFORD COUNTY)**

**MAINE.**

**ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF**

**AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,**

**JULY THE FOURTH,**

**1807.**

—...●...—  
**BY FRANCIS KEYES, ESQ.**

—...●...—  
**ORDERED BY REQUEST.**

[1807]

# AN ORATION, &c.



FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WITH heartfelt pleasure do we assemble on this anniversary, to celebrate with mirth and hilarity, that ever memorable day, July the 4th, 1776. Our pious ancestors, inhabitants of the island of Great Britain, finding themselves oppressed, and loaded with burdens too grievous to be patiently borne, left their native land, and sought a calm retreat from outrage, in the then inhospitable wilds of America. Here, God in his providence was pleased to smile upon them, and to crown their honest endeavors to procure a livelihood, with abundant success. Still their love for their mother country was fervent, insomuch that as they increased, they willingly became colonies under the British administration. But the English ministry, finding these colonies rapidly increasing in wealth, thought to make them a prey.

It appears that America was not allowed a representation in the British parliament; they therefore began their system of oppression, by an excise or tax on a few articles which were much used in America. This inroad on their liberties, the colonists immediately perceived, but they

reasoned coolly and deliberately, and ineffectually petitioned and remonstrated with parliament, for nearly ten years before they assumed the sword. As a late celebrated author\* observes, "It was not the quantity of the tax, it was not the method of appropriation, but it was the right of the demand which was called in question."

At length the British ministry, finding that the colonists were unwilling to set down patiently under their oppressive measures, sent over fleets and armies to enforce their "*mad pretensions.*"

At this critical juncture, a host of patriots, whose names and memories will ever live in grateful remembrance, headed by HANCOCK and SAMUEL ADAMS, stepped forth, and heroically made a determined stand against the torrent of oppression, and "undauntedly threw the gantlet at a power whose recent triumphs were almost co-extensive with the earth."

In July, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was published, which for ever separated America from Great Britain. To the reading of this declaration, let me now call your attention. [Here the Declaration of Independence was read, and succeeded by a discharge of musketry.] "This great event took place two hundred and eighty four years after the discovery of America by Columbus, one hundred and seventy from the first effectual settlement in Virginia, and one hundred and fifty six from the first settlement of Plymouth in Massachusetts."

\* BARLOW.

It is not my design at this time to give you a complete history of the war, for this has been ably written, and is in the hands of many of you; but let it suffice to say, that by the wise and prudent measures of the continental Congress, and the strenuous and persevering exertions of our immortal WASHINGTON, and his copatriots, America was conducted through "indescribable difficulties, to independence and peace." After the war, the united voice of his country called the illustrious WASHINGTON to preside in the grand council of the nation. Here, he was equally distinguished as a statesman, and though his term was short, yet we still feel the happy effects of his wise and virtuous administration. He is now, by the will of divine Providence, removed to the land of silence, but his fame has echoed through the universe, and his memory can never be lost.

Over the administration of Mr. ADAMS, which succeeded that of WASHINGTON, I would gladly cast a veil; but a spirit of patriotism obliges me to bear my testimony against every species of tyranny and oppression, and publicly to avow my utter detestation of every design formed against the liberties of my fellow countrymen.

By a system of oppressive taxation, something similar to that practised by the British Parliament before the war, he alienated the affections of the people, and, by attempting to frighten to compliance by establishing a standing army among them in a time of peace, by a useless and expensive navy, &c. he entirely lost their confidence, which they expressed by electing to the chief magistracy, a man whom it was their delight to

honor, whose political principles were known to be directly opposite to those of Mr. ADAMS. This was the truly illustrious JEFFERSON. [Here a discharge of musketry.] Well may we say, "*Clap your hands, O ye people, rejoice with exceeding joy,*", and celebrate with loud acclamations this political savior of your country. [Three cheers.] During the administration of our JEFFERSON, we have seen that a people can be governed, and yet be free. We have seen and felt the happy effects of a wise, peaceable, and liberal policy, which recommends "*Peace, Commerce, and honest Friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.*" But the spirit of Faction, has made a stand against this meek and righteous magistrate. "*An insatiable junto of public spoilers,*" composed principally of Monarchists, Old Tories, parse-proud Aristocrats, and speculating Lawyers, who had drawn into their vortex and deluded, a few good citizens, rose up and seemed determined to overthrow the virtuous Mr. JEFFERSON, or perish in the attempt. Every idle tale which envy or malice could invent, has been fabricated, and posted through the continent by the hirelings of Federalism, in order to prejudice the common people against their best friend.

But thanks be to God, that their deep plots have failed; the envenomed shafts of calumny have fallen harmless at his feet, and the full quiver of malevolence has been exhausted in vain. Our immaculate President still stands first on the scale of beings, and, "*while memory holds her seat,*" his truly great and meritorious services can never be forgotten.

The same Tory party, have been trying to fix

an adamant chain on the necks of the good people of this Commonwealth. Every scheme has been adopted which would tend to throw the power into the hands of a few Aristocrats, and and even the pulpit itself has not been wholly free from corruption. The ministers of the *Standing Order*, as it is called, (to their shame be it spoken) have attempted to prove to the people, that they risk'd their eternal salvation by bestowing their offices on whom they saw fit. The increase of sectaries was to them a death stroke; it was therefore one great object of the Federalists to establish a uniform system of religion throughout the state. By such tyrannical measures, the plan of which was laid soon after the revolution, they meant in the end to bring us into a form of civil and ecclesiastical government, similar to that of Great Britain. But the very wiles of our seducers, betrayed their traitorous machinations, and exposed them to the people in their most hideous deformity; and we have reason to be very thankful that their *Strong* bands are now broken, and the eyes of the majority of the people effectually opened. The virtuous SULLIVAN is now seated at the head of this Commonwealth, by the suffrages of more than forty thousand of his fellow citizens. Our prospects are now extremely flattering. Almost every state in the union is now harmonising with the general government. This is really a matter of triumph.

With pleasure do we observe this unanimity of political sentiment prevailing, and even in this remote corner of the union, we can lend the names of those worthies, who, under God, have been the means of preserving to us our invaluable Republican government.

*Inhabitants of Rumford,*

You have great reason to hymn praises to heaven, and to give your decided support to those men who have ably and vigorously defended your cause against a host of Federal combatants, who were determined to divide your spoil, and part your garments among them, and by fire and sword to compel you to submission.

But their charm is now broken; their airy vision is dissolved like the mist of the morning, and they are fast retiring to their native oblivion. While we, here in this wilderness, which but a few years since was the abode of the savage, can calmly contemplate the confusion and bustle of the world, and, while nature is blooming around us, we can with rapture exclaim,

“ Rejoice, Columbia’s sons rejoice,  
 “ To tyrants never bend the knee,  
 “ But join with heart, and hand, and voice,  
 “ For JEFFERSON and Liberty.”

FINIS: