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AN  
ORATION,

COMMEMORATIVE

OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

*PRONOUNCED AT SALISBURY,*

JULY FOURTH, 1810.

.....  
BY JOSEPH OTIS OSGOOD, A.M.  
.....

*Deus nobis hæc otia fecit. Virg. Ecl. 1.*

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1810.

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DOCT. JOSEPH O. OSGOOD,

SIR,

THE subscribers, having been appointed a committee for that purpose, by a respectable number of the citizens of the towns of Salisbury and Amesbury, associated to celebrate the anniversary of their Independence, tender you their thanks for your excellent Oration, this day pronounced, and request a copy for the press.

SAMUEL NYE,  
EPHRAIM MORRILL,  
BAILEY CHASE,  
WILLIAM BARTLET,  
SAMUEL MARCH,  
LOWELL BAGLEY.

SALISBURY, JULY 4, 1810.



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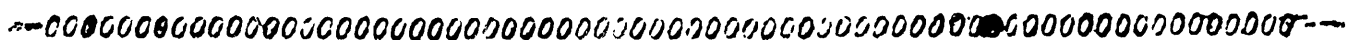
GENTLEMEN,

AN ardent desire to promote the harmony and happiness of your association, which induced me to pronounce the Oration, influences me to submit the same to your polite request.

With high respect and esteem,  
your obed't servant,

JOSEPH O. OSGOOD.

SAMUEL NYE, ESQ.  
CAPT. EPHRAIM MORRILL,  
CAPT. WILLIAM BARTLET,  
CAPT. BAILEY CHASE,  
SAMUEL MARCH, ESQ.  
MR. LOWELL BAGLEY.



# ORATION.

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*FELLOW CITIZENS,*

**W**ITH diffidence I address you on an occasion the most interesting, the most noble, and sublime. The celebration of our rights, freedom, and independence ought to warm every heart, and inflame the coldest insensibility with the sacred fire of patriotic love.

The speaker solicits your attention concerning a subject, as important, as your existence, and which involves all your privileges, civil, political, and religious.

On this memorable day, our delegates assembled in Congress, made a solemn declaration, that we by right, ought to be a free and independent nation. They pledged their fortunes, their lives, and their sacred honor, that they would defend their rights, protect their liberty, and preserve them inviolate to their posterity. They made this declaration, when our country afforded only a melancholy scene of ruin, distress, and blood. They supported at that time the glorious cause of liberty without finances, without system, and unaided by foreign alliance, yet the ILLUSTRIOUS WASHINGTON led our armies, and the GREAT JEHOVAH planted our ensign of renowned freedom.

We will consider the nature of independence, its existence, and influence in foreign and ancient republics, its origin in our own happy country, and the most proper means of supporting, and perpetuating this invaluable blessing.

Man possesses by nature certain exclusive privileges, such as these, the government and direction of his domestic concerns. He may encourage merit by reward, and restrain vice by inflicting punishment. He may regulate his finances in a manner, that will be most conducive to his interest; and the exercise, of these privileges, constitutes his independence.

From an individual we may draw a parallel between a number, a confederated nation; they have rights and privileges, which ought not to be controlled by foreign power, and the enjoyment of those rights is the basis of an independent government.

If the internal administration of our republic should be subjected to external direction, it would exhibit a scene of anarchy, confusion, and glaring injustice; and it might be governed by every petty tyrant, that despotic power might appoint, or interest suggest. Instead of having just trials in our courts of equity by an impartial jury, collected from the great mass of the people; we should be subject to partial inquiries, in which the rights, liberty, and lives of our citizens might be wantonly destroyed.

If we should be a dependent nation, the pride of ambition, the love of glory, and the fire of genius, would resemble the last gleam of the expiring taper, or the flitting light of the summer fire fly.

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Commerce, shækled by foreign restrictions, would languish, the zeal of the agriculturist cease, if he should be uncertain, whether the same hand that sows, will reap the field.

We will now survey antient and foreign republics, contemplate the causes, which undermined their beautiful fabric, subverted their independence, and overclouded the beams of their meridian glory; and thence draw a parallel between them, and our own republic, and avoid the sandy foundation on which, the fragile edifices, of the former, have been erected.

Greece first attracts our attention. Here several sister states formed a firm union, cemented by glory, patriotism, and liberty.

Here the arts and sciences obtained the summit of fame, and the mind was distinguished for elegance, vivacity, and profound judgment.

Sculpture arrived to that perfection, that the carved marble almost spoke. The painted canvass imitated nature so admirably, that the birds pecked the pictured, for the substantial grape.

The eloquence of Greece was bold, enchanting, and sublime. A Grecian orator could attract the hearts of an whole nation, and warm with the sacred fire of eloquence their passions in the cause of glory, liberty, and virtue.

The arms of the republic were its support, when opposed by the millions of Persia. Leonidas and his three hundred, who perished at the straits of Thermopylæ in the defence of their country's rights, shall be remembered with respect, and admiration, while patriotism glows in the human breast.

United by virtue, united by arms, Greece existed the glory, the terror, and the arbitress of surrounding nations.

Soon however, the wealth produced by their conquests, foreign gold, intrigue, and corruption, internal divisions, and jealousies, blasted all their rising, and glorious prospects. When the ambition, and partial views of one state militated against another, they became a prey to party rancor, and foreign influence, which separated their interest, and fomented jealousy to seize upon their vitals, and riot in their destruction.

Long since, the Grecian power has ceased to exist, and we have only the melancholy evidence of history, that the republic was once the pride of arts, the field of eloquence, and the warriors glory.

From Greece the arts, and sciences removed their abode to Rome. Here a republic vied with the former in every quality, which ennobles and improves the mind. Rome was celebrated for her virtue, her refinement, and her knowledge.

Her conquests extended from the east, to the west, from the north, to the south. All nations submitted to her power, and bowed under her iron yoke.

Rome, however, soon lost her ancient virtue, and allured by her wealth every bold invader, until the neighbouring barbarians destroyed her influence, and subjected her to an ignominious vassalage. She now exists without power, deprived of liberty, and fallen into the lap of effeminacy, luxury, and vice.

Independence and freedom have dwelt on the rugged mountains of Switzerland, fostered by virtue, by lit-

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erature, and patriotic zeal. The Swiss republic, at present, is only a name, and her hardy sons have, with reluctance, and despair, submitted their rights, and liberty to foreign direction.

When France assumed the republican form, our hearts beat with ardor for a nation, whose arms, and navy had assisted us in the glorious cause of freedom. With delight and admiration we beheld a great nation, flourishing in arts, respectable in arms, abundant in wealth, and antient in monarchy, become united as a republic. We anticipated a sister, who, with our attire, would unite our virtues, and perpetuate her republican fame to the latest posterity. Alas, our hopes are frustrated, and we lament that France does not resemble our happy country; and that instead of being *chastised* by the *whip of monarchy*, she is *scourged* by the *scorpion of despotic power*.

We will now take a retrospective view of the rise and progress of our independence, and republican form.

Our revered ancestors, actuated by the glorious principles of liberty of conscience, and religious fortitude, sought an asylum in the dreary wilds of Columbia. They despised the enjoyment of their native country, the luxury of Europe, and the pride and cruelty of ecclesiastical councils; while for their religion they endured the hardship of penury, the severity of winter, and were exposed to savage man, and the more savage beasts of the dreary desert. Although famine, danger, and death were their daily companions, yet they were united, and trusted in God, who comforted, supported, and protected them.

Spring soon arrives, while the rose of Europe, and the blooming wild rose of Columbia, like sister blossoms, vie mutually in vernal fragrance.

The nodding forest falls beneath the axe of the woodman, and in the wild, where the wolf roamed for his prey, the cultivated field smiles with a golden harvest. Where the smoking wigwam, of the ignorant savage, appeared, we behold beautiful cities, and splendid palaces. Where, the birchen canoe plied with its slender paddles, the sails of our ships whiten the shores of our country.

Our savage neighbours, although they sometimes scalped the innocent victim, were obliged to submit to the superior knowledge, and power of a civilized nation, and buried the hatchet under the tree of peace.

Our commerce, agriculture and fisheries united, as sisters in mutual exertion; and our parent country beheld with pride, and jealousy, a rival in her infant colonies. When she opposed our liberty, and curtailed our privileges, then the fire of *patriotism* blazed from the *Atlantic* to our remotest settlements. We were united in arms, united in glory, united in virtue. Our honest patriots devoted their ease, their fortunes, and their lives on the *sacred* altar of *Independence*. While history records the annals of nations, while time is not buried in the dark abyss of eternity, the *memory* of those *heroes*, who *fought*, and *bled* in *defence* of their *country's rights*, shall excite in every American bosom, the *sensations* of *gratitude*, *respect*, and *love*.

Who can recollect the battle of Bunker's hill, and not earnestly desire that the *ammunition* of his country-



men had been as *lasting*, and their *bayonets* as *pointed*, as their minds were *noble*, and their hearts brave ?

Future generations shall speak with enthusiasm of that bloody contest, and *admire, revere, and love* the *philanthropic Warren*, and his little *band of patriots*, who *fought, and expired* on the hill *devoted to independence*.

When, the cause of liberty was deserted by some of our most respectable citizens, our army destitute of convenience, and support, and reduced to an handful; then, the battle of Trenton illumined the hopes of our desponding nation, and the banners of freedom were with splendor unfolded to admiring empires. In the darkness of the festive night, when the enemy were immersed in mirth and wine, the little army of heroes crossed the Delaware amid floating ice, exposed to piercing cold, and expiring by fatigue, yet the conquered enemy soon yielded their standard, and submitted with disgrace to the ensign of freedom, and independence.

When, the army of Burgoyne ravaged the country from Canada to the Hudson, then, every brow was overclouded by sorrow, and every heart beat with anxiety. Soon the gloom of despondency was dissipated, and the *flame of freedom and independence* darted like an *electric shock* through Newengland, while her hardy, and rival sons flocked around our national standard. The fire of our musketry, like the *flames of Ætna*, *blasted* the ranks of the enemy, until surrounded by devastation, slaughter, and blood, they submitted to the superiour force of our renowned patriots, and glorious heroes. Then the *jubilee* of victory *echoed* through our *vast republic*, and the stars of our union shone with *vivid lustre*.

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While we recognise those noble actions, which, like a constellation, irradiate our independence, WASHINGTON awakens the memory of a grateful nation, the *father*, the *friend*, and the SAVIOUR of his country. In him were happily united the warrior, the statesman, and the ardent patriot.

Victory attended his train, and his eloquent eye looked dismay, and death to his foes, while to his friends it spoke the language of *courage, success, and glory*. As a statesman, he was distinguished for his extensive knowledge, correct judgment, and independent perseverance. The love of his country warmed his heart with a sacred fire, for her he lived, for her he conquered, and his last prayer breathed a *patriotic flame*. WASHINGTON stands a *vast pillar* in the fabric of our independence, on which the *highest applause*, the most ardent gratitude, and the *purest affection* of every real patriot shall be *sincerely inscribed*!

With peace, and independence we possess a vast extent of territory, diversified by difference of climate, variegated by hill, and dale, and intersected by meandering rivulets, and majestic rivers. The sun warms and lumines, and cherishes our vast union when he arises from the waves of the Atlantic, or laves his declining beams in the Western ocean.

Here, commerce holds an extensive sway, and nature has selected us sons of the ocean. The Atlantic washes the eastern, and the Pacific the western shores of our country. Commerce is one grand source of our happiness, and independence. By her the agriculturist is encouraged, and his emulation excited to industry, knowing that the surplus of his produce will find a ready mar-

ket. When commerce flourishes, we have a constant flow of wealth by which our governmental expences, and necessary appropriations are easily satisfied; when she decays industry *languishes*, the mechanical arts *expire*, and penury *stalks* through our *beloved country*.

By the diffusion of wealth there will be an extension of literature. When the man of science is chilled by penury, and anxious for a mere existence, you cannot expect, that the *spirit* of his *imagination* will soar on the wings of *fame*, or the fire of his genius, like a resplendent comet, *blaze* through the arc of our *western horizon*.

While the hardy, and enterprising son of Neptune is excluded from his *rightful* empire, *restricted* to some petty district, or *wretched* in foreign prisons; the sails of our fleets will not *whiten* the ocean, nor the *flag* of our *union wave* in foreign climes.

Let the shackles of commerce be rejected, and every gale will waft, to our shores, the means of supporting peace, happiness, and independence.

The mechanical arts, although daily approaching towards perfection, are capable of much higher improvement. Foreign artists should be encouraged to settle among us, if we would rival Europe in the delicacy, beauty, and perfection of our mechanism. Our government endeavours to patronise genius, yet there may be many unnoticed, and unrewarded Perkins, retired in poverty, and pining by neglect. Persons of wealth would encourage mechanics of merit, if they desire the prosperity and happiness of our country. If we should be separated from Europe by the restrictions of commerce, we should experience the want of improved artists.

Suffer not the sound of the hammer to cease in the workshop by the penury of the hand, that wields it, the noise of the spindle to be silent, or the sword of independence to rust, deprived of the skilful hands of the polisher.

Agriculture in this country emulates her sister in the old world in the variety, and abundance of her productions. Our industrious, enlightened, independent, and virtuous yeomanry stand the pride, the support, and the fortress of our independence.

We have a constitution, and laws, admirably calculated for our support, protection, and happiness. Our form of government has an executive possessing all the force of monarchy, a senate all the wisdom, and judgment of aristocracy, and a representation of the people all the rights, and privileges of democracy.

Our judiciary are selected from the most enlightened of our citizens, who observe faithfully the wise, just, and impartial administration of our laws.

The jury, for the trial of our property, our reputation, and lives, are chosen from the great body of the people; and they are induced by every motive personal, civil, and religious, to render a just, true, and sincere verdict.

How important our revolution, which has produced so invaluable, and extensive blessings! Every citizen, from the babe that lisps to the man venerable by years, shall utter its applause, and with his most vigorous exertions support the liberty of his country.

Religion, literature, and union, form the three grand pillars of our independence, and our political fabric, supported, upon their firm and durable bases, will stand un-

moved to the latest posterity, and appear *majestic* amid the *ruins of empires*, and the *groans*, and *destruction* of *expiring nations*.

Without religion executive power would terminate in despotic sway, our laws exist only rules of injustice, and our country exhibit a melancholy scene of riot, and confusion. Devoid of virtue, a magistrate would promote civil dissension, and be a curse instead of a blessing to society. Of what force would the administration of an oath be, if the person adjured should not believe in the existence, and perfections of Deity? The man, whose conscience is not duly impressed by the rules of equity, and justice, cannot be a good citizen, a good magistrate, or a real patriot.

With the highest respect, and purest love for the holy religion of the bible, we ought to venerate the ministers of the *sanctuary*, and the ministers of God for good to the nation. They are stationed on the watch tower of our Jerusalem to defend, explain, and enforce by precept, and example, the laws, and morals of that sacred religion, which we profess, and upon which our hopes, of present, and future happiness, depends. They form as virtuous, enlightened, and respectable class of citizens, as our country produces. Their task is arduous to attend, in a social, friendly and religious manner, their parochial duties, to soothe the anguish of the dying penitent, to comfort the weak, yet humble christian; to inform their own minds, and improve their hearts for the duties of their exalted station, by study, meditation, and sanctity. During our revolutionary struggle, and ardent exertion for liberty, our venerable clergy from their sacred desks comforted, warmed, and encouraged the

hearts of real patriots. To their exertion, their ardor, and their religious fortitude, no small share ought to be attributed among the variety of causes, which produced our freedom, and independence.

The cultivation of literature, and the diffusion of knowledge is the evidence of a free, and independent nation. Where, the galling chains of slavery oppress, and the iron sceptre of despotism bears sway ignorance is the prevailing characteristic.

It is of the utmost importance for a representative of the people to be acquainted with the laws, politics, and constitution of his country, if he would support the rights, and privileges of his constituents. Nature has not constituted so great difference among the human family, as many suppose; and often the finest genius is buried in obscurity, while by cultivation it might have shone in the senate, or have guided a nation to glory, liberty, and virtue.

Although knowledge and science are rapidly extending their mild, and cheering influence through our happy land, yet some improvement might be introduced into our public schools. They are generally encumbered by such multitudes, that fatigue and vexation are the lot of instructors, without that advantage to students, which might be obtained by some other method. Sufficient attention is not given to the qualifications, and morals of instructors. If an ignoramus, a mere novice in his profession be appointed to guide, and instruct your children, you cannot suppose, that they will be more informed, than their master. If an instructor be guilty of glaring vices, or destitute of sound principles; what a *dreadful*, and *pernicious example* for the youthful mind!

If his pupils should not imbibe his vices, and swallow poisonous draughts from the corrupt fountain ; yet they will highly disrespect his conduct, and his instructions will lose their influence.

Female education has been neglected from the erroneous idea, that learning is unnecessary for the fair sex, or that they are incapable of mental improvement. Since their mode of education has been improved, we behold them the ornament of science, the bloom of literature, and the refinement of man. It is of the utmost importance that the female mind should be cultivated, if you would possess *agreeable partners, rational friends, and faithful instructresses, for your tender offspring.*

While religion meliorates the heart, and education refines the mind there must be union of sentiment, to constitute the durability of our happiness, and independence. Every citizen should exist a real patriot. The interest of a party should not be the predominant principle. Would we sincerely desire the interest, and glory of our country, we should select those men from either party to fill our most important offices, who would be friends of science, patriotism, and virtue. It is necessary, that there should be a proper degree of vigilance among the members of an independent state, yet too great jealousy of our rulers will only excite distrust, and weaken their exertions.

The interest of one state does not militate against another, their object is the same the support of the grand confederacy. Separated we *fall an easy prey to the conqueror, united we oppose a world in arms, and the blaze of our swords shall kindle around the banner of our INDEPENDENCE a sacred flame, which shall devour the enemies of our country!*

It is impolitic, and injures our interest as a neutral nation to discover partiality for either of the belligerent powers. Alliances, with European nations, so far as



commerce is concerned, are of high importance ; yet, as we value our peace, interest, and happiness, we shall not unite with nations whose trade is havoc, ruin, and blood. Willingly would England restore to her crown the gem, she has lost by the independence of her once oppressed colonies ; and France, with similar pleasure, afford us the first rank among her obedient provinces, and subjugated republics.

Should the European powers *imprison* our seamen, *burn* our ships, *bombard* our cities, and *murder* our citizens, let us not tamely submit our *freedom*, and *rights* ; but with the *thunderbolts* of an effective *navy*, we will shiver the *trident of the ocean*, and with the *points of our bayonets* oppose the terror of empires, and sacrifice our lives on the altar of PATRIOTISM, LIBERTY, and INDEPENDENCE !

Although, with pleasure, we contemplate the grand interest of the union, with delight, *fellow citizens*, I congratulate you on the present friendly, and happy association. We are united by kindred, united by interest ; let us be united by affection, united by patriotism. Suffer not the harsh invective of party spirit to *embitter* our *endearing connexion*, destroy the *ties of friendship*, and *extinguish the flame of love*. May this social union be perennial, and perpetuated to the latest posterity. May this be *recollected*, as a day of *temperance*, *patriotism*, and *virtue* ; and when the *union of societies, states, and empires shall be forever dissolved*, may we form a union of glory and happiness in the PEACEFUL AND MAJESTIC EMPIRE OF ETERNAL BLISS !

