

AN

# ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE REPUBLICAN CELEBRATION OF

## INDEPENDENCE,

*On the 4th of July, 1818, at the Meeting House in the  
westerly parish in Dracutt.*

—:~:~:~:—  
By **BENJAMIN F. VARNUM, Esquire.**  
—:~:~:~:—

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*Dracutt July 4, 1818*

SIR

THE Committee of arrangements, for the Republican celebration of *Independence*, in Dracutt, this day, have instructed us to communicate to you their thanks for the address which you delivered on the occasion, and to request a copy thereof, for the Press.

We are, Sir, with great respect, your obedient servants,

LIFE HAMBLET, } *Committee.*  
SIMON COBURN, }

Maj. Benjamin F. Varnum.

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*Dracutt, July 5, 1818.*

GENTLEMEN,

IF the part which I had the honor to perform, in commemoration of our *Independence*, gave satisfaction to my candid hearers, I am sufficiently repaid.

As the Committee of Arrangements, for the *Republican Celebration* of the forty second anniversary of American Independence, in Dracutt, request, through you, a copy of my Address delivered on that occasion, for the press, I think it my duty to submit it.

The very short time which I had for preparation, together with my ill health will, I hope, apologize for the work.

I have the honor to be, with sentiments of respect,

Your obedient servant,

BENJAMIN F. VARNUM.

Capt. Life Hamblet,

Gen. Simon Coburn.



## ADDRESS.

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*Fellow Citizens,*

LISTEN to the sound of glad tidings ; which is, this day, re-echoed to all the sons and daughters of the United States of America, from Heaven !

This day is the forty second anniversary of that great and glorious epoch, when it pleased the beneficent Father of the Universe to speak into existence a nation, a great nation, a nation of Freemen.

While the Statesmen and heroes of the Revolution are held in grateful remembrance, by their highly favored descendants, may we never forget the adoration which is justly due to the Supreme Governor of all human events.

It was the *Lord* our Creator and Redeemer, who influenced the Statesmen of the Revolution, boldly to come forward and declare the then thirteen United States, "*Free, Sovereign and Independent.*"

It was the same omnipotent Power, that prompted the Heroes of our beloved country to take the high places of the field of action, in the defence of our rights, at the risque of all that was dear to them, against the most sanguinary enemy that ever assailed a civilized people.

It was infinite wisdom that directed our Statesmen to form the Constitution under which we live ; that distributes equality and justice to each individual, and which has transmitted the same to the present rising generation, unimpaired. These considerations ought to be duly weighed, that we may not impute our privileges and happiness, as a people, to the merits of the statesmen and heroes of the Revolution, alone ; but consider them as actors to accomplish the great designs of Providence.

After the many able explanations and details, that

have been given of the history of the Revolution, it would be vain for me to attempt to enlarge upon them ;—I shall, therefore, for the information of the rising generation, and to refresh the memory of those of riper years, only give some of the prominent events in the history of our country.

Columbus discovered the western Continent, on the eleventh of October, 1492.

The first settlement attempted to be made in the United States, was on the Island of Roanoke, in the State of Virginia, on the twenty-fifth day of August, 1585, which was unsuccessful. The first permanent settlement was made at James Town, in Virginia, in 1607.

A settlement was attempted, in this State, in 1607, at a place called Sagadahock, in the District of Maine, by a company of Englishmen; but they afterwards returned to England. The first settlement made in this State, was at Plymouth, on the third of December, 1620.

Thus adventurers, by a spirit of Religious Freedom, were influenced to leave their native country, to commit their consciences to their God, their persons to the stormy waves of the western ocean, their fortunes to the adventures of an inhospitable coast, and planted their standard in the bosom of a pathless wilderness. After passing through various scenes of "untried being," they became sufficiently numerous and powerful to attract the step-dame attention of their unnatural mother; and she, in return for having, "by her persecution or neglect," reared them to the stature of manhood, claimed the exclusive right to appropriate to the support of her extravagance, such portions of their earnings and acquisitions, as she in her tender kindness might see fit to exact of them. It was a spirit of opposition to these pretensions that dictated to the sages of that day, that memorable declaration of our rights, as a people, which closed with its claims to Independence and self government; and which nerved the arms of our

patriots and heroes with perseverance and vigor, in the defence of it.

Through the blessing of a beneficent and over-ruling Providence, the appeal which they made to the God of armies, was answered with the blessing of peace, and the exertions of their valor crowned with the laurels of victory.

To us, my dear friends, has it been left to enjoy the privileges acquired by their honorable toils. Yes, there are people now in this house, who have personally assisted in acquiring the glorious privileges of INDEPENDENCE, and have transmitted them to their posterity:—For this service, my young friends and associates, we ought to respect them in the highest degree, and endeavor to make their declining years, a series of satisfaction, by our eulogizing and properly prizing the free institutions, which they assisted in transmitting to us.

In 1763 a treaty of peace between Great Britain and France was signed, which closed a war in which the people, then residents in the Territory which now comprises the United States, took a conspicuous and active part.

Immediately after the definitive treaty aforesaid was ratified, the intentions of the British ministry to quarter troops in America, and support them at the expense of the colonies, were announced in the English papers.

Duties on sugar, molasses and papers, both legal and mercantile, were laid to defray the expense of the troops, which gave the people of the colonies great uneasiness.

On the tenth of January, 1765 the much famed Stamp Act passed the British Parliament, which was to take effect on the first of November following.—This act was viewed, by the colonists, as a violation of the British Constitution and as destructive of the first principles of Liberty. Combinations against its execution were formed, which were so much regarded by the British parliament, that, on the eighteenth of March, 1766, it was repealed.

In 1767, parliament passed an act, also, for establishing Custom Houses and laying duties on teas, &c. in their Colonies now the United States.

On the twenty eighth of September, 1768, two regiments of British troops arrived at Boston, for the purpose of enforcing the acts afore-stated.

In 1770, March fifth, the horrid massacre by the British troops took place, on the innocent Inhabitants of the town of Boston, which made a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the colonists.

In 1773, such was the opposition to the tea act by the people of the Colonies, that they boarded some ships in the harbor of Boston, which were laden with that article, and plunged the contents into the sea.

On the ever memorable nineteenth of April, 1775, the troops quartered in Boston, proceeded to Concord, for the purpose of destroying some military stores, that were deposited there; which caused the well known battle of Lexington, and which gave the signal for the war of the Revolution:—In this action eighty four Americans, and two hundred and forty five Britains were killed and wounded.

On the 17th of June following, was the Battle of Bunker's or Breed's hill, in which the Americans lost four hundred and fifty three and the British one thousand and fifty four men.

Boston was evacuated, by the British troops on the seventeenth of March, 1776; but they proceeded to the middle and southern states, where they carried on the sanguinary war for a series of years.

On the seventeenth of October, 1777, the royal army, under General Burgoyne surrendered itself as prisoners of war, to the American arms, which was justly viewed as an event, that must essentially affect the contest between Great Britain and America. This event excited the greatest joy among the people, in the cabinet and in the field.

On the nineteenth of October, 1781, Lord Cornwallis surrendered his army to the combined forces of the United States and France; the land forces under the command of General Washington, and the naval

forces under the command of Count de Grasse, which may be considered as a presage to the closing scene of the revolutionary war. The capture of Lord Cornwallis, essentially affected the measures of the British Parliament and rendered the American war unpopular in Great Britain.

And, on the thirtieth of November, 1782, the provisional Articles of Peace were signed, in which the INDEPENDENCE of the United States was acknowledged, which gave us a standing among the nations of the Earth.

Thus an opening was made to the People of the United States, for the establishment of a Republican system of Government, which was afterwards established on a solid basis, that nothing short of supreme power can annihilate; after loosing in the Revolutionary war, nearly eighty thousand of our dear countrymen.

Though, as men, we disdain to consult the indignation of accumulated wrongs; though, as Christians we forgive the brutal and savage conduct of our Revolutionary foes, we must remember such things were, and pass the wholesome lesson to posterity.

Can we forget the time, when Columbia's cities were wrapt in flames? her widows and children pierced with the bayonet? her wives and mothers exposed to the hardened ravisher? can we forget that the tomahawk and scalping knife were not beneath the research of British Policy? or can we forget that thousands of our fellow countrymen were confined in goals, guard houses and prison ships, where immediate death would have lessened the pangs of a series of barbarity, which they there experienced? can we forget these things? No;—we will forgive them. but future Generations shall learn, that a civilized and enlightened nation have not been ashamed to record the infamy of these disgraceful actions.

The veil of the Temple of liberty has been rent in twain, and the very altars devoted to sanguinary accusations, in the European world:—On every side republican institutions have been attacked and have

ultimately failed of success, in all countries; until the spark of civil and religious liberty was, by beneficent providence, kindled in the breasts of this people; which spark has been blown into a flame and expanded itself, over the vast territories of the United States, and seated its genial influence in the breasts of more than eight millions of Freemen.

The love of civil and ecclesiastical liberty is so riveted in the mind of every real American, that nothing short of divine power can ever eradicate or deprive them of the enjoyment of it.

God, who has given us these great blessings, never will deprive us of the enjoyment of them, while we conduct with suitable gratitude for the bestowment.

This people seem to have been singled out by divine Providence; as the most peculiar and favored people, in point of privileges, that have ever inhabited the terrestrial globe.

If we recur to the statesmen of the revolution, we may there see the finger of God, pointing to them the measures proper to be pursued, in order to effect our Independence.

Let us look to the heroes of the revolution and view their bold and intrepid transactions, in the field; who can hesitate to pronounce them, as having been chosen vessels of the supreme being, to defend his righteous cause and the cause of Man?—And we may also see the hand of Divine Providence, in every page that has been written in the establishment of the several state governments and the government of the United States.

The State governments are happily calculated to promote the welfare and happiness of the People, in the different sections of the union in which they are formed.

The general government is founded on the pillars reared by the several states, and is calculated to provide for, and defend the rights of all the States.

The whole combined, form a general system of free and energetic government, which is now vener-

ated and admired, by all civilized nations of the world.

Under this benign system of government the United States have experienced incalculable prosperity. Agriculture is every where improving—Manufactures every where increasing—Science expanding & Commerce extending, over the habitable globe. Nor are we left without a witness, a strong witness, that God is determined to continue his goodness to us. He has, in almost every section of the United States copiously poured forth the effusion of his spirit, upon the inhabitants and caused thousands to “choose that good part, which shall not be taken from them.”

Piety, Religion and Morality are the foundation of all free and rational governments; and while the Lord continues to bless our country, with such outpourings of his spirit, as have recently been experienced, we must conclude that he is determined to preserve and defend the glorious vine he has planted, and nothing but our determination to forsake his ordinances and commands will ever induce him to suffer it to wither.

It therefore behoves us, of every religious sect and denomination to join in giving praise to, and adoring the great giver of all our privileges.

Should the time ever arrive, when the solemn appeal this day once witnessed, shall be viewed with indifference or disdain; when the sublime declaration, that America was ‘*free, sovereign and independent,*’ shall be depreciated, as a paroxysm of political madness;—well may the virtuous weep over the ruins of their country. But we hope and believe that every future attempt, to baffle the existence of our happy system of government, will be effectually repelled by the energetic feelings and exertions of the American Republic, until time shall be no more.

We have recently experienced trials and difficulties, which the history of the country and the times will announce to you. At a time we were pronounced, by all the nations of Europe, to be a pusillanim-

ous, money getting people, who had rather relinquish our dearest rights than the idea of the acquisition of property.

At length it became necessary in the opinion of the constituted authority of our country, to appeal to arms for justice :—In the course of the war we met with many disasters, but, through the beneficence of an overruling Providence, our exertions were ultimately crowned with success.

The causes that influenced the principles that guided, and the spirit that executed the exploits of the late war, present glorious examples of virtue, patriotism and perseverance; and they wrought a change in our national character, at once unexpected and astonishing to the nations of the world.

No nation now stands higher in the estimation of other nations, than the United States.

Historians will faithfully record the brilliant exploits of our land and naval forces, during the late war, and the honor to be ascribed to individuals, I will leave for Historians to portray.

We are now at peace with all nations, except some deluded tribes of Indians, whom I hope and believe, God will induce to submit to the honorable terms, which have always been held out to them by the government of our country.

I have thus endeavored to give you some of the leading and prominent events, in the history of our country, since the discovery of it to the present time.

And now permit me in grateful remembrance, to name our great statesman and hero, **GEORGE WASHINGTON**, the leader of our **Revolutionary Armies**, one of the framers of our **federal Constitution**, and afterwards **President of the United States** under the united suffrages of the people eight years; who is now no more; **John Adams**, one of the commissioners for forming the provisional articles of peace, in 1782, and afterwards **president of the United States**; **Thomas Jefferson**, **James Madison** and **James Mon-**

roe, who have since served their country as chief magistrates of the nation: and when we recognize the most prominent leaders of the Revolution, we cannot forbear to name a Hancock and a Samuel Adams, who were the proscribed patriots of that time.

When I look around and behold a number of the Heroes of the Revolution in this house; yet alive and enjoying the fruits of their own virtuous labour, I am struck with awe and bow with reverence! and feel assured, that the present rising generation will always reverence these Fathers of their country's Glory.

That all men are born free and equal, agreeably to the declaration of Independence, (which has just been read) is, beyond all rational controversy, a self evident truth:—It will not it is presumed, on this day be denied by any in this enlightened assembly.

It is in the United States alone that equality is perpetuated. Under arbitrary systems of government, equality, the natural birth right of man, is in no case to be found:—Offices are principally hereditary in particular families and true merit consequently excluded from its proper standing: The property of the monarchy or aristocracy is concentrated in the hands of a few, while the great mass of the people have to look up to them, for sustenance.

In this nation, where our rulers are of our own selection and where Economy and Industry give wealth to the citizens we are all equal.

To the Militia of our country is committed the inestimable right before detailed; and in order to equalize the burthen of military duty as much as possible, all able bodied citizens are called upon, to perform a part of it, (at certain periods) except certain civil and ecclesiastical officers.

Let it be impressed on our minds how much our future welfare depends on a well organized militia.

It was the wise counsel of our beloved Washington's "that nothing short of a force, capable of re-

PELLING every aggression, could save us from war; or what will be still more calamitous national degradation:" Let us then who compose the Militia feel a united zeal and energy, at all times to defend the rights of the people, at the risque of Life and Property.

To the Female part of society, we look for assistance, in the defence of our dearest rights and privileges:—Their affectionate advice will at all times, serve to enliven and invigorate, and their cheerful countenance to animate and encourage the soldier, who is placed for the defence of his country.

*Fathers, Friends and fellow Citizens,*

It behoves us all to join in the promotion of Literature; to cultivate Industry and Economy and above all, to difuse, as much as lies in our power, among all classes of people, the incalculable importance of Religion, Morality and Piety; as the only sure means, by which our civil and religious rights can be perpetuated.

May the time soon come, when the spirit of envy and discord shall be eradicated from society, and every breast be filled with that noble and honorable sentiment, which has for its paramount object, the happiness of his fellow men and the glory of his GOD.

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