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April 2, 1897

Samuel Bryant

of West Dedham was born
March 4th 1783 ~~in~~ in New Salem in
Peterham - ~~partly the former~~. His nephews
published at one time A. B. Gazette.
He died in West Dedham (where he was
buried) July 9th 1852.

He married Felicia Kingsbury Staples whose
father was Rev. Samuel Kingsbury of Edgartown.
She was born there September 11th 1769.
Her first husband was Elias Staples of Brookfield
son of Elias Staples of Menotomy a descendant of
Abraham Staples one of the first settlers of that town.
She died in West Dedham July 12. 1835 -
aged 65 yrs 10 mos. 1 day. She was the grandmother
of Samuel Elias Staples, a true mother to him
whose own mother died when he was eleven months
old.

ORATION

DELIVERED AT

MOUNT AARON, IN WEST DEDHAM,

JULY 4, 1839.

BY INVITATION OF CITIZENS OF WEST DEDHAM, WALPOLE AND DOVE

BY SAMUEL BRYANT, ESQ.

Published by request of the Committee.

SECOND EDITION.

DEDHAM:

—H. MANN'S PRESS—

1839.

SONG.—BY THOMAS PAINE.
FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY.

Tune—*“Rule Britannia.”*

Hail! great Republic of the world,
The rising empire of the west;
Where fam'd Columbus' mighty mind inspired,
Gave tortured Europe scenes of rest!

CHORUS.

Be thou for ever great, for ever great and free,
The land of love and liberty.

Beneath thy spreading mantle vine,
Beside thy flowery groves and springs,
And on thy lofty mountains' brow,
May all thy sons and fair ones sing,
Be thou for ever great, &c.

From thee our rights are derived,
Which we should never yield;
And which we should defend,
With our lives and blood and sweat;
Be thou for ever great, &c.

But if the world should see
Its landed lords and nobles
Their myrtle garlands give,
The constabularies give,
Be thou for ever great, &c.

Let laureats sing their birth-day odes,
Or how that death, like thunders, hurl'd;
'Tis ours the charter, the charter ours alone
To sing the birth-day of a world.
Be thou for ever great, &c.

May ages, as they rise, proclaim
The glories of thy natal day;
And restless Europe, from thy example learn
To live, to rule, and to obey.
Be thou for ever great, &c.

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P/ain

O R A T I O N .

FELLOW CITIZENS,

We this day assemble to celebrate the joyous birth of our nation. Three score years and three have rolled away, since our immediate forefathers proclaimed to the world that they were a free and independent people, and pledged their lives and their sacred honors, and appealed to heaven for the rectitude of their intentions, to support it. But since that day rivers of blood have flowed, and thousands have died, yea millions, in the cause of liberty, and it might be politically said that a nation was born in a day.

She was not laid in the swaddling bands of time, nor rocked in the cradle of national solicitude. But she burst the bands of colonial servitude, and took her stand among the nations of the earth. And kings and princes greeted her coming. All the knowing ones, and wiseacres, and philosophers, hailed the new born nation as the joy of the earth, the glory of the skies.

But, my fellow citizens, but few were partakers of that dreadful morning of the 19th of April, 1775. In Lexington the first blood was shed for the cause of our common country and the good of mankind, and done by a savage king and a savage mercenary soldiery. Thus began the horrid work of death and distraction. And then was heard the horrid sound of battle on the fair plains of Lexington, which echoed from hill to mountain throughout the length and breadth of the land. And then was heard the cry of the orphan and the widow's wail; one for a father and the other for a husband slain in battle by the savage

soldiery; and thus was the peaceful village turned into a field of blood. But vengeance was on the wing. All the country was in arms, and soon had the enemy to scamper, and to leave their dead unburied. Yes, British regulars had to flee before a handful of the sons of liberty; and that too with great loss, and to the astonishment of the British governor Gage, who cried out in the anguish of his spirit—What! Britton's run!! Yes! British regulars flee like Milton's Satans!!

But this was but the beginning of the glorious warfare which lasted seven years. And next comes the 17th of June, 1775, the ever memorable battle of Bunker Hill. The British troops were led on by Lord Howe, with all the pomp and parade of monarchy. A numerous host of British regulars, all thirsting for the blood of freemen. Our fathers were led by the bold Putnam and the gallant Warren. And now front to front the marching armies shine. Halt—here they meet and form the lengthening line. The chiefs conspicuous seen and heard afar, give the loud sign to loose the rushing war. Their direful trumpets and deep mouthed cannon sound; the sounding charge remorseless strews the ground.

Even Jove proclaims a field of horror nigh,
And rolls low thunder through the troubled sky.

Yes, a field of horror nigh. Behold the savage work now began, which was acted on the plains of Lexington. Bunker's fair hill in Charlestown, now the arena of the horrid fight. And now behold a fair village wrapped in flames. See the smoke curling, air ascend. Hear the confused noise of confused warriors; some scour the narrow streets and some the wide. Fire and sword now lays a peaceful village in ashes, and the labors of many a dreadful day gone like the baseless vision of a dream. And now a sacrifice was required for the cause of liberty, that not all the flocks that follow the tinkling bell, nor all the cattle of a thousand hills can furnish. Nothing but the best blood of its inhabitants, and the sons of freemen, must be sacrificed on the altars of liberty.

I have been particular in citing these two actions, because they were the beginning of the great and glorious revolution that not only laid the foundation for the liberties of our common country, but the good of mankind throughout the world.

When the recruited fleets and hostile armies were gathering round our coasts, numerous and destructive as the locusts, pitching their camps at a hazard, but deliberately plotting chastisement and vengeance for the rising states—while the mandates of a king held in servitude and terror and anxiety, the children of the emigrants of the old world. Then liberty, indignant, repelled, in scorn, this gasconade of chivalry.

“When the eye of the immortal Washington, lightened along the embattled ranks” of the American legions, determined to conquer or to die. Liberty was the coat of mail; the shield of protection; the encouragement to action, and their only physical strength.

When Jefferson, Franklin, Hancock, Paine, and the other illustrious chieftains of the states, in Congress assembled, deliberated, penned, and confirmed the Declaration of our Independence, pledging by sanctions most solemn and inviolable, “their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.” Then was liberty “by them as one brought up with them; daily their delight and rejoicing always,” in approbation of all their honorable transactions.

When at last the Temple of Freedom was reared and completed, the altar raised in solemn devotion. Peace within its walls. In every niche the heroes’ fame, in all its alcoves the suspended arms and eagles of our country. Multitudes thronging within to shout the triumphs of her victory, in grand celebration. Nations surrounding and admiring the resplendant and glorious scene. Behold, enthroned in the midst of the happy worshippers, is the bright goddess, sweet liberty. Nor battle-axe, or spear, or shield, or helmet now—these lie secure within the archives of the altar, the key of which is worn upon her bosom. In easy, elegant attire, loosely flowing, in the negligence and magnificence of *stripes and stars*. She appears,—smiles—speaks—exults with all the children of her maternal love, while all triumphantly rejoice, praising the ever good and gracious Power, that gives their valued, their inestimable blessings.

There, under the caption of liberty, on the one hand, are inscribed the articles of Constitution, the national compact and the Union of the States; on the other—the Rights of Man, the laws of the Republic and our social blessings. Books, port-folios, state-papers, records and memorials fill the area-perspective.

Here are recorded, as claiming precedence, the names of Boston, Charlestown, Lexington, Concord, New York, White Plains, Bennington, Saratoga, Long-Island, Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth, Philadelphia, Brandywine, Camden, Charleston, Savannah, Yorktown, &c. with *manly* naval actions. There (as a recent inscription) Plattsburg, Sackett's Harbor, Niagara and Fort George, York, Queenstown, Chippewa, Bridgwater, Erie and Champlain, New-London, Stonington, Norfolk, and Baltimore, and New Orleans, with a long catalogue of naval victories, displaying the honored names of Hull, Bainbridge, Porter, Jones, Decatur, Rodgers, Burrows, Lawrence, Perry, M'Donough, Stewart,—but I pause, for what a host of worthies might be singled and recited, from Montgomery the hero of '75, at the walls of Quebec to the hero of New Orleans, during the exact period of forty years of our recorded history. Well may you judge the grand Temple of Freedom, thus richly and superbly decorated with innumerable inscriptions, monuments of fame, and laurel wreaths of glory, merits, as it commands, the admiration of the world.

Conspicuous in our national annals, in the great work of legislation, and in the conservation of our liberties, are the venerable names of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, successively the presidents over a great, free and happy people, honored with their free suffrages, and in consequence more honorable than kings; for diadems and thrones and hereditary peerage, bear no comparison to the merit, and worth, and virtue, which elevate to this distinction and supremacy. Junius Brutus would not envy a Tarquin, or a Cæsar! Aristides would not covet the glory of an Alexander. The virtuous save and bless—Tyrants oppress and destroy their country.

In this brief allegory, curiosity may trace the scenes of revolution, and the great outline of British and American history.

Here would I rest; but that an aged veteran gave a strong interest and pathos to the subject, by marking more distinctly each progressive event. With bleached locks, he was sitting at the foot of a decaying oak, emblematic of the man, bowed down with the weight of years. He was resting on his staff with one hand, and in the other, holding a *Pension Certificate*. His children were about him. A smile seated on his fearless brow, indicated much happiness and gratefulness, to be remembered and

to be rewarded. "I have from my youth, said he (like Caius Marius) been familiar with toils and dangers. I was faithful to your interests, my countrymen, when I served you for no reward, but that of honor." He was a veteran soldier of the Revolution, and fought in seven distinct battles. With exquisite feeling, he spoke of Bunker's Hill, of Warren, of General Putnam, and the distinguished revolutionary officers, Gates, Greene, Lincoln, Knox, Starks, and the brave Kosciuszko,—of him particularly who was "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." For a moment, the freshness of youth seemed to pass over his frame. His eye sparkled with pleasure, and an unusual flush glowed on his cheek. It was the effect of sensibility.

He began his narration.

Three wars (said he) within my remembrance have afflicted this young country. The first in 1756, for the English against the French. It terminated in 1759, with the victory of General Wolfe over General Montcalm, on the plains of Abraham. The cession of all the Canadas to the British was in 1760, and the definitive treaty of Paris in 1763. Thence various prosperity and adversity attended the Colonies till the year 1775. From that time during eight years, the revolutionary war continued. Our Independence was declared July 4, 1776. In an arduous struggle, it was maintained, and finally achieved, and the war ended glorious to our country, in the year 1783. On the third day of September of that eventful year, was the ratification of the definitive treaty of peace and amity between Great Britain, France, Spain, and the United States of America.

Commerce then revived, spreading its white wings, on every ocean, to every port. Agriculture prospered. Manufactures increased. The Mechanic Arts progressed. Our Country was free, and our citizens were blest and happy. The Constitution, a noble structure, raised pillar after pillar during 1787, was adopted in 1788.

April 6, 1789, George Washington was chosen first President of these United States. An epocha, with circumstances most memorable. It being the organization of a great republic, and the commencement of a nation's history. John Adams was elected president in 1797—Thomas Jefferson 1801—James Madison in 1809—(exactly 200 years from the first settlement of the

United States)—and James Munroe in 1817, within three years of completing two centuries, from the landing of our forefathers at Plymouth.

Our Republic has generally prospered during these successive administrations, (casualties excepted,) and within a half century has become an extensive Empire.

Various aggravated offences, against the peace and dignity of our common Country, by Great Britain; the infringement of our national rights; the orders of Council; and especially the illegal and abusive impressment of our hardy seamen, were the causes of the last war of two and a half years' duration, from the eighteenth of June, 1812.

The circumstances of this war are familiarly known; of our glorious triumphs, by sea and by land; and of the bravery of our troops and seamen. All—all deservingly honoured by their Country.

[Here he paused—looked at his *Certificate*, and dropped a tear of gratitude. He seemed in deep reflection—the work of half a century was passing in review before him. He said something of St. Clair—of soldier's notes—of disbanding the army—of fears and hopes—and finally of national credit and honor. When speaking of the times, the name of Monroe was uttered with benediction. Then brightening from his reverie, he resumed his story, and went on.]

The names of our Naval and Military heroes merit everlasting honor. Pike, Barney, Jackson, Harrison, Brown, Scott, Gaines, M'Coomb, Croghan, Jessup, Ripley, Miller and numerous others shall be gratefully remembered. Enwreathed with glory, shall be their columns, in the temple of liberty, for services so essential and efficient, rendered their Country, in the hour of her adversity. Peace has now returned to cheer and bless the world. Under kind Heaven may we long enjoy its blessings. Under the auspices of the Prince of Peace, may we ever be a united, free, grateful and happy people. Palsied be the hand—or single, or in CONVENTION, that shall attempt to sever the gordian knot of our Union!

The history of our republic is brightened with great achievements. Our rights are now secured almost beyond the reach of violation—our demands granted with ample satisfaction—our flag honored with proud distinction. Our hopes and prospects are

this day most flattering. Be our joys expressed by brilliant spectacles—sound of cannon, beat of drum, and grand parade, throughout our happy land.

A venerable personage has said, “This day ought to be commemorated as the day of our deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to Almighty God. It ought to be solemnized with pomp, shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward *forever*.” Let us thus rejoice reciprocally together, as the honored citizens of a greatly honored Country. May our exertions and loyalty, our profession and principles, our patriotism and our duty, be ever in mutual and just correspondence—then

“As he tills his rich glebe,
The brave vet’ran shall tell,
While his bosom, with gratitude, glows,
How your Warren expired,
How Montgomery fell,
And how Washington conquer’d your foes.”

He finished by observing—

In the celebration of our Independence, think not to mark the veriest faults of the times; it is uncandid, unseasonable, and inexcusable. Attempt no wit, at the expense of wisdom. Forget not the occasion. Be patriotic. Speak of no man, no measures, no party, no topic, but *The Day*, and the great national concerns and important benefits, which it commemorates.

Revert to the year 1776, and a long time before. Pass on, in the series of years, to 1812, and some time after—and note the different stages of British insolence and aggression; for as one justly said, they never have, they never will forgive us, the imputed SIN of *Independence*.

Call to mind the persecutions, dangers, sufferings, hardships and calamities of those “times that tried men’s souls.” Think of the privations and the perils, the merciless savages and the accursed prison ships; the barbarous insults and the immolated victims, worthy of a better fate; and the treachery, caprice and cruelty of the enemy—and if you can, magnanimously forgive them.

Remember those who planted the standard of freedom, in the midst of all those overwhelming dangers and difficulties. Guar-

dian angels hovered around it and with the tears of commiseration, converted its blood spots, into stars of glory! The hand of the Almighty is visible in our deliverance. Let us then rightly estimate, and duly appreciate the religious privileges, the civil immunities and the political blessings, we now enjoy; and do honor to the Giver, by cherishing piety, morality, virtue and education, as the four cardinal points of all our moral responsibilities; and more,—when we extend our views to Europe and the wide world around, and observe how toleration, and peace, and improvement, and happiness, are spreading and increasing all their estimable blessings. This day should be to us, and to our children, a day of praise and joy and thanksgiving, to the Great Disposer of all human events; the Great Ruler of the destinies of the world, who has redeemed, and will save his people. Here ended the recital, and his pathetic admonitions, with the blessings of the good old man, on the present generation, and his Country.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

Having generously enlightened the minds of your children, with useful knowledge. Teach them wisdom, piety and moral principle. Fit them for the employments and honors worthy of your distinguished Country. Instruct them in national sentiment and national sympathies. Bind their heart's affections to the public good by patriotism, and enlarge their minds by a display of the general and varied polity of the world. Learn them to venerate those principles of virtue and education, on which rest the liberties and safety and hopes and happiness of our Republic. Cherish an ambition in their young hearts to emulate the glorious deeds of their fathers. Often repeat to them the history of your nation, the nature of your excellent government, constitution, policy, religion and laws. Win them by fanciful description, and inform them by plain narration. Describe to them the circumstances of the times long past, even from your boyish days, and awaken an interest in the virtues and glory of the age preceding, and so retrospectively to the earliest settlements of your country, and even to the memorable 1492, the era of Columbus, and the discovery of this new world. On such a day as this invigorate their hopes, and cheer their emulation. Inspire them with gratitude to Heaven, for all their manifold benefits,

and passing the great and interesting events of the Revolution before them, leave them the injunction to teach their children, and they the next generation, the duties, which they, in consequence, owe to themselves, their country and their God.

FATHERS,

With deference, I would speak to you; it is my duty; we live this day to honor you, in the commemoration of your great achievements and virtues. In the early circumstances of the Revolution, you were without means, destitute of arms, camp-equipage, necessary rations and clothing, or even powder and ball sufficient to annoy the wolves of your forests. Without discipline, or funds or friends, and almost without hope. Your enemy, formidable in numbers, skilful in arms, rich in resources, haughty, fastidious, and imperious, leading the destinies of all Europe. Claiming your obedience and submission, while every act of yours—of disaffection and resistance was considered as high treason against majesty. You were threatened, insulted, outraged, tortured, with insufferable insolence, to humble your proud spirits, and by the magic of royal names and terms to hold you spell-bound and enchained, in perpetual, colonial humiliation. Through all these discouragements you rose, like Charity itself, “suffering long, and bearing all things;” yet bidding defiance to a world in arms, you then laid the grand foundations of Empire. The loans, forces, aids and encouragements supplied from abroad are gratefully remembered. See now in a righteous cause, and trusting in Heaven, what can be done, by a determined few, against the mighty. The mailed giant despised the ruddy youth of David; but only with a sling and a pebble-stone, in the name of the Lord of Hosts, he brought to the earth this great champion of the Philistines.

What a contrast is this day presented in your free republican government, in your vast resources and great population, your cleared and cultivated country, magnificent cities and immense shipping. Your arts, sciences, institutions, increasing revenues of wealth and innumerable advantages, spreading from the Columbia to the Chesapeake—from the Lakes to the Gulf, from St. Croix to the Rio Bravo, and from the Yellow Stone to Pensacola.

I cannot yet forbear. The theme is too interesting. I call on the YOUTH, the hope and pride of their country, the children of veteran and illustrious fathers. I call on them this day to rejoice with us *manfully*, in a fair estimation of their numerous privileges and blessings—to contrast slavery with liberty, ignorance with education, humiliation with honor, superstition with devotion, tyranny with their constitutional rights, the abasement of three quarters of the world with their pre-eminence, and the condition of the human race, with the glory of their Republic. Let them be engaged in these reflections, these liberal and fruitful studies, till we shall meet again.

Let us, then, Fellow Citizens, consecrate the remainder of this solemn day, to the grateful recollections it inspires. Let us answer the prayers, sent forth on this occasion, by the sons of liberty, in the different quarters of the earth, by a renewal of the oath which bound together our devoted bands, in the darkest period of the revolution.

Time, which is rapidly rolling forward the great events which mark the character of our age, may yet witness the entire redemption of the human family. Our anniversary may yet become the Sabbath of a political millennium. The period may yet arrive, hastened on by our example, when man shall not fall down to worship his own image, in the shape of despots and kings; when Peace, with her horn of plenty, shall extend over the earth; when the clarion shall no more awaken the steel-clad warrior; when the sound of the drum and trumpet shall cease to create the mournful associations of war and death; but shall be exchanged for the softer notes of mirth and joy. Our fathers are gone! they have fulfilled the obligations they assumed. The unimpaired legacy is ours. On us devolves the duty of transmitting it to after ages. Let us not be recreant to our trust. Let us add to the precious inheritance, the achievements of virtue and of science, that each successive generation may hail, with redoubled acclamation, the annual return of this auspicious day, down to the latest period of time.