

AN
ORATION,
PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE
REPUBLICAN CITIZENS,
OF THE
TOWN OF HINGHAM,
IN COMMEMORATION OF
American Independence.

JULY 4th, 1807.



BY BENJAMIN GLEASON, A. M.



The United States of America, firm in their principles of
PEACE, have endeavoured by justice, by a regular dis-
charge of all their national and social duties, and by eve-
ry friendly office their situation has admitted, to main-
tain with ALL, their accustomed relations of friendship,
hospitality, and commercial intercourse. *Jefferson.*

BOSTON;
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1807.

Hingham, July 4, 1807.

SIR,

In compliance with the vote of the Committee of Arrangements, I return you their thanks, for your excellent and patriotic Oration, delivered this day, before the Republican Citizens of Hingham, and its vicinity, and request a copy thereof for the press.

I am yours, &c.

HAWKES FEARING,

Chairman of the Committee.

MR. BENJAMIN GLEASON,



Charlestown, July 6, 1807.

SIR,

“Bunker’s awful mound”—The Monument of Warren.—The interests of The Day.—The spirit of our patriotic Citizens—and my own Republican feelings, all induce me to accept your polite civilities, and comply with your generous wishes.

Yours, &c. respectfully,

B. GLEASON.

HAWKES FEARING, ESQ.

Chairman of Com. Arrangements.

ORATION.



INDEPENDENT CITIZENS.—VETERAN SOLDIERS.

THIS auspicious Day is all your own. “The times which tried men’s souls” are now past, and live only in recollection. To the retrospection of those great events, is consecrated this sacred Day. A Day of triumph, and immortal honour.

Welcome—thrice welcome all ye peals of thunder, from the cannon’s mouth, and all ye clattering chimes of public hilarity. Let the star’d colours wave in triumphant display, and all the rich pageantry of Art and Nature mingle in the glorious exhibition.

Ye venerable fathers of a powerful Community, your hearts shall feel in all, and in all be happy; for your youth was devoted to the glory of your country, and your old age is rewarded with all the honours your patriotism deserves.—You lived in elder times, and you live this day, to hear the songs of Peace, and to participate in all our festive joys.

You saw the lowering aspect of our political hemisphere—you saw the tempest gathering its tremendous forces—you saw the pitiless storm

descend—you felt its horrors—and you suffered all ; but, your defence was God and your Right, and your salvation is everlasting ! “It shall be serene” was the motto stamped upon the currency of that Day, and you have lived to realize all your expectations. The bow of *Peace* was painted on the darkest clouds ; you saw it, and you rejoiced in the assurance of Freedom. You saw the *elements of life* subjected, and soon one perpetual azure brightened all the heavens. Your exertions were all successful—and all sealed with the testimonials of your noblest blood. You were great in War as the chieftains of the bravest age. Your hearts sunk not in the midst of every danger. Your desperation was tempered with wisdom and magnanimity. Your bosoms throbbed with *regret*—but with *transport* in every battle. And even *Death* itself became lovely as *Hebe*, while it proffered the bitter cup ; for you knew no fear, but the veneration of yourselves, and your God. You were more than mortal !

Where is the man, who lives this Day, on this side the great waters of the Ocean, who feels not an interest in these great and wonderful events ? Nay ! where is the child, whose little heart warms not, in the contemplation of such a glowing picture ? Sacred and socially affected be all our feelings, on this glorious occasion. For what is mortality and all which it inherits, without the blessing we, this ever memorable day, so richly enjoy ? what is life, and all its hopes and blisses, without *thee*, precious and inestimable *Liberty* ?

LIBERTY flames forever on the holy altars of our Country ; and millions this day, breathe its vital warmth, and exult in its inextinguishable light and glory.—Preserve it, Heaven, long as the constellated spheres of Nature glow upon thy bosom, and measure out the periods of eternal duration. Preserve our most sacred peace and liberty, Almighty Parent—long as thy children wear “the image and superscription of their God.”

Nor you, ye sacred pledges of your Parents’ love—ye rising generations, blooming in every virtue ; nor do you forget the honourable efforts of your fathers, who obtained for you this exalted inheritance. They, with the arm of God made bare for their preservation, obtained your *Independence*, and all its concomitant felicities ;—your *Peace*, and all its social rights, and virtues, and increasing happiness. They *pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their most sacred honour*, in the acquisition. They greatly triumphed in every enterprize, and reaped a harvest of consummate satisfaction. *The hatchet is now buried ;* but the remembrance of former times shall never pass into the wastage of departed years. It fills our hearts with big sensations, and gladdens all the present scenes. It is enough, aged fathers, to have it said, you lived in those momentous times ; our hearts instantly feel for you all respect, and we exclaim—*Brave men, your memories shall be immortal !*

The battles of *Thymbria*, *Platæa*, and *Thermopylæ*—what are they? or what the more recent battles of *Alexandria*, *Lodi*, and *Austerlitz*, to the Revolution which gave our Nation—peace, liberty, and independence? They all fall short of this exalted glory.

Our Countrymen arose to a man to revenge a long train of daring and outrageous insults, “injuries and usurpations”—they fought, they bled, and nobly dared to die to save their infant country. They conquered, and returned from the ensanguined fields of action, covered with wounds, and scars, and everlasting glory.

Their leader was the immortal WASHINGTON.

The apotheosis of *Alexander* could never make him a character, preeminent as *Washington*.—*Cæsar*, with all his slaughtered thousands, and the liberties of his country overturned and destroyed, was not great like him.—Nor is *Bonaparte*, the popular hero of the present age, a rival, or counterpart of the excellencies of this great and good man. He lived, and died an uncorrupted and faithful patriot—and the tears of millions have consecrated his memory. Sacred to endless posterity be the memory of the immortal WASHINGTON.

Since the conflicting interests of the elder, and the infant world have subsided—since the purchase of *Freedom* was made—since our *Independence* was obtained—since *War* ceased—and *America* has been free; the blessed angel of *Peace* hath been our perpetual visitant, even down to this glorious anniversary: and in “the full tide of successful ex-

periment," successive periods of administration have passed, constitutionally modified, improved, and continued to the present day. The present is a *Golden Age*,—and equal rights, and equal liberties, with peace, prosperity, and happiness, are the awards of all.

The celebrated author of the "Rights of Man" has somewhere given us a brief summary of equal rights—in words to the following effect.—

Equal Rights, and equal Freedom, all should possess;
 The richest no more, and the poorest no less:
 Yet all rights have their bounds; but the right to do evil
 Is no Right of Man, but the right of the devil.

May our land long be the seat of all the virtues, and honours, and felicities, connected with the well regulated *Rights of Man*:—may your children, and children's children, throughout all generations, "rise up and call you blessed:"—and to yourselves, sacred be the enjoyments of this hallowed Day, You must be happy---for all Nature

———"smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
 "And Heaven beholds its image in your breast."

You must be happy—for tho' you "sowed in tears," behold "you reap in great joy!"

You must be happy—for all the riches and advantages, you possess, are the effect of your *Independence*.

If it be a true saying, that none know how to enjoy their possessions, so well as those, who have dearly earned them,—none can more richly enjoy the blessings of their *Independence* than they, who have earned them, at the dear price of their

blood ; and hence happy are we that so many of our worthy fathers live this day to honour, with their presence, a *Celebration*, which is indeed “ the feast of Reason, and the flow of Soul.”

To an American—to a *Republican*—the story of elder times will ever be interesting and grateful. With “ the mind’s eye” to follow our veteran fathers, thro’ all the manifold scenes, and ample fields they traversed ; and day and night, thro’ every sufferance ;—what a subject for contemplation !

Time was once—when your rich soil felt not the effect of cultivation—its virgin bosom then scarce felt the genial influences of Heaven. Your cities, towns, and villages were then but hunting grounds, or places of resort for Indian warriors, or else unknown to every savage tribe, throughout the vast domain—a blank existence ! Now rise from these same spots, innumerable spires, and domes, and noble edifices, towering to the clouds. Your population is great, and increasing immensely. Civilization holds you in the silken bands of good fellowship. Your Government is truly Republican. The predominant excellency—nay, the soul of your Republic is *Virtue*—and the blessing of the ALMIGHTY is with you.

Time was once—when Persecution passed with gigantic strides over *Albion’s* sea-walled shores, and a little band of *Burghers*—independent in feeling and character, who worshipped God in pious sincerity, and venerated Liberty for its nature’s sake, were driven from their native homes

and paternal habitations, to seek for peace and quietude in a land of strangers ; their pilgrimage ended not there, they crossed the mighty waters, and sought an assylum in the wilds of *North America*. The benignant eye of Deity smiled complacent on all their wishes. Here they found a home, and here planted themselves, with chartered privileges, on the most generous and happy soil, under the canopy of Heaven. They grew and flourished, and have now become a mighty and magnanimous People.

Time was once——when the avocations, anxieties and fatigues of life, then necessary for subsistence and protection, barricaded the human mind, and prevented its progress in those improvements, which are so congenial to its nature, and in which its capacities now so pre-eminently excel. The *Arts and Sciences*, those lovely twin sisters in the human family, then slept where wild flowers shed their fragrant bloom. No *Franklins* then awoke them into life and transport. The infant colonies were then kept in *leading-strings* ; nor permitted to think, or speak, or act, but at the sovereign nod of its parent *Britain*. This presumptive, sovereign parent felt not the yearnings, nor affections of a mother ; it looked upon its offspring as a *foundling*, nursed by some menial servant, and educated in the school of insufferable discipline ; that its desertion from home was a proof of daring disaffection, and that cruel impositions and severities were the only efficient correctives : but the offspring of *Great Britain* was no such found-

ling child ; nor yet a prodigal son, wasting its substance in riotous living.—It never did, nor never would feed upon *husks*.—It never became *senseless* ; nor yet ever had occasion to arise and go to its parent for forgiveness. It was a legitimate child, and discovered early in life, a filial affection, respect, and gratitude,—and never the humiliating servility of a menial ; but the amputating knife of rigid intolerance made the *Excision*, and the fairest branch of a lofty tree was hewn to the ground. The arms of domestic and honourable regard took it to its bosom, and it was secured from danger ;—it was borne to a milder and happier soil, and planted and cherished by a religious love and veneration—it took a deep root, and grew—expanding all its verdant foliage, in the purest liquids and clearest sunshine of Heaven ; The admiration of man, and the glory of the world !

Time was once—when *War* sat terrific upon its embattled charger. It threw the *gauntlet* and bid defiance to all the respectful affections of a deserving offspring. The mighty war horse, inured to carnage and tutored to incessant battle, in the language of *Job*, pawed in the valley, and rejoiced in his strength ;—his neck clothed with thunder, and richly caparisoned ;—the shrill sound of the trumpets heats the courser's blood ;—“ he smelleth the battle afar off ;—he swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage ;”—he champs, and neighs, and cries *ha ! ha !*—both horse and rider stand ready and impatient for action. The

suppliant offspring solicits protection, promises hard submission, “ conjures by the ties of common kindred and consanguinity,” and gives up all its interests and affections to the parlance of Peace ; but the ostensible rights of *Sacred Majesty* must prevail—and, *to arms ! to arms !* was the universal cry.

Time was once—when the embattled ranks lined all our shores ;—and implicit and perpetual *Subjugation*, or supreme and perpetual *Independence* were the only alternatives.

Witness—the blood-stained traces of the mercenary troops, in every section of our country : the horrors of those times are not to be pictured by words. *Witness*—the conflagration of your fair towns and happy villages : distresses and calamities, which our fathers beheld, which we their children never yet have seen. *Witness*—the savage depredations upon your peace, your property, and what is dearer than life itself, upon your virtues : your sons were immolated before your eyes—your loving wives and lovely daughters were sacrificed to every baser passion.—Heavens ! must I remember the tears I have shed over your history, ye husbands, ye fathers of such virtuous wives, and children. *Witness*—the sacrilegious prostitution of your temples, erected to GOD, and dedicated to every Christian social virtue. How did a brutal soldiery ravage your well cultivated fields, your sacred habitations, and your more sacred temples of sublime and Godly worship ! Contrast the quiet pleasures of this Day, with those dreadful abuses

and dreadful sufferings. It is well for "the good people of these United States," to think often of those times—to consider the present—and to be wise ; lest they neglectfully swerve from the path of their political duty, and heedlessly prostitute, or pervert the true spirit, and venerable principles of Republicanism. The Declaration of our Independence has well and truly asserted that "The history of the present king of *Great Britain* is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having indirect object, the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States." Again. *Witness*—the frauds, massacres, and prison ships, which baffled, surprised, and nullified your energetic powers. *Witness*—the treason, rapine, and devastation, the fragments of which are even now visible, scattered among those mouldering ruins, which every where meet your view, as *memorials* of the proud, perverted policy of the British Cabinet. *Witness*—the oppressions, interruptions, embarrassments, and invalidation of our laws, our civil and judicial regulations, and all our legislative and national concerns. *Witness*—"the standing armies introduced," and the "insurrections excited amongst us." *Witness* also—"the merciless Indian savages" brought upon our defenceless frontiers, with the *tomakawk* and *scalping-knife*—destroying "all ages, sexes, and conditions." *Witness*—ye yourselves, who survived this everlasting disgrace, which has, and will for ages yet to come, tarnish the valour, heroism, and glory of *Great Britain*.

Ye noble sires of a numerous progeny, the reward of your exertions is imperishable as the stars, if we, your children, but continue to imitate, and venerate your exalted virtues.—The roaring of the *British Lion* can never affright us :—the whole armada of English *Sea-Leopards*, with all their vindictive barbarities, can but excite a spirit, which will be their inevitable destruction :—nor can “all the vassals of *Europe* in arms” destroy OUR INDEPENDENCE.

You saw the vengeful malignity of that power, which treated your sober remonstrances, and earnest petitions with insolence ; which crouded upon you, with treacherous cunning, and cruel impositions in one hand ; with frauds, imperious threats, and sovereign contempt in the other. You saw the mighty power, which strided and led the war horse on to battle. You heard the clangor of arms. You beheld your “cities wrapt in fire,” and your own garments were “rolled in blood.” You saw the cannon’s terrific blaze—you heard its labouring thunders. You witnessed the industry of your own hands trodden to the earth—the hard earnings of many wearisome days and years, wasted in unfeeling sport. You saw the pointed steel goring the bleeding bosoms of your beloved wives and children. You felt your cherished hopes and fairest prospects cut off on every side. You were driven to a revengeful desperation. You *saw*—you *heard*—you *felt*—like men. Your last hope trembled in the entrenchment of Liberty. It flittered upon the last point of destiny. The all seeing eye of Heaven pat-

ronized the expiring flame, and bade it live. Cherubic hosts guarded the holy fire,—and Nature kindled the inextinguishable blaze of Freedom. You appeared in battle array. You rose indignant. You could bear no more. You “appealed to the supreme judge of the Universe for the rectitude of your intentions.” You declared yourselves *Free* and *Independent*. Your ground was principle. Your law the *Rights of Man*. Your cause was the noblest. Your efforts were justified, and crowned with complete success. You “fought and bled in *Freedom’s* cause,” and you were greatly victorious.

Death or Liberty was the insignia and countersign of those times, and you verified the truth of feeling, by all your wonderful transactions.

These were the days of old. The object and end of all your invincible energies were fully answered, and the consummation of all was *Peace* and *Independence*.

Upon the ruins of war, rose the fabric of our superior Constitution and Government—and this our admirable *Republic*, which far surpasses all the republics of the elder world. They were frail as the nature of Man, and have long since crumbled to atoms:—ours is founded upon that wisdom, which is the fear of the ALMIGHTY—and upon those immutable principles, which are unchangeable as Truth, and is co-eternal with the duration of VIRTUE.

Equal rights, and equal privileges are now, in solemn compact, guaranteed and secured to us, by every sacred tie, almost beyond the reach of violation.

An equal representation in our state and general governments, our frequent elections, and our corporate capacities now affords us every important political advantage : the *present* is indeed fraught with innumerable blessings, and the *future* with the richest anticipated felicities.

Blest and happy are we now as a nation. Our political enjoyments and advantages, are incalculably great. Our domestic peace, prosperity, and happiness are now almost as rich as life can make them.

Distinctions may exist in society, and there may be differences in our political sentiments ; but unless some desperate villain should dare to leap the barriers of our social Peace, pass the boundaries of our excellent civil regulations, and with malice *prepense*, or in *cold blood*—to hurl “ fire-brands, arrows, and *death*,” among his fellow citizens—a *dog-ribbed wolf* ! preying upon the quietude and confidence of society—excepting a solitary instance, like this, of *horrible frenzy* !—what have we to fear from the mere differences of opinion, on the same subject ?

Call him as we please *Republican*, or *Federalist*, a good man ever acts from *Principle*. And it is wisely observed by our honourable chief magistrate that “ good men can never make bad citizens.” It is a truth, that every man is as fairly entitled to his opinion as is his neighbour ; and hence, every man’s opinions may be respected in

proportion to his education, and understanding. There are times, it is said, when “men equally good, and equally great hold sentiments unequivocally hostile”—and however in trifling speculations we may divide, diversify, and arrange our notions of Government, of the existing state of things, and of the powers that be, yet we must have the good of our common country at heart, because it is inseparably incorporated with our own individual welfare and prosperity : hence we hold ourselves *Free and Indivisible*. And while we pledge ourselves, in “peace, commerce and honest friendship with all.”

Firmly united let us ever be,
Rallying round our glorious Liberty.

After exhausting the cup of Reconciliation to the very dregs—after conflicting thro’ blood and slaughter, with infuriated mercenary troops, during eight successive years—after, (like *Charity* itself,) “bearing all things, enduring all things and hoping all things”—the palm of *Victory* was at last awarded to our brave and immortal countrymen. They obtained an honourable *Independence*: while the “*hundred millions of money, and hundred thousand lives,*” which *England* expended to support their inglorious presumption, are in all probability now *funded* in extensive annuities, and multiplied conscriptions of an irredeemable *National Debt!*

England has been as a man of war from its youth; but its fate is now hinged upon all the casualties and chances of life. The stripping of *France* holds the pebbles and the sling, and all await the issue of combat. Their *Hearts of Oak* may one day perish, as the hearts of *Fox* and *Nelson*, and like them resuscitate no more, till the general renovation of all things.—*Peace be with them.*

Since the establishment of our Independence has received the acknowledgment, and sanction of surrounding Nations; our Republic has taken a shape and form, which bears the test of all investigation. The powers and dependencies are all so nicely adjusted, and so accurately ballanced, embodying all the active and intelligent principles of Virtue—it is a soul and body of itself entire, in a state of innocence, incorruptible, full of health and vigor, and like *Achilles* invulnerable to the very heel—and even this is not exposed to the arrows of a *Paris*!

The compound of all Governments constitute our own; and make it a *Republic*. Our republican Government stands like a pyramid, based upon the Sovereignty of the People, or in other words, upon *Democracy*. The executive power is its *vertex*, and may be considered the principle of *Monarchy*, in certain limitations, founded and dependent only upon the sovereign will of *The People*. In the superior grades, of our Legislature, are

scattered the principles of *Aristocracy*, represented by the medium parts of the pyramid, more closely incorporated with the *basement*, or otherwise, the representations of the People. These representations of the People involve all the purer principles of DEMOCRACY, all which support and render the *pyramid* perfect and entire, wanting nothing. The *Pyramids of Egypt*, in all their glory were not comparable to such a structure ! Our civil and judicial regulations operate in all unspent, and are ever the effective correctives of all political evils. Our minor governments have shape, pressure, and proportions all the same ; they all exist in sister union, and co-operate in the general weal—one beautiful, perfect, and happy system :—while the General Government may be called the *primum mobile* of all, embracing all, and protecting all our rights and liberties ; interests and privileges ; all our civil, social, and religious advantages ; and holding forever the Compact and Charter of our National Independence. Happy the country with such a Government ; happy indeed is the country thus governed by mild and equal laws ; in every department of state and territory, having good and wholesome regulations ; ameliorating the condition ; encouraging the laudable ambition of its citizens ; and rendering honour to those only, to whom honour is due.—

Happy and respectable people, while your *Virtue* remains ; while you are made wise by every vol-

ume of *Experience* ; and while you neglect not the invaluable and ever honourable advantages of *Education*,—freedom, prosperity, and happiness, will not only be yours, but gloriously descend to the thousandth, and hundred thousandth generation, yet unborn.

Your territory is now extensive, and your connections are highly respectable. Your defensive powers are armies of free and independent citizens,—the well disciplined *Militia* of your country, who hold themselves as the *minute-men* of all Times, to the faithful and full discharge of all their respective responsible duties. Your *stars*, and *stripes*, and *eagles* have access to every port. Your commerce already covers every ocean. Your country is a garden of delights. Your lakes and rivers, canals and turnpikes intersect each other in endless direction, and in this great internal communication, are realized the immense profits, which enrich our country. “Your fields stand thick with corn, your vallies laugh and sing.” The honoured *farmer* receives the most bountiful recompense for all his toil. The worthy *mechanic* eats, and drinks, and enjoys the good of all his labour. The intelligent *merchant* can produce his *ledgers* and *invoices*, and by them, you ascertain the superior valuation of your productions and property.

Your civil privileges are replete with every excellence, and importance, and temples are rising every where around you, filled with the incense of gratitude ; in Christian Fellowship, with filial veneration, dedicated to the Parent of Universal Nature.

You are indeed—this Day, rich and happy, and highly favoured: and all this is the effect of the good administration of our good republican government, which Government is the immediate offspring of our Liberty and Independence.

Fellow Citizens, may we ever delight, on this important anniversary day, to reflect and be grateful ; to consider and be wise ; to understand and be happy. Ever persevering in the pathway of our Duty, and ever enjoying the rich triumph of exalted republican principles.

The changes of officers, which have been made, since what was called the *Reign of Terror*, and which are now making in the different departments of our government, are evidently evincive of our republican feelings, and bear large testimony to the excellency of our republican forms and operations. *All is well !* and the hearts of all good men and true rejoice.

JEFFERSON—the pride of our nation ; the first citizen of our country ; a man honoured with the friendship of all nations, loved and respected by his own ; good as *Aristides* in principle, and great as *Washington* in character ;—this illustrious and

dignified personage, penned the declaration of American Independence, which makes our Country *free*: he gave his signature to the same; and has lived to this day, to give spirit, and energy, and the fullest effect, to all the honourable transactions of his useful life.—

Long live the President of our United States!

Citizens of Massachusetts, your suffrages have recently placed, in the chair of state, the *Hon. JAMES SULLIVAN, Esq.*—a man who having passed all the fiery ordeals of *Federalism* is acknowledged, by even the rebellious spirit of opposition itself, to be worthy of your highest confidence and esteem. The result of this election will no doubt, be a general harmony in our own, and the Government of the United States. Our reflections and considerations have made us wise. The same *causes* will unquestionably produce the same *effects*, in our sister states—*Connecticut* and *Delaware*. Reformation and a return to first principles, must be the eventual issue—and the *States ALL UNITED* in principles, feelings, and interests, will then become a *Power*—formidable, respectable, and majestic, among the sister nations and republics of the world; be most worthily the boast and pride of Americans; the delight and admiration of mankind.

Thus have we taken a brief and cursory view of the times long past; considered, in due commemoration, *The Day*—and transferred our anti-

cipations forward, far into futurity. Time would fail us to enlarge, or be more particular. Venerate yourselves—venerate your aged veterans—venerate the memory of your patriots—venerate the God of your fathers—and you must ever be great and distinguished—blest and happy.

The time now is—when all the advantages we ennumerate are richly and gratefully apparent, and the time will doubtless soon come, when *Louisiana*, purchased by a fair price, without the expense of human blood,—*in defiance of every treacherous attempt*,—shall become a respectable portion of our great community,—and our United States as a *permanent* REPUBLIC, know no longitudinal bounds, but the two great *Oceans*—in latitude extending thro' all the temperate climates, from the *Gulf of Mexico*, to the great chain of *Northern Lakes* : a free and generous soil ; covered with a free, civilized, and virtuous PEOPLE ; one Government ; and “ all *Republicans !* ”—delightful perspective view !—charming scenes of Friendship and Happiness !

May GOD ALMIGHTY prosper all our laudable endeavours and consummate the increasing felicities of this our distinguished Country.