

*Presented to Wm Duane  
by his Friend & Admirer  
the Author 142*

*Mr. DAN McAllister*  
**ORATION,**

DELIVERED AT

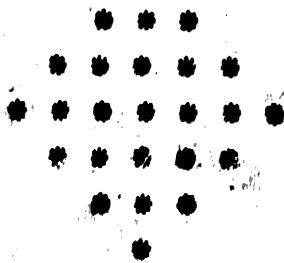
**Gloucester Courthouse,**

ON

**JULY THE FOURTH,**

**\*1794\***

*John Page*



**RICHMOND:  
PRINTED BY JOHN DIXON.**

**MDCGCIII.**



## TO THE READER.



**T**HE Reader of the following Address to a number of respectable Citizens of Gloucester County, in the year 1794, is requested to view it with indulgence, as a well intended effort to establish there, a practice recommended by the Author, of requiring, from one or more of the company, when met to celebrate the 4th of July, an Oration or Address, adapted to the occasion:—The example was set by him, at the desire of a friend, and the company requested that the Address should be printed; but as the Author had not leisure to copy it, and till now, never was in a situation to examine proof sheets from the hasty and rough original, it never has been published; and probably never would have been, had not a promise been made to his friends, that whenever in his power, he would furnish them with printed copies of it.

THE expressions respecting the French, were at that day, in the opinion of a great part of the world, applicable to that "*wonderful nation.*"



# O R A T I O N .



**T**HIS DAY, ought to be held in grateful remembrance throughout the world!—It should be forever peculiarly dear to every citizen of the United States; and must be remembered with the highest exultation, and patriotic emotions of joy, by such of them, as have had any share in the glorious exertions, which gave birth to their Liberties, and secured that Independence, to which, on this DAY in the year 1776. our Delegates in Congress assembled, declared that the united Colonies were intitled.

THIS DAY I trust will be had in everlasting remembrance by the nations of the earth; and will be handed down from generation to generation, as a day worthy to be remembered by every enlightened nation under Heaven; whether emancipated from Slavery, or held in Bondage by the power of Kings; for they will remember that the Declaration of Congress which was announced to the world as on this Day, broke the chains of British despotism, by which the thirteen Colonies of America were held bound; and gave birth to their civil and religious Liberty; and to the propagation of the divine doctrine of the Rights of Man—a doctrine which has gained proselytes wherever taught, and has been received with enthusiasm by the French nation, a nation of Philosophers and Heroes! a People who seem prepared by

Heaven to deliver Mankind from the iron hand of oppression! Their gallant achievements against the well trained veteran troops, of the confederated Tyrants of Europe, leagued together to re-establish despotism in France, will be told to the free Citizens of the remotest posterity with rapturous joy; and be listened to with admiration and applause! It will then be told, that France caught the heavenly flame of Liberty from these United States: and that the ambition of their heroes, was, to rival ours.—Nations which may possibly long groan under the yoke of despotism, will hear of the wonders produced by Liberty and Independence, which were claimed by the United States on this day; they will watch the return of this memorable Day—they will count the years of our Independence—they will turn their attention to the æra of the French Republic: they will, should no more be permitted, ask, and be told in whispers, the traditionary tale of the virtuous struggles of America and France; and will hear instances of heroism, which will warm their hearts, and rouse them to emulate such glorious deeds—they will sigh over the long story of oppressions like their own: they will at length know enough of the history of oppressed nations, and of their overthrow of Tyrants, to follow their virtuous example, and resolving to be free, will never rest till they secure to themselves and their posterity, the blessings of a free government; and once possessed of that government, they will venerate and bless the republics of America and France, and celebrate this day, as well as the anniversary of their own Independence. With how much joy ought we then to behold the return of this auspicious day? We, who remember the oppression under which we labored; against which we petitioned, and remonstrated in vain; against which at length we took up arms, imploring Heaven for that assistance,

which we humbly thought, relying on the justice of our cause, we might hope to receive—we, who can never forget, that Heaven heard our prayers, inspired us with courage to resist, and sometimes even miraculously furnished us with the means of resistance; gave us Washington for our leader, and France in due season, as an ally—we, who remember that we beheld with composure the evils intended for us by our enemies, and saw them without an insulting exultation, fall on their own heads—we, who saw the beginning of the war without despondence, and the end without insolence; we who know from what oppression of government we have escaped, and what Liberty we now enjoy; we, who have seen the world enlightened by our doctrines, and animated by our example, so as to leave no doubt, that Tyranny will be extirpated from the earth, and Liberty and Equality be established in its place; whilst peace and free commerce shall unite the nations of the world in bonds of mutual interest and fraternal affection.

Rejoicing at our happy escape from Slavery, and full of gratitude that we enjoy the blessings of Freedom, exulting in the idea of the inestimable benefits derived to mankind from our example, how much reason have we to be glad with exceeding great joy, when we celebrate this glorious day, which gave birth to that escape; to this liberty, and to the enchanting prospect, of the future Freedom and Happiness of mankind.

But as some may hear me, who perhaps have not been sufficiently informed respecting the oppression under which we labored; the struggles, the arduous struggles we made, and the dangers we encountered, to get rid of that oppression—and perhaps, may not see, so clearly, as an American Citizen ought; in

what consists the excellency of a free government; I will, before I say any thing more respecting the propriety of rejoicing on this Day, take the liberty of describing, in as few words as my present undertaking will permit; the oppression under which we groaned; and the means by which we extricated ourselves from that oppression: and then will shew, that all the dangers to which we were exposed, and all the losses we sustained, were justly despised, as not to be put into competition with the glorious prospect of securing to ourselves, and to posterity, the blessings of Liberty.

As to the oppression under which we laboured, it was by many, not improperly, compared to that under which the Israelites groaned—their Egyptian task-masters were not more unreasonable than our British masters—for they, only required in addition to their severe tasks, that the Israelites, should not be furnished with straw with which they made their bricks, but that they should themselves collect it, and yet should be called on for the same quantity of bricks, as when the straw had been delivered to them; but our masters, not only, as I may say, required of us an additional number of bricks, but at the same time cut off from us the means of procuring straw to make them. For they laid heavy additional duties on certain articles imported by us, payable in sterling money alone; and at the same time carefully prevented our importing specie, from Spain and other countries, and even from Britain.

Besides these duties, we were obliged to pay a tax on our lands, called quit-rent, in sterling money, payable to the king; this however was received in tobacco, at a low rate, and paid as an acknowledgement that we held our lands of, or under him as pro-

prietor of the soil. Indeed he seemed to be proprietor not only of our lands and of our other property, but of our persons, and even of our consciences—as the first was absolutely claimed by him and his parliament in sundry acts; the second demanded for him, by the officers of his army and navy impressing our citizens into his fleets and armies, after he had wantonly plunged us into a war with the French or other powers of Europe: and as to the claim to our consciences, he held it as supreme head of the Church of England, here established, and exerted this his royal prerogative in this state, according to his royal will and pleasure—Sometimes most graciously permitting Dissenters as they were called, to preach the gospel, on receiving licenses from his Governor and Council; at other times giving his sanction to laws, for absolutely prohibiting any other than the orthodox Ministers of his Church, from even expounding the Church Catechism; excluding all persons from any post in his government, who would not take, and subscribe the test, and compelling against their consciences, all Dissenters to pay towards the support of the Clergy and Church of England.

In the mean time, as averse as we were to war, to shew our patriotism and loyalty, we voted by our Burgesses, as our Representatives were called, large sums to carry on his wars; and freely shed our blood to support the credit of the British arms—By the aid of these states, then called colonies, the British army took the Havanah from the Spaniards, and Canada from the French, in the war of 1756: and a British fleet, aided by the People of New-England alone, took Louisbourg from the French in the preceding war—and although the British government had acknowledged the services of the Colonies, and had

confessed that they, at least some of them, had contributed beyond their abilities, and twenty thousand pounds were actually sent to Governor Dinwiddie, to reimburse Virginia the sum she had expended in the early part of the war of 1756, beyond her proportion of its expenses; yet this very Colony with every other, was several years after the war, called on to repay the *Mother Country* the heavy expenses she had incurred in defending and supporting them (as she termed it) in that war—and the stamp act was passed with a view to raise a permanent revenue in the Colonies for this express purpose—We were by this act to be taxed, without our content, by the King, Lords and Commons of Britain; to relieve their own wants, to lighten their burthens, to defray the expenses of their wars, in which we had no interest, and in which, though successful by our assistance and exertions, I have seen instances in which we were treated with contempt, if we were disposed to boast of a share in their imaginary glory—and we were always despised as dependent Colonists; supposed fit only to drudge for the benefit of *the Mother Country*. The famous act, just mentioned, shewed what we had to expect from the British Parliament, if permitted to tax us—for, it was calculated to enforce its own execution; [as the stamped papers on which the duty was payable were necessary to marriages, and contracts of all kinds; to transfers of all property; to every kind of legal process in our courts, and even to the reading of newspapers and almanacks] and yet such sums were required for all the various species of stamped papers, that all the money in the colonies was not sufficient to pay for the proceedings in the courts of Law and Admiralty alone—So that it was soon discovered, that this act, would not only have swept away all the specie of the Colonists; but notwithstanding every shilling they had might have been



paid, in compliance with it, that it would have deprived them of the means of performing a variety of business, and some of it necessary to their comfort, and happiness. and to the good order of society, for want of the stamps requisite for the legal performance thereof: and that it would establish a precedent for the Parliament to tax the colonies at pleasure, and to declare upon what conditions they might buy or sell; make contracts; bring suits in their courts, marry or even read! To a condition thus wretched and humiliatingly slavish, was this act calculated to reduce us! It was therefore almost universally detested & opposed; and in consequence of an association of the colonies not to deal with Great Britain, it was repealed. This act appeared to us the more unreasonable and cruel; as our assemblies had been accustomed to grant freely the sums which the governors stated to them as necessary for the service of the King or of the colony, and had peaceably submitted to acts of Parliament regulating the commerce of the colonies; although this regulation was truly oppressive and in some instances seemed calculated for no other end but to oppress us!

Independent of these mortifying circumstances of insult and Oppression—The very government, even had it given no cause of discontent by an abuse of power, was enough to excite uneasiness in every breast which had any feeling—For the King appointed all officers civil and military amongst us, although it was impossible from the vast remoteness of our situation from his residence, that he should be acquainted with the characters of the persons properly qualified to fill such offices as might become vacant—Hence, the fawning, flattering and intriguing of Courtiers, gave us Governors and Councillors, and these were bound by the King's instructions, which they were



sworn to observe, and keep secret; and yet they were Judges in all cases, as well ecclesiastical as civil: and the Council formed an Upper House of our Assembly, a compleat branch of the Legislature resembling as nearly as British pride would permit, the House of Lords; having like them, a right of originating bills. (except money bills) amending or rejecting them, enjoying several privileges, and secured against insults by an act of Assembly—and though not hereditary, yet the office was generally by the royal favor handed down in rich families of approved royalty, from Father to Son in a regular succession for more than one hundred years uninterrupted, except by some accident, or by non-age, or the too youthful age of the heir apparent of the deceased Councillor. And to secure compleatly the obedience of the Council to the royal will and instruction, they were removeable at the pleasure of the King, and might also be suspended by the governor, who might also be removed by the Kings command—and he too had a negative on our laws; and exercised the royal prerogative of convening, proroguing and dissolving the Assemblies—and this power was sometimes exercised as the governor thought would best accord with the caprice of his master at one time, or his resentment and malice at another. But this was not all, the King himself exercised an arbitrary controul over the acts of our Legislatures, as if to guard against a case in which his Council and Governor might have been prevailed on to pass laws in favor of the oppressed Colony; and this control was exerted sometimes at the instigation of a company of merchants, and sometimes even of an individual—Our Council or Governor frequently refused to pass laws, unless they contained a clause suspending their operation till the King's assent could be obtained, which sometimes could not be had till the law might be use-

less or even mischievous.—What situation then could be more wretchedly dependent and slavish than ours? We were permitted to have a government it is true in some measure resembling the British, which however was infinitely better than ours.—For the people of Britain had deposed their Kings when they pleased, and had changed their succession—they had abolished monarchy, established republicanism in its stead, and had again put aside this latter species of government and resumed the former, and claim a right to change their government as it shall seem best to the *Majesty of the People*—but we were not permitted to depose a Governor or Councillor, or even to complain of the abuse of either.—The People of Britain, though unequally represented, were not more so than we should have been, had the King's pleasure been indulged; for, all our new counties were to be unrepresented.—The British had a parliamentary right to an election once in seven years; but we had no certain claim to elections, and enjoyed them by the favor of the King's Governor's alone. It is true, we flattered ourselves that we enjoyed the British right to septennial elections—and elections were for many years nearly within that period, as they were granted to us on the death of a king, or of a governor, or on the removal of a governor, in all of which cases writs issued from the governor or the president of the council for a new election of burgesses—indeed the frequent dissolutions of our assemblies which followed the death of George the 2d. occasioned so many new elections that they were not distinguished by many of our countrymen from those which proceeded from the resignation of governor Dinwiddie, and the deaths of Fauquier and Lord Botetourt, and therefore led many to suppose, that we always had enjoyed at least septennial elections; till the late Richard Bland, one of the members of

our first delegation to Congress, published a pamphlet, in which amongst other grievances he stated this, and proved its existence from the records of our Assemblies; shewing that we were once nine years without an election of burgeses.

The British if oppressed by their Parliament, could petition and remonstrate so as to be heard; and so as to awaken either the compassion or fears of their representatives, and executive: but we, with the Atlantic ocean between us, when oppressed and insulted by that Parliament, wherein we were not represented, could neither excite pity or any idea of inconvenience to that omnipotent body, and the all sufficient nation it governed. We had the mortification of seeing our petitions received with indifference, and our remonstrances treated with contempt; and of knowing that this was the natural consequence of that oppression against which we complained. For by loading the colonies with taxes, the Parliament hoped to diminish in time, that of their constituents; and by insulting and depressing Colonists which was grateful to British pride, they thought they aggrandized their country, and secured the dependence of their Colonies.

It was not enough for the insatiable ambition and pride of Britain, that her Colonies were restrained, by every possible means, from injuring her, by their legislative acts; that they were satisfied with the small share of British freedom which they retained, imperfect as that boasted freedom was—that they even gloried in promoting her interest, as if she really were the affectionate indulgent parent of them all—not enough that her merchants received the produce of the Colonists on the most advantageous terms, and sent there their merchandize in return on their own

conditions—it was not enough that we imported from them the whole of the furniture of our houses; our carriages; our wearing apparel; implements of husbandry; even scythe handles; almost all the cheese, and malt liquors which they could spare; and in short, that we took of them almost every article of their manufactures which they had for exportation: no, all this was not enough. Britain was so ungenerous as to oblige us to take from her alone, several articles which her cold climate could not produce—and was so jealous of the few manufactures which we then had, and was determined that we should be restrained from manufacturing at all, that the famous Pitt one of the most liberal of her statesmen, and one supposed to be a good friend to America, declared in Parliament that he would never consent “that the Colonies should manufacture a single hob-nail;” and indeed although our country abounded in iron, we had been, and then were prohibited, by an act of Parliament from erecting sitting mills, or machines for facilitating the manufacture of nails—and although our country abounded also in furs, and particularly in that of the Beaver, the most excellent in the composition of hats, we were restrained from making hats for exportation even to a sister colony.

Our situation was so mortifying, and our condition so degraded, that it is evident, to me at least, that our oppressors thought, notwithstanding our sincere and solemn declarations to the contrary, that we must have considered it as intolerable: and that therefore, we must have resolved to shake off their Yoke, as soon as we could—they resolved therefore to put our disposition as to Independence to the test; and to make a bold experiment of our patience, loyalty, and attachment to the Mother country—if these

exceeded our love of Liberty, then the precedent which our oppressors wished for, was to be established; and if we, seeing no hope of relief from oppression, but in open resistance; should resist, they saw, (it was thought) a good excuse to call us rebels; and an easy and effectual method of reducing us to submission, and of putting it out of our power, to rival their commerce, or to resist their acts of Parliament. The British government therefore, took care to revive the discontent amongst us, which had subsided on the repeal of the stamp act, by enacting other laws equally oppressive. Indeed the act, known by the title of the Declaratory act (by which it was declared, in direct opposition to the solemn resolutions of all the Assemblies, "that the Parliament had, and "of right ought to have, power to bind the Colonies "in all cases whatsoever,") which was passed soon after the repeal of the Stamp act, was of itself sufficient to have excited universal discontent, amongst the Colonies as in one comprehensive clause of a British act of Parliament, they were declared to be totally dependent on the will of British Parliament; in short, to be as abject slaves as words could describe. The Colonies however were so pleased with the repeal of the stamp act, and so disposed to be upon good terms with the parent country, that they were willing to look upon this insulting tyrannical act, as a mere *salvo* of Parliamentary honor for repealing the stamp act—and fondly hoped that the pride of the British nation would be satisfied with it; and that the wisdom and commercial interest of that nation would never consent to make any other use of it.—Government therefore to carry into effect its system of oppression, was determined to rouse the resentment of the Colonies, and as Mr. Burke expressed it, even "to goad them into resistance"—and this, they happily effected—for, two years after the repeal

of the stamp act, the Parliament finding that the Colonies had universally agreed to acquiesce in their regulations of commerce, but had at the same time protested against taxation by the Parliament: distinguishing in a pointed manner between external and internal taxation, saying that there was a wide difference between paying a duty in Britain on the articles they might choose to import, and being compelled to pay it in America, where they had not the money required by law for such duty—and that too required on articles forced upon the Colonies, which they were not permitted to procure from any other country, and which too must come to them loaded with the high price which British taxes obliged British manufacturers and merchants to lay on those articles.—It was hard enough said they, to be reduced to the necessity of purchasing many necessaries in Britain on which were laid the sums necessary to lighten the burthens of taxes laid there on the manufacturers and merchants; but it would be an intolerable oppression after doing this to be called on here for further duties, and those too payable in specie (nay some of them in sterling money,) which we had not, and which with care was kept from us. I say at this time and in this situation of the American mind, the Parliament passed an act laying a duty on Tea, Paper, Paint and Glass, payable in America, attended with such circumstances in the act and the bold measures taken to enforce its execution as prove incontestibly that not revenue but a precedent for raising it *ad Libitum*, was the great object of government: and that to excite discontent and resistance, in America, was deemed of more consequence to the power of the King and Parliament, than a peaceably collected revenue; unless it could be a revenue of such an amount as could satiate the greedy appetite of a corrupt and extravagant government, loaded with a debt of about

150 millions of pounds sterling; or the right of levying and collecting it at the pleasure of the Parliament were acknowledged and a disposition to acquiesce in such acts shewn by the Colonies—If this were not the case, why was it insisted on by the Parliament that we should pay three pence per pound on teas in America, when all America had declared no such duty should be paid, instead of twelve pence, which we had cheerfully paid in England? If revenue were the real object of the tea act, it ought to have added to the duties payable on tea in Britain on exportation to the colonies, and not to have taken off nine pence per pound from the twelve hitherto paid there, requiring only three paid in America—this was giving up nine pence on every pound of tea which ever could have been exported to the colonies to try the power of Parliament to collect three pence in America.

I know that it might have been said that this was but a peaceable and justifiable stratagem to ensnare the avaricious, & draw them into compliance with the act—as they would get their tea nine pence per pound cheaper—and that government meant to use properly the precedent when once established, and were incapable of abusing it—but the British minister at that time knew too well the discernment and virtue of the Colonists to suppose they could be the dupes of so shallow an artifice, and had too lately experienced their invincible aversion to an internal tax laid on them by the Parliament, to believe that they would submit to the act laying the duty on tea however glossed over, and therefore the plans for enforcing obedience were laid.

A new board of Custom House officers had been created, and established at Boston—and now ships of war and troops were sent over to support them in



the execution of their office; and they who would embrace their hands in the blood of those who should resist the laws, were to be in fact indemnified—for they were by an act of Parliament to be sent if the governor of the colony thought it convenient to another Colony, or to Britain to be tried, and every step was taken by the Governor's officers and other tools of Government which could provoke the Colonists, and urge them to violence. Indeed one might suspect that the repeal of the stamp, followed by the declaratory act—the tea act as we called it, succeeded by acts of Parliament or proceedings of the Minister and Governors which at one time threatened, at another coaxed the Colonists, were so many manoeuvres, like military stratagems, to draw us into the strong deep laid ambushade. This suspicion might be supported too by the consideration that the enormous debt of the British nation, added to its excessive ambition and pride, prompted Government to make the experiment of subjugating the Colonies as the only means in its power of extinguishing the former, and of fully gratifying the latter—Or the stamp act would have been introduced in the lenient manner suggested by Sir William Keith, the person who in 1728 pointed out to George 2d. the means of holding the Colonies in subjection, and yet of raising a revenue in them. Sir Robert Walpole who was said to be well skilled in politics and in the knowledge of the human heart, thoroughly convinced of the advantages resulting to Britain from her connection with her Colonies, refused to make the experiment proposed by Sir William, saying let some hardier minister undertake it, that he would not burn his fingers with it.

But the time would fail me should I attempt to relate the series of oppressive acts passed by the Bri-

tish Parliament; and to adduce proofs of a systematic design of enslaving the Colonies.—I will only refer for proof of this to the resolutions of Congress, the Declaration of Independence, and to Mr. Jefferson's pamphlet on this subject.—We have indeed abundant reason to rejoice, that we were so happily delivered from the tyranny of the British Government, and extricated from the ensnaring devices which were used to attach some to it, and to deter others from venturing to express even a disapprobation of its measures. Seats in Parliament where America might be represented were held out as a bait to some because we had declared that taxation and representation were inseparable—and when we resolved that we could not accept of a partial representation, and that too at the distance of 3000 miles from us; a Vice-Roy, an American Parliament, and an order of Nobility were talked of—but all these allurements were seen through, and despised. If we have reason to rejoice, at escaping the danger of British wiles, and corruption; we have much more that we escaped the full force of the furious storms of British thunder, and to exult in the recollection of the patriotic and undaunted spirit with which we defied the threats and rejected the terms of the British tyrant, and opposed in battle his veteran, well armed, and well appointed troops.

And here I may describe the means by which we got rid of British oppression.—It was not by remonstrances; not by commercial associations; not by prayers to the King; to all which the nation, Parliament, and King turned a deaf ear, or viewed them with a smile of contempt, or an indignant frown—but it was by force of arms; by a resistance becoming freemen; by a virtuous and patriotic exertion of such means of defence as by the mercy of Heaven we possessed.

But here again the time allotted to my present undertaking would fail me should I attempt to describe that glorious resistance and their virtuous exertions; indeed had I time, I should want the ability to do justice to events so honorable to our countrymen, and so interesting to them and to the posterity of mankind—nay, had I the historical descriptive powers of a Raynal, a Gibbon, or a Polybius, I could but imperfectly describe them—For who can express the praises due to the Assemblies, Committees, and Executives of the different states; and to that truly wise and magnanimous Congress for their displays of wisdom, vigilance, activity and firmness; or who can sufficiently applaud the good conduct and heroism of American officers and soldiers, displayed from Lexington in Massachusetts, to Savannah in Georgia? Who can describe the ardent glow of patriotism, the undaunted spirit of Freedom, which animated the united Colonies, to spurn at the offers of pardon and terms of peace, held out to them by the British commissioners, and bid defiance to that numerous army, and powerful fleet, which accompanied them, with orders to take vengeance on the Colonists who should dare to reject their insulting proffers of peace? Who can do justice to the heroes of Lexington, Bunkers Hill, Bennington and King's Mountain, where undisciplined, half armed militia, checked the insolent career of British regular troops, taught them caution; and in some degree humbled their haughty pride? The names of Warren, Herkimer and Stark who fell with the other slaughtered heroes in battle, will be forever dear to America, and to the lovers of liberty throughout the world; they will be named with Montgomery, Mercer, Nash, Kalb, Pulaski and Lawrence; all will be placed "high on the tablet

of immortal fame"—nor will the name of Campbell be forgotten, although he fell not in the arms of victory; enough that Ferguson fell, and that his well trained troops yielded to the three small corps of militia of three sister states which providentially met each other and chose Campbell for their leader—And if no one can do justice to the militia, who can to the regular troops? who describe their sufferings for want of tents, clothes, and even blankets and shoes; and sometimes even for want of provisions? Who their brave resistance (with bad arms and little discipline) to the best armed, an best disciplined troops in the world? Who can describe the arduous task of their commander? Who can give even a faint idea of the difficulties with which he contended? Who can paint his situation whilst retreating with an handful of new troops through the Jerseys before the chosen force, the selected troops of the British army, Who can do justice to his conduct throughout the whole of that mortifying retreat? What praise does he not deserve for his patience, equanimity and cheerfulness which he shewed as if under no difficulty; for his skill in manœuvring in the face of the pursuing army flushed with their successes at forts Washington and Lee; one time facing about and appearing to offer them battle, till they had lost much time in preparing for an action in which they looked for a certain victory, whilst in the mean time he had secured his baggage, and then in the night retreating rapidly out of their reach. At another time appearing as if he meant to go into Philadelphia for winter quarters (which seemed to induce general Howe to canton his troops at Princeton, Burlington, Bordentown, Trenton, and other towns in New Jersey) whilst with the assistance of about 1,500 militia (who had been animated by general Mifflin, to march from Philadelphia and its neighbourhood to the support of

the remains of the American army, which had been miserably reduced by various skirmishes, by sickness, and by the expiration of the terms of enlistments, which were claimed by a raw and desponding soldiery) he repassed the Delaware on the night of the 25th of December, through a severe snow storm, and with great skill, activity, and gallantry attacked, surprised and completely defeated the three Hessian regiments under the command of Col. Rahl stationed at Trenton, and brought off near 1000 of them prisoners with so small a loss as to be scarcely credited.

Brilliant as the success of this bold enterprise was, it was almost eclipsed by another which the general undertook in the night of the 2d of January following, when the whole British army, at every station, were wishing for an opportunity of revenging the insult which had been offered to them but a few days before, and cursing Hessian cowardice or carelessness as the cause of their disgrace. On the 2d of January he met the flower of the British army, on its approach to Trenton which had been sent on from Brunswick under the command of Lord Cornwallis: he manœuvred before them, skirmishing till he had retreated across the bridge at Trenton, where he cannonaded the enemy and kept them in check till night, when falling back out of the reach of their cannon and kindling a great number of fires as if he had a very extensive encampment of a numerous army, by a circuitous route he pushed on to Princeton, leaving Cornwallis at least twelve miles in his rear, waiting for the light of day to discover the true position of his army, and their numbers, if reinforced, as from appearances it was, or to discern with certainty where the attack should be made, so as to exterminate it, if no stronger than it was in the preceding day. General Washington reached Princeton

early in the morning of the 23d, and would have completely surpris'd the British troops stationed there had not a regiment which was on its way to Trenton met him and being attacked and routed sent the alarm to Princeton; he however pushed on and took above 300 prisoners notwithstanding they had thrown themselves into the College, a large strong stone building, and carried them off making good his retreat, notwithstanding from the various positions of the British army he seem'd to be surrounded by them. This second enterprize of General Washington which shew'd that he was equal to the partisans of modern or ancient wars, animated all America, rous'd up the desponding spirits of the Jersey militia, who immediately put on so good a countenance that the British commander abandoned every post in that state except Amboj and Brunswick, which had a communication by water with New York.

This gallant and well conducted series of enterprizes of our commander, totally changed the face of our affairs, and shew'd what he would have done had he been furnished with a well trained, well equipped and completely organized army, superior, or even equal in number to that of his enemy. But where am I going? how rashly have I undertaken to describe what is indescribable! and to relate in a few minutes, what should fill a volume! I must therefore leave to the historian of leisure and of abilities equal to the arduous task, to describe what was performed by this wonderful man, and by the gallant officers and soldiers under his command—many of whom require the best biographers to do justice to their merit.

The patriotic exertions of individual states, and of their respective citizens deserve the labours of the

accurate historian. For want of such, the heroes and patriots of this state will scarcely be known in the next generation, and Washington perhaps be alone remembered. Scarcely is it known that even general Mercer commanded a brigade which went from this state—his heroic death immortalized him it is true—but the gallant behaviour of col. Weedon, lieut. col. Marshall and their major Leech who so bravely withstood the British troops on Harlem Heights, near the city of New York, and of Weedon's brigade\* at Brandywine, are unnoticed by the writers of the present day! What historian has told us that the state of Virginia exposed as it was to the ravages of the Indians on its Western frontiers, to savage Britons on its Eastern, and to threatened domestic insurrection through the whole state, gave up to the general defence six regiments of Infantry, one of Cavalry, and one of Artillery—whose eagerness to join the army, under General Washington was such, that notwithstanding they never had the small-pox, and were therefore detained long on their march by that destructive disorder which swept off a great proportion of them (above 1500 of them perishing before they could reach the state of New Jersey, above 1000 of whom being buried in

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\* Which was the American column of which gen. Howe speaks, as resisting his attacks unbroken till late in the evening; and to whose resistance he attributes the escape of the American army that day, from destruction, ~~are unnoticed~~. What historian has told that Virginians had a great share in the glorious affair of Stony Point? it is true col. Febiger in a letter to governor Henry, endeavoured to do them justice—but possibly this letter was destroyed by Arnold. Major Posey and lieutenant Shelton are not mentioned in the story of that affair.

the Potter's Fields in Philadelphia,) reached the army time enough to support the commander in chief by checking the career of British victories on New York island, and by covering his retreat through the state of New Jersey—soon after which they were stricken by sickness and deaths that a whole regiment was but a captain's command, at the head of which fell the gallant youth Fleming, who coolly had ordered his little corps "to dress before they made ready;" within hearing of a British column.—When he had halted and faced about to give it a check—the commander of which damned him, swearing that he would dress him, ordered a platoon to give him a dressing, on which they discharged a volley which cut down the cool and intrepid youth, and a great part of his company.

Had I leisure, or could I do justice to the story I would relate what I have heard from undoubted authority of the bravery of our officers and privates—of the astonishing enterprise of col. Clarke against the British post on the Kaskaskias, and the Gov'r of Detroit, (lieut. col. Hamilton) at St. Vincents who had taken post at that place to intercept Clarke, and relieve as he supposed Governor Rocheblave of the Illinois—both of whom Clarke soon sent down to Williamsburg prisoners of war.

If justice has not been done by the historian to officers and men acting on a larger scale in the war, well may the gallant exertions of general Nelson and col. Innis with the militias of Williamsburg and the counties of Elizabeth City, James City, Warwick, and York, to oppose British troops in the invasions of Arnold, Philips and Cornwallis be forgotten; and well then may it be supposed that the virtuous struggles and severe trials of the militia of Gloucester and



that part of it now called Matthews during Dunmore's holding Gwyn's Island, and the various invasions particularly Arnold's, where almost the whole of them marched from their county against that traitor, and in Cornwallis's, when he took possession of York Town, and of our post in Gloucester Town with his army and fleet he also forgotten; and be unknown in the annals of our country—but had I leisure to undertake the task, imperfectly as I could perform it, would I hand down to our posterity their virtuous exertions and intrepid firmness, and the name of Peyton should live forever, his coolness and activity during the affair of Gwyn's Island—his vigilance guarding ever against secret plots or open attacks, and his spirited opposition to the enemy whether they appeared in their frigates on our Bay; or on land in possession of our posts—the indefatigable pains he exerted in training the militia under his command; and his ardent love of Liberty, and his country, should never be forgotten—But where again have I been hurried? An honest zeal for the credit of our country; for the reputation of our county, and for the fame of our deceased friends has hurried me too far—I will therefore only briefly say by what means we got rid of the oppression, according to my promise.

It was by the glorious struggles of our country, and its sister states; conducted by the wisdom of Congress, and their hero Washington; his heroical officers and soldiers aided by a patriotic and brave militia, that the United States were enabled to support their Independence, and to resist the British arms, and even to capture regiments, and at length an whole army—displaying such wisdom, love of Liberty, and such firmness and bravery, that they attracted the attention, commanded the respect, and interested the feelings of most of the

of the earth—so that France listened to the propositions of our commissioners, *Franklin, Lee, and Dean*, acknowledged our Independence, and became our firm and faithful ally; who soon drew into a share of the war, Spain and Holland; by whose joint exertions the forces of Britain were so divided, her losses so multiplied, and her expences so encreased, that after the capture of her fleet and army under Lord Cornwallis, at York, who was compelled to surrender to the combined forces of America and France, that the nation and Parliament of Britain obliged their King to acknowledge our Independence.

It was by this means we got rid of the oppression under which we labored.—The hardships we suffered, the wants we endured of even money and necessaries through a great part of the war, and the incessant dangers to which we were exposed through the whole of it, would fill a volume if related, and justice were done to the patience, self denial, and fortitude of our fellow citizens. But all the inconveniencies, losses and dangers, were justly despised, when weighed against the glorious prospect of securing to ourselves and posterity the blessings of Liberty—to get rid of a Tyrant who held us in chains, by which we were to be handed down to his children's children; to be governed by his governors, tools of his power; who convened, prorogued, and dissolved our Assemblies at pleasure; whilst we were mocked with the indulgence of a mimick kind of British Liberty; whilst we saw we were but the slaves of slaves who boasted of their imaginary freedom—to get rid I say of such a miserable and mortifying condition as this, and to exchange it for substantial Liberty and Equality, was worth any risk, worthy of any sacrifice—Great God! to think that millions should be born subject to the caprice of one man born to reign over them—

he too perhaps, weak, foolish, headstrong, passionate and vindictive!—To think of being subject to intolerable insults of a rich, proud hereditary Nobility—To think that we were also subject to be taxed by the venal Representatives of the British nation, who could not more essentially serve and flatter their Constituents, overwhelmed by taxes, than by laying part of them on us, that they claimed a right to our property, and to prescribe rules of faith to our souls! — To think of these things, and that we have escaped from them so happily, and with so little loss, and I may say, in so short a time, compared to that in which the Swiss Cantons escaped from the oppression of the House of Austria, and the United Provinces, from the tyranny of Spain, must fill every patriotic reflecting mind with gratitude and joy!

Let us therefore **REJOICE ON THIS DAY**, as the birth-day of our Liberties, and perhaps of the nations of the World, and never let us be persuaded to believe that monarchy can be tolerable, but to a people too ignorant to know in what consists the happiness of mankind, and unacquainted with the abominable abuse of the power of Kings—let us learn daily in what consists the blessings of a free government, and in what the true doctrine of Equality—Is not that country blessed with a government which secures it against the dangers of being plunged into the horrors of war, by the mere caprice, avarice or ambition of one man, and which entrusts the awful power of making war to their representatives alone? Which looks upon every citizen as equal, each being in equal need of the others assistance? Which considers the carpenter, taylor, ploughman, &c. as necessary to the support of society as a judge, a senator, or chief magistrate, and of consequence leaves all offices open to all men? Which guards the rights of all

by a declaration of rights, a constitution, and by wise laws? Which secures a free, and full, and equal representation in annual elections? Which limits the authority of the Executive within narrow bounds; and the duration of its power, to short periods? Which secures the rights of conscience; the trial by jury, and the Freedom of the Press? Happy must be that people, who see the apparent inequality of mankind in its true point of view; as intended by the all wise author of our being, to shew our mutual dependence on each other—for were not many men suited by their genius and dispositions to different occupations, even the necessary wants of millions, could not be supplied; and did not others possess talents, and enjoy leisure to cultivate them, the progress of the labourers, of the artificers & others would be slow and imperfect; and the business and distant intercourse of the world would be at an end.—So wisely has Heaven ordained it, that the labor of the ~~axe~~ man who fells the tree, of the butcher who kills bullocks and swine, is as necessary to the intercourse between distant nations, as the intense application and study of the philosophers by whom Astronomy, Geography and Navigation have been brought to their present state of perfection. Detestable is the doctrine of hereditary nobility, of superior dignity on account of birth—cruel, and insulting, as well unjust and impolitic is it to look upon any man as beneath another because he is not born of as long registered a line of rich parents; cruel and insulting to add to his supposed degree of degradation on account of his inferior occupation, as it is foolishly termed in monarchies and aristocracies; and truly impolitic because such treatment tends to diminish the number of hands perhaps necessary to be employed therein.—Sweet and consoling on the other hand must it be, to the man who finds that his employment can not degrade him,

and that if he be industrious and honest, he may acquire not only riches but may when qualified for high offices, be elected to fill them.—In such a country every man must find himself equally interested to support it—it must be equally dear to all, and a good constitution in such a place may last to the end of time; or if altered it must be by a cool and dispassionate convention making some further provision for the security of their rights, and not by an insurrection of the people, for they can never have cause in such a state to wish for a change of government.—the measures of government may be disagreeable to them, but their constitution furnishes an easy and peaceable remedy for this evil. If the fault originate with their representatives they may be changed; if with their executive it may be impeached, or changed at the next election.

When I spoke of the annual elections of Representatives, &c. &c. above, I alluded to our state Constitution.—As to that of the Federal government, it is wisely calculated to answer the end for which it was intended. The general interest of the confederated states cannot be promoted and sufficiently protected, without a degree of energy, beyond that which is perfectly consistent with the theory of free government in a single state—but in this complicated machinery of the Federal government, this almost monarchical energy seems necessary, and may be safely entrusted to it—as the Senators are chosen by our Republican Assemblies, and the President by Electors chosen by the People—this energetic power however, ought to be watched by the People, as power has always been observed to increase in the hands of an Executive. The wisdom and virtue of a Washington may not be found in his successors, or if found there, the jealousy of freemen in the days

of a Washington may be a full sanction for a conti-  
 nuance of that Republican virtue in the days of his  
 successors.—Happy for the World, the experiment  
 of free governments is going on, in different forms  
 in America.—And in France upon a large scale, the  
 trial is about to be made of a simple democracy.—  
 Would to Heaven that the Kings who have wickedly  
 and foolishly combined against that Republic would  
 leave it to a fair trial of its well intended experiment.  
 The tyranny of former Kings, and the hypocrisy and  
 treachery of the last justified the abolition of his power,  
 and the pride, insolence and useless pageantry of the  
 nobility who had not been a part of a legislature as  
 the lords in England are, might well apologize for  
 the rejection of a second House or branch of the Le-  
 gislature and even of nobility. Indeed the idea is so  
 pure and natural, of having a simple Democratical  
 government, to secure perfect liberty and equality,  
 that every true lover of Mankind, must wish success  
 to that experiment, and think that the struggle which  
 the French are making, is worthy of the great cause  
 for which they contend; and that their acts of vio-  
 lence are but the consequence of the violence  
 and fraud practised against them.—When we see how  
 arduous their task is, and how little compared  
 to them we had to do and suffer, and how hap-  
 py we are in our government, we have great reason  
 to thank Heaven for these blessings, and to rejoice  
 at the return of this *GLORIOUS DAY*, on which the  
 United States first *DARED* and *RESOLVED* to be  
**FREE**; breaking off the galling yoke of British ty-  
 ranny and laying the foundation of a free govern-  
 ment in our country, and of perpetual Friendship  
 and Union between them. Let us therefore my  
 friends rejoice; and celebrate **THIS DAY** with  
**GRATITUDE** and **JOY**.