

# ADDRESS

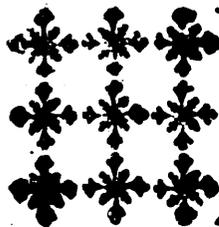
DELIVERED AT  
NEWFIELD, CONNECTICUT.

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN  
INDEPENDENCE,

JULY 4, 1798.

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By the Rev. SAMUEL BLATCHFORD.



PRINTED BY LAZARUS BEACH.

*At a meeting of the Inhabitants of New-  
field, on the 4th of July, 1798.*

*Voted—That the Committee for the  
day be appointed to wait on the Rev.  
Mr. BLATCHFORD, and return him the  
thanks of this meeting, for his address  
delivered this day, and request a copy  
of the same for the Press.*

*JOSIAH LACEY, President.*

AN ADDRESS, &c.



GENTLEMEN,

**T**HERE can be no one present who requires an apology for the business of this day: and were there any we conceive it needs none. Animated in our country's cause, and fired by the love of patriotic virtue, we feel it to be an interesting duty to commemorate our deliverances, to exult under a just sense of the blessings we enjoy, to cherish a high spirit of Independence, and to cultivate dispositions worthy our privileges and humanity. The grateful returns, these, to society and to heaven, for gifts so signal and unrivalled.

I could have wished, indeed, that the part I now take, at your request, had been assigned to some other: my short residence

in this country, and the little comparative knowledge I have of those brilliant transactions, which made the *fourth of July* a proud day for America, have naturally induced a diffidence, which is not lessened, by a reflection on several characters which compose this assembly; whose fortitude, whose sacrifices, and personal exertions, contributed to raise that fair monument of Glory, which has excited the admiration of a world, and encreased the happiness of millions!

It has been truly observed that Liberty is to the political body, what health is to the natural; its enjoyment, its vigor, and its brilliance. So far as it is wanting, a country is distempered and deformed; and where it is totally destroyed, a country however advantageously placed on the great map of the universe, is but a scene of substantial misery, a prison of living men, where life and freedom, and property, every thing which reason holds dear, are the contemptuous sport of caprice and cruelty—but here Freedom and Independenee have unfurled their banners. The Constitution under which you live was framed by yourselves—Your rulers are the objects of your voluntary choice—Your public expenditures are directed to the good of the whole, and the conscience of every individual is conse-

quently charged with making the national funds adequate to the exigences of the State ; with discouraging all foolish talking and jestings which may tend to lessen the reverence due to constituted authorities ; and with watching, with anxious care, that those bonds are not slackened which hold society together. By a remiss conduct as it respects these high concerns yours will be the blame, when the hurricane is abroad in the world, and doing its work of mischief.

**THE REVOLUTION** which gave birth to your priveleges and raised you to a distinguished rank amongst the nations of the world, affords many interesting scenes of contemplation to the patriot and philosopher, who will love to dwell upon the subject, instruct their offspring in the principles which induced it, and inculcate upon them the wisdom and virtue of living under a good government.

**THERE** is a fatal prejudice in favour of prerogative, by which sovereigns imagine themselves set above the laws of strict equity ; and which they too often use as masks only, more surely to conceal and disguise their ambitious views. It is however certain that in Princes as well as in Subjects, injustice may be compared to counterfeit

money which discovers real misery; and that part of the community involved in it will seek, naturally, as speedy a relief as may be.

YOUR Forefathers sought it in a way honorable to themselves, and in the issue astonishingly advantageous to society.—They separated themselves from their native Country—broke thro' the connections of their youth—braved the dangers of the Atlantic Ocean, and found an assylum in the uncultivated wilds of America. Here indeed they had to cultivate a fortitude which could brook sufferings—and a mind not to be subdued by hardship; but their trials were of a very different nature from those they had left behind them.—They formed a social compact and bound themselves to each other by the sacred bonds of christian fellowship. They enjoyed *civil and religious Liberty*.—GOD ALMIGHTY was at this moment marshalling his forces, and arranging his instruments, to produce the existence of a civilized nation formed on a plan of rational freedom; the fair residence of *honor, truth, mercy, liberty, and justice*.

AMIDST the many kind and generous affections which the wise and benevolent author of our beings has implanted in our

Constitution, the love of our Country is certainly one of the noblest and most amiable. Other passions center often in our own selves; partial friendships generally look no farther than the particular convenience of the persons by whom they are contracted; but this carries along with it such marks of unbounded generosity and diffusive benevolence, which constitute the highest Glory and the brightest ornaments of human nature. Your ancestors felt it in its full force. Distance from their native soil could not sever the bond of union, and length of time, rather increased than lessened their attachment to their ancient home. Their pleasures rose in proportion as the honor of Britain was advanced. They had joy for its prosperity, sympathy for its sorrows, and arms to vindicate its injured rights.

THIS principle was carried down from one Generation to another, and the American Revolution arose a *Phenomenon* in the Universe.

THE cause of this astonishing event is not to be found in this country; it must be sought for in the archives of the British Parliament.—It originated in the crooked policy of the Cabinet of St. James'!

THAT noble spirit of Independence, which made the first settlers of the Wilderness so tenacious of their rights, and which they bequeathed to their descendants as a legacy of inestimable value, could not bear the imposition of an unjust exaction, which in principle went to the command of the purse of the continent without its consent.

REMONSTRANCES and Petitions, *humble yet manly, affectionate yet firm*, followed each other in quick succession, but neither the towering ambition of the english monarch, nor the unjust claims of his parliament were to be satisfied by these; and it was determined to extort that by force which could not be obtained by art.—The fatal appeal is made, the appeal is made to arms. The sword of slaughter is drawn, and war hangs out its bloody flag!—What a mournful reflection have we to make, when we think of the thousands, and tens of thousands of hardy veterans and valient youths that plunged into scenes of blood and were cut off by an untimely death—can we help weeping over the immense quantity of human gore which impurpled the seas, and dyed the earth, to the unspeakable anguish of fathers, mothers, relatives and friends.—Those of you who bore commissions in your coun-

try's cause, and marked the rapid and wide destruction of the destroying Angel, as he pursued his tremendous course along the ranks, can best describe the thing. Your ready memory collects with ease the images of woes long since past, when a dying soldier, yielding life out in convulsive pangs, was no uncommon sight; yourselves in jeopardy of equal fate!

The struggle was severe and long—your hopes and fears were suspended on the doubtful events of War. Your spirits sometimes flagg'd—your courage never—and finally success was yours. The GOD OF ARMIES led you on to victory and triumph; supported your just rights, and established the Independence you had avowed.

BRITAIN confounded and amazed learnt the news of the capture of *Burgoyne* and the surrender of *Corwallis*, and Britain's King was forced to yield, to your undaunted resolution, the brightest Jewel of his Crown.

GENTLEMEN,

THE struggles of America have exhibited a striking lecture to the world, that however intimate the connection may be betwixt any nation and a virtuous people,

every attempt to traduce their just rights, will meet with a just and spirited opposition. And the success with which your arms were crowned will teach wicked and arrogant men the vanity of their endeavours to subjugate the independent and the brave. America triumphed over the arms of England, and she has sufficient energy and inclination left to repel any insult offered to her honor from whatever quarter it may come.

LET this be a day of universal gratitude, let our national altars smoke with the incense of a just praise offered to the friends of the Revolution.

GREECE could not forget a Solon and Lycurgus too—Miltiades and Leonidas.—Rome could boast of Cato and of Pompey, and “the Chinese erect triumphal arches to those who promote the general happiness at home; as well as to the Heroes who brought their ensanguined trophies from beyond the walls of the farthest Tartary.”

We approach your shrine, Oh, gentle *Warren* and recognize in you the first distinguished martyr to your country's sacred cause, we saw you quit the home-selt pleasures of domestic peace, assume the life, and with the life the hazard of a

Soldier—you fell, but with your honours  
thick about you—a wreath of glory binds  
your brow, and posterity will not forfeit  
your virtues.

To *Montgomery's* memory to be just  
we must be grateful: high in the confidence  
of the public, his intrepid valour led him  
on to the most dangerous of all attacks—he  
left behind him an example of unbroken  
courage, and sunk amidst the havoc of pro-  
miscuous death.

OUR hearts will ne'er forget the brave  
virtues of *Green* and *Wooster*—*Puinan*  
*Gates* and *Lincoln* with all those dauntless  
warriors, whose conduct formed a galaxy  
of heroism.

THESE were in the field—and in the  
council your present virtuous and patriot-  
ic President held a distinguished place with  
*Hancock*, *Jay* and *Trumbull*, *Franklin* and  
all whose great abilities were called forth  
in unison with the fairest designs of nation-  
al service—their eloquence spoke to the  
souls of their countrymen, whilst their vig-  
orous yet mild exertions conducted the re-  
volution.

But the highest attempts to pourtray the  
character of that distinguished chief, who

was the saviour of his country and the father of American Independence must be inadequate to the thing. Early taught to love and venerate the man, I used to wish him well before my mind could judge of his deservings. The unabated fervor hath increased with my years, and now I'll teach my children from the breast to lisp the name of WASHINGTON.

After a course of glory, he has retired from the walks of public life, to the privacy of domestic peace: but tho' retired he marks with a steady eye the interests of his country—his patriotic fire is not consumed by age, and at this moment we hear him speak “I am ready again to go forth with my fellow citizens to the field of battle, in defence of the liberty and independence of my country.” [*Here, a general applause, whilst the drums beat and fifes played.*]

GENTLEMEN,

Your present ardor convinces me, you can be grateful, and, without a compliment, I think you merit the independence you enjoy. Let no rude hand deprive you of it.—Respect the honors of your birth, right.—Your privileges are blessings of no common class—enjoy them whilst you live and dying, may you leave them an un-

alienable patrimony to all succeeding generations.

**CULTIVATE** national justice, for let us suppose, says a celebrated philosopher, a people to be perfectly unjust, we shall soon perceive them to be perfectly unhappy. Restless and jealous of each other, their constitution will be never the same thing long together. Being the declared enemies of mankind they will be equally miserable by the sensations which they raise in others as by those which they feel in themselves; Being feared and hated by other nations, they must likewise fear and hate them. 'Tis not necessary that neighbouring powers should take up arms to subdue them. 'Tis sufficient that each of the individuals guide their conduct by the maxims of the state, and accordingly make use of every method, tho' ever so detestable, to raise themselves upon the ruins of each other; then we shall have such a race of men revived, as formerly struck a terror into Cadmus, when they sprung out of the earth, and lived together for no other reason but to destroy each other. Such a society of men could not subsist, nor does ancient history furnish us with any example of this nature, whatever the modern may do. Beware of Infidelity, for this loosens the cords of mor-

al obligation, and is the fertile parent of disorganization and corruption. The happiness of states is not to be measured by external grandeur and power, for no country can be happy without religion. It is a dangerous expedient to throw ourselves out of the protecting arms of God. Such a people may be successful for a time in their measures; desarts, forests, even vast seas may not be sufficient bulwarks against their ambition; and divine providence may make use of their fury to bring his own judgements to pass. Yet I am persuaded that in the issue they will be brought down even to the dust. Receive it as a certain maxim, that *none can harden their hearts against God and prosper.*

**CHEERISH** union among yourselves,—be purely Americans—party differences will sap the foundation of your political existence—Be brothers in virtue, in courage and Independence—Join hands and hearts in the common cause—Rally round the venerable fabric of the government you have yourselves erected—Let no foreign finger touch it, its touch is deadly poison! Strengthen the hands of those honorable characters, your rulers, the objects of your voluntary election; and let the world know, that altho' many of the veterans of seventy-five be dead, their descendants are

alive, possessed with a sacred ambition of emulating their fathers, whenever their country shall need their services. With the *consecrated standard of Independence* in our hands, let us go and enjoy this day, and exulting in our national freedom, let our souls be filled with the most raised conceptions.

" No trifling, trilling notes be ours,  
Noble themes claim noble powers,  
Object immense! a nation freed!

We hail the record, and subscribe the deed.  
Catch it, ye winds, and bear from zone to zone,  
And where the tale is told, be the same blessing  
known.

The triumph's sacred, and th's laureat day  
To future times its lessons shall convey!"

**F I N I S.**

