



From "Patrick Henry Before the House of Burgesses, 29 May 1765" (1851) by Peter Frederick Rothermel.

COLUMBIA'S ORATORS

"It has been said, by the Baron de Sainte Croix, that from the commencement of the thirteenth century to that of the third before Christ, Athens did not produce more than fifty-four distinguished orators and rhetoricians. We have had many more than that number within half a century."

~ Samuel L. Knapp, *Lectures on American Literature* (1829), Lecture XII.

The founding of the Roman Empire under Augustus Caesar effectively signaled the demise of the civil oratory that had earlier distinguished the careers of such as Pericles, Isocrates, Demosthenes, Cato the Censor and Cicero. It was only later that it found renewed life by way of the Jewish synagogue and later the Christian pulpit; where religion, by restoring humanity to a place of dignity in the cosmos, made it possible private men (women naturally would have to wait) to have a voice and speak openly about what was going on in society. So much of early American literature itself overflows with church sermons (written and spoken) that, aside from government documents, there is barely ought else in the way of published writings till about the first quarter of the 18th century. Indeed, even by the 1800s, Americans at large were more likely to receive inspiration and information from and start engaging in public discourse by way of sermons and public orations than from printed matter; so scarce, outside of major urban centers, were newspapers and periodicals, let alone pamphlets or books, the latter being prohibitively expensive for most.

Legislative oratory of the sort of Patrick Henry was comparatively rare; few of whose speeches are extant in written form. In the opening years of the Republic, foreign travelers would sometimes attend the various government assemblies hoping to catch a statesman in effusions of eloquence, only to usually come away sorely disappointed. Rather, the place to hear the great orations was in churches or public gatherings, the last usually in the form of holiday events, memorials, or celebrations of some recent occasion, like, for instance, the end of the war or the ratification of the Constitution. In wartime itself, such might at times also be heard in the camp.

It was at one such civic gathering that Henry Lee in a eulogium conferred on General Washington that since famous title "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen." Other especially memorable orations include James Otis on the Writs of Assistance (Feb. 1761), Samuel Adams on American Independence (1 Aug. 1776), Washington's Inaugural and Farewell addresses, Alexander Hamilton on the Federal Constitution (4 June 1788), and John Adams' (only) and Jefferson's (first) Inaugural addresses. Yet aside from Native American speeches (and which we covered previously in "Eloquence of Chiefs;" see *Continental Army Series*, volume one), our list might go on to add some of those of John Hancock, Josiah Quincy, James Wilson, Richard Henry Lee, Benjamin Rush, John Jay, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, William Pinckney, Gouverneur Morris, John Marshall, James Madison, and Fisher Ames (sometimes spoken of as being on par in vocal expressiveness with Patrick Henry.)

And yet these represent only a tiny handful of the actual number of public speakers one might hear during the Revolution and later throughout the United States, and quite numerous are the orations of other speakers that survive from these eras.

Historian Louie Regina Heller aptly remarked “There is no doubt that, in periods of great national uprising, when the emotions of men play as strong a part in the affairs of state as does their calmer reason, men listen to the impassioned speech of the orator with an attention they would scarcely ever devote to cold print; for there is, in the constitution of the human mind, a chord that vibrates in sympathy with the persuasive voice, and answers in response to the magnetic glance of a penetrating and compelling eye. What would, in print, seem exuberant fancy, appears none too highly colored when spoken; and what would seem cold and unimpressive when read, often gains warmth and life from a well-modulated voice and an engaging personality.”¹ It was then the voices of preachers and then civil orators that urged Americans to action both in war and in taking on momentous and nation shaping challenges. Without such, the causes of freedom and democracy in America were hardly even imaginable, let alone realizable. And those who those who tend to look only for the making of this country and the establishment of its political institutions in the writings and documents of great statesmen do well not ignoring this. For it was largely orators that convinced and persuaded the people to grab hold of their destiny, and thereby give them hope of transforming and liberating both their nation and the world.

Most of the ensuing mix is taken from some of the many lesser known orators; with however one from Joseph Warren and another from Thomas McKean.

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*From “An oration; delivered March sixth, 1775. At the request of the inhabitants of the town of Boston; to commemorate the bloody tragedy of the fifth of March, 1770” by Joseph Warren.*

...OUR fathers, having nobly resolved never to wear the yoke of despotism, and seeing the European world, at that time, thro’ indolence and cowardice, falling a prey to tyranny; bravely threw themselves upon the bosom of the ocean; determined to find a place in which they might enjoy their freedom, or perish in the glorious attempt. Approving Heaven beheld the favourite ark dancing upon the waves, and graciously reserved it until the chosen families were brought in safety to these western regions. They found the land swarming with savages, who threatened death with every kind of torture. But savages, and death with torture, were far less terrible than slavery:—Nothing was so much the object of their abhorrence as a tyrant’s power:—They knew that it was more safe to dwell with man in his most unpolished state than in a country where arbitrary power prevails. Even *anarchy itself*, that bugbear held up by the tools of power (though truly to be deprecated) is infinitely less dangerous to mankind than *arbitrary government*. *Anarchy* can be but of short duration; for when men are at liberty to pursue that course which is most conducive to their own happiness, they will soon come into it, and from the rudest state of nature, order and good government must soon arise. But *tyranny*, when once established, entails its curse on a nation to the latest period of time; unless some daring genius, inspired by Heaven, shall unappalled by danger, bravely form and execute the arduous design of restoring liberty and life to his enslaved, murdered country.

THE tools of power in every age have racked their inventions to justify the FEW in sporting with the happiness of the MANY; and, having found their sophistry too weak to hold mankind in bondage, have impiously dared to force *religion*, the daughter of the king of *Heaven*, to become a prostitute in the service of *Hell*. They taught that princes, honoured with the name of christian, might bid defiance to the founder of their faith, might pillage pagan countries and deluge them with blood, only because they boasted themselves to be the disciples of that teacher who strictly charged his followers to *do to others as they would that others should do unto them*.

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<sup>1</sup> *Early American Orations, 1760-1824* (1902), pp. ix-x.

THIS country, having been discovered by an English subject in the year 1620, was (according to the system which the blind superstition of those times supported) deemed the property of the crown of England. Our ancestors, when they resolved to quit their native soil, obtained from King James a grant of certain lands in North-America. This they probably did to silence the cavils of their enemies, for it cannot be doubted, but they despised the pretended right which he claimed thereto. Certain it is that he might, with equal propriety and justice, have made them a grant of the planet Jupiter. And their subsequent conduct plainly shews that they were too well acquainted with humanity and the principles of natural equity to suppose that the grant gave them any right to take possession; they therefore entered into a treaty with the natives and bought from them the lands: Nor have I yet obtained any information that our ancestors ever *pleaded*, or that the natives ever *regarded* the grant from the English crown: The business was transacted by the parties in the same independant [sic] manner that it would have been, had neither of them ever known or heard of the island of Great Britain.

HAVING become the honest proprietors of the soil, they immediately applied themselves to the cultivation of it; and they soon beheld the virgin earth teeming with richest fruits, a grateful recompence for their unwearied toil. The fields began to wave with ripening harvests, and the late barren wilderness was seen to blossom like the rose. The savage natives saw with wonder the delightful change, and quickly formed a scheme to obtain *that* by fraud or force, *which* nature meant as the reward of industry alone. But the illustrious emigrants soon convinced the rude invaders that they were not less ready to take the field for battle than for labor; and the insidious foe was driven from their borders as often as he ventured to disturb them. The crown of England looked with indifference on the contest; our ancestors were left alone to combat with the natives.— Nor is there any reason to believe, that it ever was intended by the one party, or expected by the other, that the *grantor* should defend and maintain the *grantees* in the peaceable possession of the lands named in the patents. And it appears plainly from the history of those times that neither the Prince nor the people of England thought themselves much interested in the matter. They had not then any idea of a thousandth part of those advantages which they since *have* and we are most heartily willing they should *still continue* to reap from us.

...By an intercourse of friendly offices, the two countries became so united in affection, that they thought not of any distinct or separate interests, they found both countries flourishing and happy. Britain saw her commerce extended and her wealth increased; her lands raised to an immense value, her fleets riding triumphant on the ocean, the terror of her arms spreading to every quarter of the globe. The colonist found himself free, and thought himself secure: He dwelt *under his own vine and under his own figtree and had none to make him afraid*: He knew indeed that by purchasing the manufactures of Great Britain he contributed to its greatness: He knew that all the wealth that his labour produced centered in Great Britain: But *that* far from exciting his envy filled him with the highest pleasure; *that thought* supported him in all his toils. When the business of the day was past, he solaced himself with the *contemplation* or perhaps entertained his listening family with the *recital* of some great, some glorious transaction which shines conspicuous in the history of Britain: Or perhaps his elevated fancy led him to foretell, with a kind of enthusiastic confidence, the glory, power and duration of an empire which should extend from one end of the earth to the other: He saw, or thought he saw, the British nation risen to a pitch of grandeur which cast a veil over the Roman glory, and, ravished with the *praevue*, boasted a race of British Kings, whose names should echo through those realms where Cyrus, Alexander, and the Caesars were unknown; *Princes* for whom millions of grateful subjects redeemed from slavery and pagan ignorance, should with thankful tongues offer up their prayers and praises to that transcendantly great and beneficent being *by whom Kings reign and Princes decree justice*.

THESE pleasing connections might have continued; these delightful prospects might have been every day extended; and even the reveries of the most warm imagination might have been realized; but unhappily for us, unhappily for Britain, the madness of an avaricious minister of state has drawn a sable curtain over the charming scene, and in its stead has brought upon the stage, discord, envy, hatred and revenge, with civil war close in their rear.

SOME demon in an evil hour suggested to a short sighted financier the hateful project of transferring the whole property of the King's subjects in America to his subjects in Britain. The claim of the British parliament to tax the colonies can never be supported but by such a TRANSFER; for the right of the

house of commons of Great Britain to originate any tax or to grant money is altogether derived from their being elected by the people of Great Britain to act for them, and the people of Great Britain cannot confer on their *representatives* a right to give or grant any thing which *they themselves* have not a right to give or grant *personally*. Therefore it follows that if the members chosen by the people of Great Britain to represent them in parliament have by virtue of their being so chosen, any right to give or grant American property, or to lay any tax upon the lands or persons of the colonists, it is because the lands and people in the colonies are bona fide, owned by, and justly belong to the people of Great Britain. But (as has been before observed) every man has a natural right to personal freedom, consequently a right to enjoy what is acquired by his own labor. And as it is evident that the property in this country has been acquired by our own labor, it is the duty of the people of Great Britain to produce some compact in which we have explicitly given up to them a right to dispose of our *persons* or *property*. Until this is done every attempt of their's, or of those whom they have deputed to act for them to give or grant any part of our property is directly repugnant to every principle of reason and natural justice. But I may boldly say that such a compact never existed, no, not even in imagination. Nevertheless the representatives of a nation, long famed for justice and the exercise of every noble virtue, have been prevailed on to adopt the fatal scheme; and although the dreadful consequences of this wicked policy have already shaken the empire to its center; yet still it is persisted in. Regardless of the voice of reason—deaf to the prayers and supplications—and unaffected with the flowing tears of suffering millions, the British ministry still hug the darling idol; and every rolling year affords fresh instances of the absurd devotion with which they worship it. Alas! how has the folly, the distraction of the British counsels blasted our swelling hopes and spread a gloom over this western hemisphere. The hearts of Britons and Americans, which lately felt the generous glow of mutual confidence and love, now burn with jealousy and rage. Though but of yesterday I recollect (deeply affected at the ill boding change) the happy hours that past whilst Britain and America rejoiced in the prosperity and greatness of each other, (Heaven grant those halcyon days may soon return.) But now the Briton too often looks on the American with an envious eye, taught to consider his just plea for the enjoyment of his earnings as the effect of pride and stubborn opposition to the parent country. Whilst the American beholds the Briton as the ruffian, ready *first* to take away his property, and *next*, what is dearer to every virtuous man, the liberty of his country...

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From "An oration, in memory of General Montgomery, and of the officers and soldiers, who fell with him, December 31, 1775, before Quebec; drawn up (and delivered February 19th, 1776,) at the desire of the Honorable Continental Congress," Episcopal minister William Smith (1727-1803), also first president of the University of Pennsylvania.

...The Canada expedition is one of those measures, which the enemies of American peace having first rendered necessary, will now strive to misconstrue into hostility and offence. But when authentic reports were obtained that a people professing a religion, and subjected to laws, different from ours, together with numerous tribes of savages were instigated and preparing to deluge our frontiers in blood, let God and the world judge whether it was an act of offence; or rather, whether it was not mercy to them, to ourselves, to the whole British empire, to use the means in our power for frustrating the barbarous attempt.

Indeed there was benevolence in the whole plan of his expedition. It was to be executed not so much by force as by persuasion; and appearing in the country with such a respectable strength, as might protect the inhabitants from the insults and vengeance of those, who were striving to make them lift up their reluctant arm to the shedding fraternal blood. It was further wished to kindle up the expiring lamp of liberty among them; to open their eyes to its divine effulgence; and enable them to raise their drooping head, and claim its blessing as their own.

This was a work, in all its parts, suited to the genius of a Montgomery. He had a head and heart which equally pointed him out as a fit guide in such an undertaking. He understood and could well explain the blessings of a free government. Persuasion dwelt upon his tongue. He had a soul, great, disinterested, affectionate, delighting to alleviate distress, and to diffuse happiness. He had an industry not to be wearied out; a vigilance not to be imposed upon; and a courage, when necessary, equal to his other abilities.

But still, with a few new raised men, of different colonies, and perhaps different tempers; ill supplied with arms and ammunition; worse disciplined; unaccustomed to look cannon in the face; to make or to mount a breach—in such circumstances, I say, and in the short space of an autumnal and winter campaign, in rigorous northern climes, to achieve a work which cost Great-Britain and the colonies the labor of several campaigns, and what was a sacrifice of infinitely more value—the life of the immortal WOLFE—this certainly required a degree of magnanimity beyond the ordinary reach, and the exertion of the highest abilities of every kind.

The command and conduct of an army, were but small parts of this undertaking. The Indians were to be treated with, restrained and kept in temper. The Canadians were likewise to be managed, protected and supported: And even his own army in some degree to be formed, disciplined, animated, accustomed to marches, incampments, dangers, fatigues and the frequent want of necessaries. Camps, of all worldly scenes, often exhibit the greatest pictures of distress. The sick and the wounded—the dying and the dead—as well as the wants and sufferings of the living—all these call forth the most tender feelings, and require of a General that, to the courage of a soldier, he should unite the utmost benevolence of a man!

Our General possessed these united qualities in their highest lustre; of which there are numerous testimonies not only from his own army, but from the prisoners, English as well as Canadians, now amongst us...

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*From "An oration delivered at Brookfield, Nov. 14, 1781. In celebration of the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his whole army at York-Town and Gloucester, in Virginia, by the combined army under the command of His Excellency General Washington, on the 19th of October, 1781," by Massachusetts Congregationalist minister Nathan Fiske (1733-1799).*

...This glorious event, on the 19th of October 1781, pregnant with such happy consequences (which I must leave to your imaginations further to enumerate, and to Providence to realize and bring forward in their season) revives the joyful remembrance of the similar surrender of General *Burgoyne* and his army, on the 17th of October 1777, when Heaven, in a manner equally propitious and remarkable, smiled upon our northern army, under the command of General GATES.

These exploits will shine with a distinguished brilliancy in the Annals of Fame. What a radiance will this struggle for Liberty, which has produced such exertions of genius and prowess, throw around America! 'Tis enough to make us proud of our country, and to glory in the name of Americans; yea, even to make it criminal to be destitute of this pride.—Many nations have in their turn been celebrated for noble achievements—for battles won—for cities taken, and for countries gradually subdued. But the glory of capturing whole armies together, one after another, with experienced commanders at their head, by superior generalship, and with little loss of time or of blood, is reserved for America.

Happy Country! the scene of such wonders, the nurse of such heroes, the defender of Liberty, and the care of *JEHOVAH!* How natural is it to look forward to distant posterity, and figure to ourselves their increase, their tranquility, their freedom, their prosperity! Soon, we trust, will commence the aera [i.e., era] of our quiet enjoyment of those liberties which our fathers purchased with the toil of their whole lives, with their treasure, with their blood. Safe from the enemy of the wilderness; safe from the griping hand of arbitrary sway, here shall be the late founded seat of peace and of freedom. Here shall arts and sciences, the companions of tranquility, flourish. Here shall dwell uncorrupted faith, the pure worship of God in it's primitive simplicity, unawed, unrestrained, uninterrupted. Here shall religion and liberty extend their benign influences to savage, enslaved and benighted nations.' —How can we forbear rejoicing in such happy prospects, as well as in the events which open such prospects to our view? How can we help testifying the gladness of our hearts in every decent way, in which joy can be expressed, communicated and heightened, and the event which gave rise to this joy be fixed deep in the memories of all, and transmitted to future generations? But our care should be, that 'Religion may preside over the joy of this day, and that gratitude to Heaven may exalt it. There are some civil and military demonstrations of gladness that so great an

occasion demands. But the blessing is too divine, the joy is too great, too sacred, to be affronted by profaneness, or polluted and debased by sensuality.’

‘May our gracious Benefactor perfect the work of mercy in which we are rejoicing, and grant that neither we, nor those that come after us, may wantonly forfeit these blessings and these hopes! May the cause of Liberty and of pure Religion still advance by the favour of the Almighty, ’till every nation shall be happy under the government of the Prince of Peace; and truth, freedom and righteousness universally prevail!’...

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From “An oration, in commemoration of the independence of the United States of North-America, delivered July 4, 1787, at the Reformed Calvinist Church in Philadelphia,” delivered by Thomas McKean, signer of the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation; President (i.e., Governor) of (at separate times) both Delaware and Pennsylvania, and also a Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.

...Another advantage derived from our Independence consists in the expansion it has given the human mind, and the new fields it has opened for enquiry, especially on the interesting subjects of government.—While only a third part of legislation was in our hands, it is not a subject of wonder that we were deficient in many of its principles; but since all the powers of government have devolved upon us, how many proofs of knowledge have been given in this science—witness the wisdom and energy of many of our constitutions, and witness the literary productions of those illustrious civilians, Jefferson and Adams, whose works are not only calculated to instruct their countrymen, but to enlighten Europe and posterity in the great science of social and political happiness;—nor have our studies and enquiries since the Declaration of Independence been confined to government, science has flourished in all its branches—the American historian records the events of our revolution with classical elegance, and her poets celebrate in all the harmony of verse the glorious achievements of her sons.

By a separation from Britain we have encreased our resources for knowledge:—Witness the numerous colleges, academies and literary societies that have been established since the peace throughout the Union.—These institutions, so fruitful of public and private happiness, have arisen entirely from a conviction that knowledge is essential to the preservation of a republican form of government.

Our separation from Great-Britain has extended the empire of humanity—no longer shall the wretched African be torn from his peaceful habitation, to fertilize with his tears the soil of a people professing themselves advocates for universal freedom—the time is not far distant when our sister States, in imitation of our example, shall change their vassals into subjects.

Our national Independence has opened the avenues of commerce with every part of the world, and thereby not only lessened the price of our imports, but added to the value of our products.—Nor is this the only advantage we have derived from the extension of our trade: It was not less the policy than the interest of Britain to instill[1] into our minds national prejudices, and to teach us to regard all mankind, except Englishmen, as our enemies; but happily this prejudice is removed, and we now view the whole human race as members of one great and extensive family, however much they may be distinguished from us by the circumstances of distance, colour, or religion. The Frenchman and the American (till lately considered hereditary enemies) now embrace each other as children of the same father—the European Catholic and the American Protestant review with equal horror the times when their ancestors embued their hands in each others blood, and now join to cancel the remembrance of them in mutual acts of charity and benevolence.—Nor has this intercourse been restricted to Europe, the inhabitants of China, Bengal, and the United States, have met together on the sands of India; and by the influence of commerce have added the ties of interest to the obligations of universal benevolence.

Another, and a principal advantage of our Independence, results from the material change it has wrought on the opinions, conduct and government of the European nations: It was by contemplating our Independence that France has become the land of free enquiry and general toleration; Germany, from the same cause, has shaken off an immense load of religious prejudice and bigotry; Spain has caught our spirit

of enterprise and innovation; and even *Britain* herself has been taught, by our successful struggle to relax in her system of general subjugation; hence Ireland enjoys what she had long demanded in vain; an exercise of her natural rights to commerce, liberty and independence. Propitious aera! happy event! Which has softened the rigours of tyranny, and taught *even* Kings to revere the great laws of justice and equity...

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*From "An oration delivered in the Presbyterian Church, at Elizabeth-town [New Jersey], on the Fourth of July, 1794, at the request of the militia officers, it being the eighteenth anniversary of American independence," by Rev. Isaac Watts Crane (?-1856.)*

...In our late glorious struggle for liberty, every patriotic American felt himself interested in the cause and was willing to sacrifice life or property for the attainment of so desirable an object. It is presumed that those patriotic principles have not yet been obliterated, and that they glow with as much ardor in your breasts, and in the breasts of all free Americans, throughout the United States, on the celebration of this day, as they did the Fourth of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

Many of those who fought have the satisfaction to see their children, whom perhaps they were once obliged to leave helpless and exposed, now growing up in the love and spirit of the same noble principles, and as if divinely influenced by the sacred planet of liberty under which they were born, partaking of the temper and genius of the parent and shewing marks of their parents bravery in every action.

Courage may be called a distinguishing trait in the American character. There is neither age nor sex here but what feels the sacred fire—the names of liberty and independence convey the pleasing and lively ideas to the young, as well as to the aged.—Our fathers have related to us instances of valor and patriotism which they saw—in lively colours have these virtues been impressed upon our minds, and we hope that they will not vanish like a thrice told tale, but be forever preserved pure and uncontaminated.

Should any of you, who are now present in this assembly, be ever called out in the defence and service of your country, remember that you are to support the character of brave Americans; remember that you are the defenders of liberty and of the rights of man; that heaven is therefore on your side; and when you fight resolve to conquer or resolve to die!

But it is unnecessary to recommend courage to you my respected audience—allow me to say, that the appearance of this house to day, affords sufficient proofs of valour and of love for our country—whence else this glow of martial zeal in every countenance, whence else the smile of generous bravery in every face?—The standard of liberty which you have just erected, with its colours floating in the air and presenting the fifteen United States, as so many stars in the moral firmament, bespeaks aloud your unshaken patriotism—Your past conduct is like wise a sufficient proof of your present courage and public spirit—Let yon fields bear witness, with what patriotic ardour, with what undaunted courage, the brave citizens of Elizabeth[town] pursued and harrassed a fierce, a cruel, and a turbulent foe.

Whose heart does not glow with gratitude to our military guardians, to the gallant general as well as to the brave soldier for freedom from the threatened yoke of oppression?—Who will not shed the tear of sympathetic gratitude over our departed heroes? The names of Warren, Mercer and Montgomery, who died fighting the battles of their country, shall never, never be forgotton [sic].

But ye are not dead illustrious captains! Ye are not dead but removed to the armies of heaven! It is there with a complacent and holy submission, ye are waiting to be rejoined by your renowned CHIEF, and with him to mingle among the innumerable hierarchies that surround the throne of God; while your names with his, embalmed by your glorious and shining actions, shall be had in sweet remembrance, by your countrymen to the remotest ages of the world...

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“An oration, pronounced July 4, 1797, at the request of the inhabitants of the town of Boston, in commemoration of the anniversary of American independence,” by Massachusetts legislator John Callender (1772-1833).

...THE baleful spirit of religious persecution which chased our forefathers from the land of their nativity, compelled them to take refuge in the dens and caverns of a wilderness—greatly preferring the inhospitable wilds of America with freedom of sentiment, to the luxurious abodes of cultivated Europe when shackled by oppression. Here then we discover the source from which arose that delicacy of feelings, that purity of manners, that rigid inflexibility of principles which gave birth to our admirable republic. Degenerate indeed must have been their offspring had they suffer’d the hand of tyranny, to stifle in *their* bosoms, the glowing spirit of such progenitors. It were needless to repeat the various perils which our settlers encountered in their infant establishment; to describe a warfare with the treacherous inhabitant of the woods, novel in its manner, and cruel in its conduct. Suffice it, that under every impression of difficulty and danger, still their settlements flourished; and by progressive improvement, became at the commencement of the present century, the strongest arm of the British empire. The inhabitants of the, then, American colonies, were filled with sentiments of loyalty to their king and veneration for the constitution of Great Britain. Thanks to the foolish policy of her ministers, those sentiments so inimical to our national grandeur were not permitted to remain.

MANY oppressive acts of government had inspired the people of America, with the most dreadful apprehensions. The safety of those darling rights and privileges for which they were ready to sacrifice their lives, appear’d imminently endangered. Still, however, they entertain’d a lively hope that a submissive deportment and a modest representation of their grievances would obtain from the justice and generosity of the parent country, ample reparation for injuries which they had sustained, and security against the infliction of others, in future. But the humble petitions of America were answered with insult, her agents treated with the foulest contempt, and the right of taxing us “in all cases whatever,” at length, avowed as a principle equitable in itself, and strictly conformable to the political constitution of Great-Britain. A declaration at once so oppressive and absurd, discover’d to America the precipice on which she stood. The tyrannic measures of a British ministry, and the obsequious devotion of a British parliament, roused in every breast a merited detestation of the government, and a resolute determination to resist...

HOWEVER unprepared for warfare with antagonists so far their superiors in the deadly practice, still they shrunk not from the unequal contest. To the hardy veterans of Europe they opposed the rude untrained levies of the moment, the voluntary exertions of individuals and the sanctified justice of their cause. The only object they contemplated, was their country’s freedom, the only efforts they employed, fair and honorable conflict in arms. No murderous proscription, traced the steps of our revolution, in the blood of assassinated brethren. No mockery of justice, made the difference of opinion a signal for execution. The American cause needed not the aid of such auxiliaries. Founded in justice, conducted with firmness and discretion, it ended in the most ample and unbounded success. Search the varied history of nations: analyse [sic] the discordant principles of government, the records of mankind afford not an instance of a revolution so important, effected with so few enormities. To the wise provisions of our venerable forefathers are we indebted for such salutary effects. Their early establishments for the education of youth rendered the attainment of knowledge easy to the poorest member of the community. Hence their rights were clearly understood, the blessings of genuine liberty ardently pursued and the visionary wanderings of its phantom most judiciously avoided.

THAT our revolution [i.e., as opposed to the French Revolution] was so little disgraced by cruelty and injustice much also is due to the exertions of our clergy, and it is with pride I here offer my humble tribute of applause to that devout and learned profession. The holy precepts of our religion which they inculcated, and the bright examples of virtue which they exhibited, gave them a great and merited influence with the people. To their eternal honour be it recorded, *that* influence exerted on the side of liberty and humanity, in a great measure restrained those wild excesses which have too frequently blasted in the execution, a cause designed by the noblest motives of the human mind...

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*From "An oration, prepared, to be delivered in St. Phillip's Church, before the inhabitants of Charleston, South-Carolina, on the Fourth of July, 1798. In commemoration of American independence. : By appointment of the American Revolution Society. Published at the request of that society, and also of the South-Carolina State Society of the Cincinnati," by Henry William De Saussure (1763-1839) of the South-Carolina State Society of Cincinnati.*

...The parent state, after having cherished its American colonies with fond affection in their infancy, became jealous of their growing importance in their riper age. She dreaded a rival, where she should have seen only a friend. Under the unhappy influence of an ill-judged policy, she determined to check the growth of her children, advancing rapidly to maturity. To effect this purpose, she limited their commerce, restricted their manufactures, shackled their spirit of enterprize, obstructed the administration of justice, destroyed their charters, suspended their legislatures, and manifested, by a thousand injurious acts, that spirit of domination, which finally issued in the assertion of an unqualified right in the British parliament, to bind in all cases whatever, unrepresented America. The colonies, filled with affection and kindness towards a nation, which they fondly and truly esteemed their parent, and kindling into anger, slowly and with regret, resorted to every means of conciliation. They supplicated the monarch for a remedy to their evils, and they solicited the parliament for redress of their grievances. Their supplications were treated with scorn, and their solicitations were rejected with contempt. Their patience, under suffering, and their forbearance, under wrongs, were construed into timidity, and the bearers of their petitions were refused an audience. Great Britain had come out of her last war, which had been conducted by the vast and fervid genius of Chatham, flushed with unparalleled success. Encircled with her victories, and strong in her immense resources, she could not condescend, after she had given law to the most powerful nations in Europe, to treat with indulgence, or respect, a handful of people, whom she called rebellious subjects. In a dark hour, when her evil genius presided, she spurned her suppliant children from her feet, and declaring them out of the protection of her laws, waged cruel war upon them. America receding slowly and reluctantly from her fond attachment, and from her earnest hope of conciliation, was gradually forced to take up arms in self-defence. Unskilled in the art, and unprovided with the munition of war, she suffered every calamity, which superior force, directed by experience, and sharpened by resentment, could inflict. Her provinces were overrun—her towns were pillaged and burnt—her citizens were exiled, or immured in dungeons—her undisciplined armies were dissipated, and a dark cloud hung over her fortunes, and threatened their ruin. But that characteristic temper of Americans, which, in times of peace, is forbearance and gentleness, rose under the pressure of the war into invincible fortitude. Like the founder of the Russian grandeur, they learned to draw victory out of defeat; and they acquired the art of war from their enemy. The gallant defence of Bunker's hill by undisciplined provincials, taught the British troops the vanity of their hopes of a speedy conquest. The vigorous invasion of Canada, by new troops, penetrating through a wilderness, never before trodden by civilized man, displayed a hardihood of enterprize, not equalled by the great Wolf, in his more fortunate attack on Quebec: and was likened, at the time of its execution, to Hannibal's famed passage of the Alps. The skilful retreat through the Jerseys, and the decisive blow at Trenton, displayed combinations of patience, judgment, and active valor; which evinced, that America, though "in the gristle, and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood," could not be subdued by foreign invasion. The gallant and unceasing attacks at Bennington, Saratoga, and Stillwater, which compelled the haughty Burgoyne to lay down his arms, were pledges of ultimate success. The glorious defence of Fort Moultrie, the brilliant achievement at Stoney Point, the decisive blow at King's Mountain, the fortune-changing victory at the Cowpens, and the hard fought battles of Guilford and the Eutaws, were the great harbingers of that glorious day, when the surrender of Cornwallis put the seal to the American independence.

The pressure of the times brought out those great minds which exist in every society of man, and which, laying dormant in tranquil seasons, remain in the shade of privacy, till some fit occasion arises, and demands them to ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm. The Sidneys, and the Hampdens, who would else have remained mute, inert, and inglorious, came forth at their country's call; and guiding the councils, or conducting the armies of America, led her to victory and independence. Great Warren, skilled in the arts which adorn and dignify life, in the gilded scenes of peace, arose at the harsh notes of war, and gave, in the noble defence of Bunker's-Hill, a great example, in a glorious death, to his grieving countrymen. Montgomery, than whom a nobler spirit never was clothed in human form, offered up his life, a sacrifice, for that cause which he had ardently adopted; carrying with him, into immortality, the affections of his

compatriots, and the admiration of his adversaries. By his side, at the gates of Quebec, perished in the moment, when the fate of the embattled legions seemed suspended upon their lives or their deaths, M'Pherson and a host of gallant youths, who scorned to survive their chief. Were I to indulge in the theme, and enumerate the multitudes, who sought honor in the field of glory, and who died a willing sacrifice for their country, I should swell the catalogue to an immeasurable size; and I should awaken too many sad recollections of the losses we have sustained. Yet some recollections press too strongly to be eluded, and force an unwilling, because a painful, remembrance. The gallant Mercer was slain in the vigor of his years, and in the arms of victory. The veteran Wooster fell covered with glory in the defence of his own immediate country. Nash, Scammel, Perry, Campbell, were the victims of their courage, and of their country.

It would be ingratitude to refuse a place in the roll of fame, to the ardent valour of Pulaski, the noble Pole, who, despairing of freedom in his own country, sought to win it in America, and freely gave his blood as the price. Nor less unjust would it be to withhold the eulogium of the great de Kaalb [Kalb], who, covered with wounds in a cause, not his own, spent the last hours of his glorious life, in attesting the courage of the troops he had commanded.

Nor were there found wanting able and gallant men in our southern region, to vindicate their country's quarrel. The veteran Roberts, who first taught our Carolina youth the discipline necessary to regulate their valour, died gloriously in its defence, pointing out the road of honor to his son. The high spirited Huger, with the gallant Neyle [Andrew Neale?] and Moultrie, who left wealthy ease, for the hardships of camps, fell in the defence of our city.<sup>2</sup> The wise and resolute Hyrne became the victim of an incurable wound, received in the ardent conflict. The brave Shepherd, Wilkins, Hume, and many other patriotic soldiers, freely shed their blood in the varied warfare. Wise, Motte, Rutherford, Joor, Simmons, Donnom, De Saussure, and a thousand other heroic officers, left "the warm precincts of the chearful day" for the cold chambers of death, in the inspiring cause of independence. Laurens, proud name! thy heroic spirit seemed born for other times, when high deeds of chivalry, surpassing human powers, gave a gigantic form to military enterprize. Even thee we were compelled to yield to the scythed tyrant, who sweeps the warlike hero and the peaceful citizen, indiscriminately before him.

High above all, towers the beloved name of Greene; who, yielding to fate, since the accomplishment of the revolution, could scarcely be admitted into this enumeration, if his pre-eminence in merit, as in station, did not dispense with the rule of confining our eulogium to those who died in the revolution. This great officer was in the South, what his illustrious chief was in the North, the saviour of his country. The Romans were proud of possessing chiefs, one of whom merited the title of the shield, and the other, the sword, of his country. Greene was at once the sword and the shield of the southern states; and their gratitude will be as eternal as his fame...

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From "An oration, delivered on the Fourth of July, 1798, before the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, the Democratic Society, the Tammany Society or Columbian Order, the New York Cooper Society, and a numerous concourse of other citizens," by U.S. Representative for New York George Clinton, Jr., (1771-1809); also son of Maj. Gen. James Clinton, as well as nephew of the Governor of New York and U.S. Vice-President for whom he ostensibly was named.

...FREEDOM of opinion is essential to knowledge and virtue. An unrestrained communication of sentiment and discussion of public measures is the scourge of tyrants and the strongest pillar of democracy. A free press would soon destroy the most gloomy despotisms—kings tremble before the inquisition of the people. There is a distinguishing principle of right and wrong in the most untutored breast, which abhors tyranny and execrates flagitiousness.

² [Edit. Note. Of the three, only Neale, assuming he means Andrew Neale, was slain and this was at the Battle of Rocky Mount on 30 July 1780. Huger escaped capture at the siege of Charleston, May 1780; though Moultrie it could be said "fell" in being taken prisoner there.]

Let the mind be enlightened, and the chains of slavery are broken. In this country the freedom of opinion, both in civil and religious concerns, is happily secured by the constitution. May the popular indignation and the *vengeance of heaven* light upon the unprincipled wretch that shall attempt to infringe so invaluable a privilege!—To perpetuate the advantages of the revolution, let us support our constitutions: May they be the rallying point of all true republicans. Because objections were made to the federal constitution when it was first proposed for consideration, let no one be hardy or foolish enough to assert that those who were then opposed to it would now wish to overthrow it by force or by fraud. All parties admitted that it was not a perfect system—that it needed amendments; and the only material question was, whether they should *precede* or *follow* the adoption. Since the ratification several very important amendments have been engrafted into the constitution. This has been the means, we trust, of uniting all parties in its favour. If it be defective, it contains within itself the power of amendment. The same wisdom which pointed out the necessity of a more energetic system of federal government than the articles of confederation, will, it is hoped, produce such alterations in our general constitution as experience shall dictate to be salutary and expedient. Let us preserve our union: *United*, we are powerful and unconquerable—*Divided*, we become the prey of intestine faction and foreign ambition. Let none presume to assert that our territory is too extensive, our manners too dissimilar, or our interests too repugnant for a federal government. If the states maintain authority to manage their internal concerns, the relations of the union are neither too multifarious, too complicated or arduous for a general government. A small territory is the seat of faction. When the spirit of discord is prevalent it pervades every part; infuses its poison into the bosom of families, and contaminates the whole mass. No portion of the community is sufficiently dispassionate to support the public good, and the government is destroyed by a mob or subverted by a tyrant. A government over an extensive country promises duration, permanence and stability; its views are enlarged as its territory; local interests affect not the mass of the community; and when one part becomes disordered, there is sufficient vigor in the others to restore the health of the political body. Beware of the spirit of party: it may dissolve your union, dismember your empire, and render you the sport of ambition, and the cause of your own destruction. Never may it be recorded in history that the people which combined against despotism, and by their united energies shook off the yoke of British tyranny, have become a divided and dismembered nation. Let this great example of national vigor teach you the advantages of union...

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*“Eulogy of George Washington;” given on 29 Dec. 1799, in Bethel Church of Philadelphia, by Bishop Richard Allen (1760-1831), founder of the African Methodist Church.*

At this time it may not be improper to speak a little on the late mournful event — an event in which we participate in common with the feelings of a grateful people — an event which causes “the land to mourn” in a season of festivity. Our father and friend is taken from us — he whom the nations honoured is “seen of men no more.”

We, my friends, have particular cause to bemoan our loss. To us he has been the sympathising friend and tender father. He has watched over us, and viewed our degraded and afflicted state with compassion and pity — his heart was not insensible to our sufferings. He whose wisdom the nations revered thought we had a right to liberty. Unbiased by the popular opinion of the state in which is the memorable Mount Vernon — he dared to do his duty, and wipe off the only stain with which man could ever reproach him.

And it is now said by an authority on which I rely, that he who ventured his life in battles, whose “head was covered” in that day, and whose shield the “Lord of hosts” was, did not fight for that liberty which he desired to withhold from others — the bread of oppression was not sweet to his taste, and he “let the oppressed go free” — he “undid every burden” — he provided lands and comfortable accommodations for them when he kept this “acceptable fast to the Lord” — that those who had been slaves might rejoice in the day of their deliverance.

If he who broke the yoke of British burdens “from off the neck of the people” of this land, and was hailed his country’s deliverer, by what name shall we call him who secretly and almost unknown emancipated his “bondmen and bondwomen” — became to them a father, and gave them an inheritance!

Deeds like these are not common. He did not let “his right hand know what his left hand did” — but he who “sees in secret will openly reward” such acts of beneficence.

The name of Washington will live when the sculptured marble and statue of bronze shall be crumbled into dust — for it is the decree of the eternal God that “the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance, but the memorial of the wicked shall rot.”

It is not often necessary, and it is seldom that occasion requires recommending the observance of the laws of the land to you, but at this time it becomes a duty; for you cannot honour those who have loved you and been your benefactors more than by taking their council and advice.

And here let me intreat you always to bear in mind the affectionate farewell advice of the great Washington — “to love your country — to obey its laws — to seek its peace — and to keep yourselves from attachment to any foreign nation.”

Your observance of these short and comprehensive expressions will make you good citizens — and greatly promote the cause of the oppressed and shew to the world that you hold dear the name of George Washington.

May a double portion of his spirit rest on all the officers of the government in the United States, and all that say my Father, my Father — the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof, which is the whole of the American people.

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From “A discourse on General Washington; delivered in the Catholic Church of St. Peter, in Baltimore--Feb. 22d 1800,” by John Carroll (1735-1815), first ever Roman Catholic Bishop and Archbishop appointed to the United States, and who also happened to be the cousin of Declaration of Independence signatory Charles Carroll.

...I need not recapitulate the origin of the discontents between G. Britain, and her American dependencies. Suffice it to say, that America viewed the claims of the parent country, as incompatible with her freedom and happiness. The great soul of Washington revolted at the idea of national degradation; but tempering his ardor with deliberate wisdom, he associated with other Sages of his country, to meditate on her new and critical situation.

Here let us pause, fellow citizens, to contemplate this exalted man, revolving in his breast the natural and social rights of human kind; comparing these with actual and impending grievances, and with the obligations of an allegiance due to a long established government. Had lawless ambition reigned in his breast, he would have decided the public voice for immediate hostility. But in this point also, Providence destined him to leave a memorable and salutary example, He was not dazzled by the prospect of being elevated to the chief command of the military force of America. In his opinion, nothing could justify a recurrence to the sword, and a revolt from established authority, but extreme necessity. All reasonable means of redress should be tried, before a good citizen will dissolve the fabric of government, and expose a people to the convulsive shocks of a revolution, the explosions of which no considerate man can promise himself to regulate, or foresee their termination....

A reflection here forces itself upon my mind, which I ought not to with[h]old from my respectable auditors. Would to God, that the principal authors and leaders of the many revolutions, through which unhappy France has passed in the course of a few years, would to God, that they had been influenced by a morality as pure and enlightened, as that of Washington, and his associates in the first Congress! What

scenes of carnage and cruelty! What private woes and public calamity would have been spared to that ill-fated country? and how sacred and venerable would have still remained to it the sanctuary of religion?...

But far other thoughts absorbed his attention. Modest, as he was eminent in valour and wisdom, he contemplated with mingled emotions of self[-]diffidence, and generous resolution, the important stake placed in his hands; the subjection or independence; the vassalage or freedom of an immense territory, destined to be the habitation of countless millions. When therefore, in obedience to the voice of his country, he placed himself at the head of her army, the expressions of his dependence on Providence should never be forgotten. Claiming no personal merit, apprehensive of injuring the public interest through some misconduct; yet trusting to the justice of his cause, and conscious of the purity of his motives, he called upon his fellow citizens to remember, that he depended for success, not on his own military skill, but on the God of battles, to whom he made his solemn appeal...

Washington beheld from his retirement, as the Jewish legislator from the summit of mount Phasga [or Pisgah], the flourishing prosperity of his country. Health sweetened his repose and rural occupations; his body and mind retained their usual vigour. We flattered ourselves with the expectation of his continuing long to retain them: Joy beamed in our hearts, when on every annual revolution, we gratefully hailed this, his auspicious birthday. But, alas! how dark is the cloud, that now overshadows it? The songs of festivity converted into the throbs of mourning! The prayers of thanksgiving for his health and life changed into lamentations for his death! Who feels not for him, as for his dearest friend, his protector, and his Father? Whilst he lived, we seemed to stand on loftier ground, for breathing the same air, inhabiting the same country, and enjoying the same constitution and laws, as the sublime and magnanimous Washington. He was invested with a glory, that shed a lustre on all around him. For his country's safety, he often had braved death, when clad in her most terrific form: he had familiarised himself with her aspect; at her approaching to cut the thread of his life, he beheld her with constancy and serenity; and with his last breath, as we may believe from knowing the ruling passion of his soul, he called to heaven to save his country, and recommended it to the continual protection of that Providence, which he so reverently adored. May his prayer have been heard! May these United States flourish in pure and undefiled religion, in morality, peace, union, liberty and the enjoyment of their excellent Constitution, as long as respect, honour, and veneration shall gather round the name of Washington; that is, whilst there shall be any surviving record of human events.

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*From "An oration, delivered at Plymouth, in New-Hampshire, on the anniversary of the independence of America, July 4th, 1800," by Robert Fowle (1766-1847), Rector of the Episcopal Church, New-Holderness. Of note, Fowle was a stridently Federalist supporter of John Adams, and at one point in his speech even speaks disparagingly of democracy.*

...BLESSED with a Constitution of Government whose prominent features are wisdom and strength, let us embrace, support, and protect it with an ardency of affection, a glow of zeal and a firmness of virtue—Let us esteem it as a most precious treasure, and transmit it pure to posterity. Our [e]xertions in this cause are not confined to our own persons—The lisping infant, whose tender age we are bound to cherish, looks to us for the preservation of the invaluable blessing—And the dear partners of your bosoms, and the pledges of your mutual love, in the eloquent language of a trickling tear, and in the silent, though impressive rhetoric of tenderness, beseech you to regard your sacred, dearest rights, and not sacrifice your virtue at the altar of Faction.

THE true spirit of an American is figured in the emblem of our Standard. There we behold the Eagle, towering with the boldest flight: In one talon carrying the shafts of death, ready to be hurled with dauntless vigor against the enemies of our Liberty: In the other the olive branch of peace, extended to every nation, stimulated with a desire of friendship on the honorable ground of reciprocal advantage: In her beak supporting the charter of our Freedom, the birth-right of Americans, and the terror of disorganizers. While the spirit there displayed actuates the Nation in general, we have no enemy to fear. The crest-fallen opposer of Government will hang his head, pressed by the weight of hopeless mischief—Abashed by the virtue of its

friends, he will seek a refuge in the covert of obscurity, and emaciate with the mania of disappointed ambition...

IT becomes us, as a free, sovereign and independent Nation, to be prepared for every event which political discernment may predict as possible. Though the prospect of peace glimmers with a ray of hope, the blessing may be more distant than our wishes may lead us to expect. But while we cherish and show a disposition for peace, we are free from the charge of delighting in the desolations of war; and shall prove to the world with what reluctance we should appeal to this last and dreadful resource and that we wish "the rights and liberties of nations to be fully restored." Blessed with the means of national happiness, independence, and glory, we desire only the undisturbed enjoyment of what Heaven has been pleased to bestow on our Country. Let us prove to the world, that the violator of these enjoyments will find the roused resentment of Americans will not be easily appeased. While our Navy is chastizing the marauders of the ocean, may the public virtue of our citizens beam like the splendor of the Sun, and like the destructive lightning blast the plots inimical to the peace and happiness of our Country.

THEN may we hope, that till the Conqueror of Time has extended his banners over the world, and Kingdoms, Empires and States, have yielded to his dominion, the prosperity of Columbia will be continued—and that its Freedom and Independence will only end with the last wreck of matter...

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From "An oration, delivered in St. Paul's Church, on the Fourth of July, 1800: being the twenty-fourth anniversary of our independence; before the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen, Tammany Society or Columbian Order, and other associations and citizens," by Matthew Livingston Davis (1773-1850), journalist and associate of both Philip Freneau and Aaron Burr, and for whom he acted as a second in the latter's fatal duel with Hamilton.

...YES, our beloved country is now free and independent; no longer the submissive vassals of a haughty and imperious power, we have acquired an honourable and elevated rank among nations.—Four and twenty annual seasons of prosperity have passed away, and demand the effusions of gratitude to Heaven, for the many blessings we have enjoyed.

FELICITY uninterrupted, and unalloyed, belongs not to man. Our day of life is marked by a perpetual succession of vicissitudes. By turns it presents the cheerful sunshine of prosperity, and exhibits the gloomy appearances of adversity: Just so with nations.—Empires, as well as individuals, are perpetually exposed to the evils which arise from the errors, imperfections and vices of humanity.

THE hostility and depredations of foreign states, the rivalry [sic] and jealousy of contending parties, and the effects of aspiring ambition, are sure at one period or at another, to present a front of danger which can only be encountered by a happy combination of fortitude and wisdom.

THIS is the Anniversary of our existence as a people.—It constitutes an era calculated to inspire us with sublime and enthusiastic emotions.—It is a day which should ever animate our hearts with gladness, and swell our bosoms with expanded and patriotic feelings. On each annual recurrence of this memorable period, we should call to our remembrance those scenes of peril and of glory which conducted us to freedom: We should recount to our friends and our children, the repeated injuries we suffered, the numerous hardships we endured, and the invincible constancy with which our soldiers conquered in their country's cause: We should tell them how our little band of heroes, unprovided with the conveniences, and scarcely supplied with the necessaries of war, braved the summer's scorching heat, and winter's freezing cold, and vanquished armies numerous, organized, and disciplined: We should remind them of the arrogant pretensions of our implacable foe, and the inveterate resentment with which they endeavoured to subjugate America: We should unfold their cruelty, and record how pestilence, fire and famine, were united with the sword, with the intent to accomplish our destruction. And while we kindle in their breasts the pious flame of patriotic sentiment, we should teach them to dwell with fervent rapture upon the virtues of our illustrious

generals and statesmen, who in the season of adversity stood foremost in the glorious rank of saviours of their country...

I perceive the momentous events of this arduous contest passing before me in a rapid, though interesting succession. Gloomy and hopeless at first: Black and menacing was the cloud which overshadowed us. Surcharged with fury, the heavy thunders roared, the forked lightnings flashed. Calm and collected the Guardian Genius of America, viewed the impending tempest.—Though not insensible of her danger, she viewed it undismayed. She knew the resources of her proud invaders, and eyed their preparations for the combat. She saw their numerous armies, their mercenary bands of foreigners, enforced by powerful fleets. Appealing to the protection of an over-ruling Providence, she trusted to the justice of her cause, and to the superior gallantry of her sons. Between *slavery* and *battle* could there be room to hesitate? For submission was worse than death and desolation, it was servility, degradation, and perpetual unlimited subjugation...

WHILE we are jealous of the intrigues of Europeans, let us cultivate harmony, friendship and affection among ourselves. These United States constitute one country, and one republic. Beware of local parties, interests and divisions. Beware of geographical distinctions. The extremities of Georgia, and of New-Hampshire, are equally component parts of our extensive empire. Connected by the most endearing ties, let us cherish a constant intercourse of love, and regarding each other as the faithful members of one happy family, let our union be co-existent with our independence.

UNITE a love of liberty, with a love of social order and representative government. Our civil constitution confers immortal honour upon the discernment of its founders. Cherish and preserve it, for it is truly worthy of our most ardent solicitude and attachment. Cultivate sound political maxims, and blend them with an unconquerable spirit of rational freedom. Liberty can never flourish, unless ascertained and protected by just and equitable laws: Profiting by the lessons of experience, may we never sacrifice our felicity to splendour, or deviate from virtue, in pursuit of the alluring follies of ambition. Let us be true to ourselves, and let affection to our country be the most active emotion of our hearts. So shall that independence which we this day celebrate, continue the blessing of millions yet unborn. The name of America, rising superior to the tarnished fame and fading lustre of Rome or Athens, will stand foremost in the annals of history, and the mild glories of an empire, shining with celestial splendour, shall continue the inheritance of an enlightened and happy people, while the loud sounding cataracts of Niagara are heard to roar, and the mighty waters of the Mississippi and St. Laurence, roll in opposite directions, to encompass the land of the free.³

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³ This oration was followed by a lengthy "Ode for The Fourth of July, 1800" by poet Samuel Low (1765-?).