

**TOWN HALL SUGGESTIONS: AN
ADDRESS AT THE OPENING OF A
NEW CITY HALL, XENIA, OHIO,
FEBRUARY 16, 1881, PP. 5-43**

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WHITELAW REID

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18237

TOWN HALL SUGGESTIONS

AN ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF A NEW CITY HALL, XENIA, OHIO

FEBRUARY 16, 1881

BY

WHITELAW REID



NEW-YORK
HENRY HOLT & COMPANY
1881

XENIA, OHIO,
January 19, 1881.

WHELAW REID, Esq., New-York.

My Dear Sir : I have the honor to transmit herewith an official copy of a resolution passed by a unanimous vote of our City Council at last meeting. Our City Hall (or Opera House) will be ready for opening somewhere about the 10th to the 15th February. Hoping to hear from you at an early date, I have the honor to be, very respectfully,
your obedient servant,

JOHN A. HURLING,
*Chairman Committee on Public Buildings,
City Council, Xenia, Ohio.*

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Xenia :

That Whitelaw Reid, Esq., Editor of THE NEW-YORK TRIBUNE, be invited to be present at the re-opening of our City Hall, and to deliver such an address as he may deem appropriate to the occasion; and that any surplus remaining after payment of expenses be given for the relief of the poor; and that the Mayor of the City and Committee on Public Buildings are hereby appointed a Committee of Arrangements to carry the foregoing resolution into effect.

C. H. PUTNAM,
President City Council.

Adopted January 18, 1881

*Attest : C. L. MAXWELL
City Clerk.*

TOWN HALL SUGGESTIONS.

AN ADDRESS

AT THE

OPENING OF THE NEW CITY HALL, XENIA, OHIO.

FEBRUARY 16TH, 1881.

First of all, let me make you my best acknowledgments, for the most gratifying honor of my life. To come back to the dear old town which in my boyhood treated me so much better than I deserved, and around which centre my earliest and happiest recollections, is always a pleasure;—to come, an absent son, summoned by your city government for this occasion, is more than a pleasure—it is a grateful duty.

We have been hearing, however, of late, that it is no longer quite prudent to make public confession of the fact that one was born in Ohio. It is growing to be a political crime, a sort of pleading guilty to political disability. The fault, you will observe, is not entirely in living here; it attaches even to the error of having been so inconsiderate as to be born here.

Massachusetts, a few years ago, might people half the legislatures and executive chambers of the Northwest, and crowd their delegations in Congress, and gather in the prizes of half the diplomatic service; and nobody objected. It only added to the glory of the Puritan commonwealth that stood there on her bays, and spoke for herself. Virginia might fill offices with similar frequency on lines of emigration a little further South, and it only added to the pride of the whole country in what they delighted to call the Old Dominion, the Mother of Presidents. But when her greatest offspring, the first-born of the Ordinance of 1787, became the Mother of Presidents too, and when *her* wandering sons, in turn, came to the front, all over the Union, in war, or politics, or business, the feeling seemed suddenly to change. A huge detective society was forthwith formed, whose duty was not only to note with disparagement every advance of an Ohio man, but to ferret out and to "spot" every advancing man in any other State who could be suspected of having been born in Ohio. When found, the order

was simple and peremptory: "Hunt him down."

Well, with the changed conditions of our local emigration, that becomes something of an undertaking. Forty years ago the chief native source of supply for the hardy settlers who toiled Westward in the old Conestoga wagons,

Who crossed the prairies, as of old
Their fathers crossed the sea,
To make the West, as they the East,
The homestead of the free,

was in New-England, and particularly in Massachusetts. For the past fifteen or twenty years it has been in Ohio. There is no land into which their lines have not gone. There is no State or Territory to the westward Ohio emigrants have not largely helped to people. Call over the familiar names of the pioneer families of Greene County, and see where you will find their living representatives. Take the Galloways, the Townsleys, the Kyles, the Turnbills, the Harbines, the Baughmans, the McCoys, the Colliers, the Gowdys, the Shields, the Sterretts, the Deans, the Collinsec, the Puter-