

**AN ORATION DELIVERED AT
SPRINGFIELD, CHICKOPEE FACTORY,
AT A "UNION" CELEBRATION OF THE
SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN
INDEPENDENCE, JULY 4, 1836**

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An Oration Delivered at Springfield, Chickopee Factory, at a "Union" Celebration of the Sixtieth Anniversary of American Independence, July 4, 1836 by Myron Lawrence

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MYRON LAWRENCE

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AN
O R A T I O N

DELIVERED AT

SPRINGFIELD, CHICKOPEE FACTORY,

AT A

"UNION" CELEBRATION

OF THE

Sixtieth Anniversary of American Independence,

JULY 4, 1896.

By **MYRON LAWRENCE.**

Springfield:
GEO. AND CHAS. MERRIAM, MAIN STREET.
1896.

Chickopee Factory Village, July 4, 1836.

SIR,

The Committee of Arrangements for "the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of American Independence at Chickopee Factory Village" would beg leave to tender you their unfeigned thanks for the very able and eloquent Oration delivered by you on that occasion, and in compliance with their own feelings, and in obedience to the unanimous wish of the numerous audience who had the pleasure of listening to it, would respectfully request a copy thereof, for publication.

Very respectfully,

S. C. BEMIS, *Chairman of Committee
of Arrangements.*

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE.

Belchertown, July 8, 1836.

SIR,

Your kind favor of the 4th inst. is duly received. You will accept for yourself, and communicate to the gentlemen associated with you, my thanks for the personal attentions shown me on the occasion referred to, as well as for the flattering opinion you have been pleased to express of my Address. In compliance with your request, a copy is herewith placed at your disposal.

Respectfully,

M. LAWRENCE.

S. C. BEMIS, *Chairman of Committee of Arrangements.*

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ORATION.

FELLOW CITIZENS,

The history of our country is short. Our ancestors, oppressed at home, by the strong arm of power, and denied, by the government, the enjoyment of common rights and privileges, sought exemption from persecution in voluntary exile. The untried perils of the ocean, the unknown horrors of a wilderness, and the nameless deprivations consequent on the abandonment of the land of their birth, and the graves of their fathers, were, to their noble spirits, far less dreadful than a life of ease and comfort, attained by the loss of civil liberty or religious freedom. Emigrating with these dispositions, and under such influences, the pilgrim fathers commenced the settlement of the new world, as *freemen* and *Christians*, laying broad and deep the foundations of the institutions of liberty and religion. The first written constitution of government that the world ever saw, was framed by our fathers in the cabin of the *May Flower*. Ere they landed upon the soil consecrated to freedom, they spread upon parchment the landmarks of their rights and liberties, and solemnly prescribed the rules by which they should be governed. This wise precaution saved them from the agitations of the restless, and the intrigues of the ambitious; and from the beginning, they grew together, a united and happy community. A protecting Providence preserved them from the ravages of famine and the desolations of pesti-

lence, and against the arts and wiles, the attacks and ambuscades of a savage and insidious foe.

The population of the colonies multiplied, with a rapidity that astonished Europe. Though during the first quarter century of the settlement they were called upon to suffer all the "ills that flesh is heir to," from cold, and hunger, and disease, and savage violence, they rose superior to them all, and soon became a powerful people, respectable both for numbers and character. Their enterprise, and spirit of adventure, speedily acquired for them all of the comforts, and many of the luxuries of life. Even at this early period, the New Englander was known throughout the civilized world, by his commercial enterprise and adventurous daring. The fisheries and the lumber trade, which have since grown into such immense importance, even then were sources of no mean income, and objects of no inconsiderable enterprise. The mother country, restive under the accumulated pressure of her pecuniary embarrassments, and seeing the growing prosperity of her trans-atlantic colonies, and feeling, perhaps, a little splenetic at their fast increasing power and greatness, adopted the rash expedient of compelling them to contribute to her relief, by imposing upon them certain duties, as imposts, against their consent. This attempt at systematic coercion, aroused the free spirits of the colonists. Indignation burned in every bosom. The alarm, *Our liberties are in danger*, was sounded from Maine to Georgia. The illegal exaction was universally condemned, and strenuously opposed. The patriots of New England led the way. The Adamses, the Otises, and the Hancocks, raised on high the standard of liberty, and fearlessly fanned its inextinguishable fires. They were most ably seconded by the Henrys, the Franklins, the Rutledges, the Pinckneys, and the Washingtons of the other colonies. As honest men, and good citizens, feeling themselves aggrieved, they respect-

fully laid at the foot of the British throne an humble statement of their grievances, and exhausted the powers of petition and remonstrance without obtaining relief. Resolved not to submit to unauthorised impositions or aggressions of any sort, and finding the British ministry and parliament inflexible in their determinations, they reluctantly resorted to the ultimate remedy, and appealed to arms, and the God of battles, in vindication of their rights. The same mad policy continuing to govern the councils of their king, they at last solemnly severed the tie that bound to him their allegiance, and proclaimed themselves "of right, free, sovereign, and independent," pledging to the maintenance of this declaration, their "lives, fortunes, and sacred honor." The chivalric boldness of this declaration strikingly appears, when it is considered that it was made by only three millions of people, sparsely scattered over thirteen States, and illy prepared for war, against the gigantic powers and resources of Britain. The history of the war that followed this declaration, its cruel hardships and privations, its victories and defeats, its triumphs and reverses, shows how nobly, how heroically, they redeemed this fearful and patriotic pledge.

When has the sun, in all his course since time began, shone upon a scene like the disbanding of the revolutionary army? Where is the history that can show its parallel, or the people that can boast its equal? An army, flushed with victory, that has just achieved the independence of its country, and given it a name and place among the nations;—an army that, with indescribable toil and hardship, had accomplished the high purposes of its enlistment, and that had large and just claims upon the treasury, as well as the gratitude of the nation, is summoned on parade for the last time; their arrearages are unpaid, they are without a dollar in their pockets, without comfortable apparel, without a single day's rations in their knapsacks, hundreds of miles from

home, which home may have been desolated, in their absence, by savage violence, many of them enfeebled by sickness and protracted sufferings, and all of them goaded to extreme sensitiveness by a most eloquent exhibition of their deserts, and an exciting portraiture of their grievances, by a talented and ingenious factionist. Will their love of country overcome the promptings of selfishness, and the keen and bitter stings of disappointment? Will they refuse to listen to the song of the siren, that justifies and urges self-remuneration? Will these care-worn and neglected veterans pile their arms, and literally beg their passage homeward? Will they quietly surrender the means of redress in their hands, and trust cold charity for bread, and the tardy justice of their country for remuneration? Oh, it is more than human, it is God-like. The drum beats—the line is formed—the flag of independence is advanced to their front—the officers, with uncovered heads, bid their men a silent farewell; filing off, they pile their arms in solemn silence, and with clasped hands, and averted eyes, are dismissed, each one to his own way. Is there aught in Grecian or Roman story, in ancient or modern revolutions, that can equal this last act of our veteran fathers, in magnanimity and lofty patriotism?

Peace found our countrymen in possession of little else than unsullied national honor, and political independence. During their protracted warfare, the arts of peace had slumbered, agriculture had been necessarily neglected, and commerce forgotten. The whole country was impoverished. Private fortunes, as well as the public treasures, had been unsparingly expended in effecting their emancipation. And now, when peace had dawned, and the European mercenary had ceased to pollute a free soil, they were sorely embarrassed by continued Indian hostilities, and by a most imbecile government. The national treasury was empty, the financial resources of the country exhausted, and the government harrassed and weakened by an enormous