

**AN ORATION DELIVERED
BEFORE THE DEMOCRATIC
CITIZENS OF THE COUNTY OF
WORCESTER, JULY 4, 1837**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649336623

An Oration Delivered Before the Democratic Citizens of the County of Worcester, July 4, 1837
by Robert Rantoul

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ROBERT RANTOUL

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OF THE

COUNTY OF WORCESTER,

WORCESTER, JULY 4, 1837.

BY ROBERT BANTOUL, Jr.

WORCESTER:
PUBLISHED BY MIRICK & BARTLETT.
1837.

US 4512 39.812

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WORCESTER, JULY 4, 1837.

SIR:—

The Democratic citizens of Worcester County, assembled for the celebration of the glorious 4th., elected the undersigned a Committee to request of you a copy of your able and eloquent Oration delivered this day. We are happy to make this request, and hope that an Oration so well adapted to the times, and calculated to effect so much good, will not be withheld from the public.

Yours, with sentiments of

Very great respect,

ISAAC DAVIS,

SAMUEL WARD,

NATHANIEL WOOD.

To ROBERT RANTOUL, JR., Esq.

WORCESTER, JULY 5, 1837.

GENTLEMEN:—

I have just received your very flattering invitation to submit to the press the remarks delivered by me yesterday. I place them at your disposal, though well aware how far they fall short of a thorough discussion of the subject treated of.

With the utmost respect,

Very truly yours, &c.,

ROBERT RANTOUL, JR.

Messrs. ISAAC DAVIS,
SAMUEL WARD,
NATHANIEL WOOD, Esqrs., } Committee of the
Democratic citizens
of Worcester Co.

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ORATION.

There is no incident in the history of mankind, except the advent of their Redeemer, that can rival in importance and interest that which we have met to commemorate. The capacity of the people in any nation to govern themselves, however excellent might be their intellectual, moral and political education, and under whatever favorable circumstances, was not merely called in question ; it was almost universally denied : it was only the theory of a few sanguine speculators upon human perfectibility, thinly scattered over the world, until the Fourth of July seventeen hundred and seventy-six. Since that day it has been a fact, obvious, indisputable, penetrating everywhere, dispelling by its radiant clearness that political bigotry, in which the millions of our race had blindly submitted to the fiat of arbitrary power as to the irresistible decree of fate. It is the star of Hope and Promise. Enlightened by its beams, the oppressed discern the weakness of the tyrant. They now no longer must bow their servile necks beneath the yoke of one of their fellows, neither stronger nor better than themselves: no longer must the many sow, that the few may reap : no longer must myriads toil, and sin, and suffer, and perish, that one glorious name may fill a page in history : no longer shall the husbandman and the artizan, torn from their peaceful labors to carry desolation and death to the homes of those who have never wronged them, be dragged, brute victims to slaughter, at the chariot wheels of a conqueror. Freedom guarantees govern-

ments in the interests of those that are governed, and intelligence and virtue are now the only qualifications necessary for the enjoyment of freedom.

Independence is proclaimed, and with the sound a nation starts into being, not like her elder sisters, held in thralldom, but all her limbs unbound and free ; not like them, slow of growth, and after a tardy developement, attaining only to a dwarfish deformity, but like Minerva, from the head of Jove, at once mature in wisdom, courage, dignity, and power, knowing her rights, and fully armed to maintain them against every aggressor, asking nothing but what is right, submitting to nothing wrong — equally ready to vindicate her just cause, whether Britain provokes her youthful energies, or France delays to do her justice, or Algiers or Mexico insults her hardy sons upon that element which is their home and empire. Her sudden entrance on the theatre of action changed essentially the positions and relations of all the other nations of the world. The nature of this change, the extent to which it has already reached, and must proceed hereafter, the momentous consequences that spring from it, affecting both governments and subjects, to what peculiar dangers it exposes them and us, and how we may best secure and improve the blessings of our most fortunate location and condition, are all fair topics of inquiry upon this hallowed anniversary. The field open for our discussion is fertile and inexhaustible. Many have entered it, and some with signal and lasting benefit to their countrymen, but there is still rich room for more. In view of the vast variety of considerations which suggest themselves, and recollecting the ability with which this occasion has been often illustrated, one is at a loss to choose the theme of a discourse addressed to an audience like that before me.

The great experiment of our Independence has been in its general results even more successful than the most sanguine would have dared to hope. Allowing for all those deductions

which truth and candor, and justice to ourselves require to be made in the account, there still remains a long continued career of prosperity, interrupted we must confess, by evils, which for the most part, wisdom might have avoided or at least mitigated, yet far surpassing the best estate of the most fortunate people that ever before appeared upon the face of the globe. The population of this Union has just reached its second duplication since the census of seventeen hundred and ninety — being now about sixteen millions.* The population of our own State is this year double what it was at the date of the declaration of Independence, while about a million and a half of the inhabitants of other States are either emigrants, or the children of those who have emigrated from Massachusetts since the opening of the Revolution. Not the pressure of want at home, but the cheap abundance of a richer soil in the West, tempted these multitudes of our brethren to go out to people the prairie, and subdue the wilderness. The wealth of Massachusetts is probably ten times as great as when the Revolution broke out; some estimates would make it thirty times as great; but if ten times only, it gives to each family, upon an average of the whole Commonwealth, five times the amount of comforts and conveniences of every kind, that they enjoyed before the Revolution. Those who have staid by the old homestead have done well then; if those who have gone and are now going from among us have done better, we desire to be devoutly thankful for the benignant smiles of a kind Providence on our kindred and acquaintance. God speed them on their way, and watch over and bless them in their selected abode, and may they carry

* Population of the United States, in 1776, about 2,600,000. In 1790, 3,921,328. In 1830, 12,866,407. In 1837, about 15,720,000.

Population of Massachusetts, in 1776, 348,094. In 1790, 378,787. In 1830, 610,014. In 1837, about 792,000.

Property of Massachusetts, in 1776 estimated at eleven millions of dollars, but probably at least thirty millions, at the present value of money. In 1830, \$208,660,407. Real value, in 1837, probably exceeding three hundred millions; perhaps four hundred millions.