



## SAMUEL HARRISON SOCIETY

PITTSFIELD MASSACHUSETTS

“NO WARMER FRIENDS HAVE I HAD  
ANYWHERE THAN IN PITTSFIELD”



### HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

#### “SHALL A NATION BE BORN AT ONCE?”

The natal day of a nation is a time of no small consequence, and it is a time to which continual recurrence is had, especially if its existence is brought about by incidents and circumstances of a marked character. The birth of some great man is noted and celebrated with no small degree of fervor and interest annually. But of how much greater importance is the birth of a nation? And as around the individual birth and growth great dangers and much care is needed to guard against them, so is greater care needed in the nurturing and fostering of national birth and existence; and if anxiety is shown in the one case, so much the greater care and anxiety is needed and must be shown in the other. National life and birth demands care and watchfulness. A nation is composed of individuals, and the responsibility rests upon each individual, especially in a republican government. And according to the faithfulness of each individual, who is a part of the nation, will the national existence be vigilantly guarded and defended. Those dangers which occasion fearful apprehensions are both within and without.

We, as American citizens, have peculiar pride in our own nation. We have entered the one hundredth year of our national existence more full of hope than ever before, and have greater reason to be proud. Our geographical limits extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from British North America to the Gulf of Mexico. We have all the varied temperature of climate, and the various productions of earth. We have noble rivers and beautiful lakes which are navigable; mountain ranges and valley scenery which gladden the eye and make joyous the heart. Our country has evidently become the wonder of the world. Our laws are wholesome and good, affording protection to all, wherever loyalty reigns, to the weakest and humblest man. Invidious distinctions are swept away so far as the letter of the law is concerned, and we opine that the day is not distant when the letter and spirit of the law shall go hand in hand, and intelligence become so universal that all shall enjoy their inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Freedom lives today in all this land. There are no slave pens, nor auction blocks. These have all passed away, and thank God for it. This is a free nation and every child now born breathes the pure air of freedom, and all the people will say amen. Though slavery is abolished, and the ex-slaves are enfranchised, and the ballot, which is the palladium of our liberty, still our work is not done. As American citizens and as a nation, we have much yet to do. This nation has its mission, and to [much of] its energies be directed. We are not to lay down and say, having accomplished so much, now we may rest upon our laurels.

By Rev. Samuel Harrison.

Excerpts from a Centennial Sermon delivered in the Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church on July 2nd, 1876.

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