

Bloomsburg, May 18, 1844.

To the People of Columbia County, FELLOW CITIZENS.

After having served you for four consecutive years, as your Representative in the General Assembly of this Commonwealth, I return again to take my place among you, as one of the private citizens and the people of Columbia County, without any intention of again being a candidate for re-election.

To say that I feel grateful for the honors and distinctions you have conferred upon me by your free suffrages, would be but a feeble expression of my sense of the obligations that I am under to you, for your triumphant support of me on the four different occasions I have been a candidate for the Legislature—that obligation I now, and always shall acknowledge, but I am afraid never shall be able to repay.

I cannot, my fellow citizens, take leave of you as your Representative, without rendering you a true, and somewhat detailed, account of my stewardship; and I desire that you should all read this my address to you, and then form for yourselves, a free and unbiased judgment of my acts.

On account of the agitation of a local, but very important question in our county, my situation as a representative, has been attended with rather uncommon trials and difficulties; through which, and in despite of which, I have endeavored from first to last, to discharge my duty to you with honesty and fidelity, and whether I have succeeded in doing so or not, I most cheerfully and with great confidence, leave for you to determine.

I was first elected by you to the Legislature in 1840, and was at that time, as I always have been since I became a citizen of Columbia county, a resident of Bloomsburg. My opinions and feelings were known then as well as they are now, to be in favor of a removal of the Seat of Justice of our county from Danville to that place, yet, I confess, that at that election, I was not supported and voted for as a removal man particularly, but as the regularly nominated candidate of my party; hence, I did not feel it incumbent on me under such circumstances to take part in bringing the question of removal before the Legislature during that session, especially as petitions were not forwarded to me asking me to do so, but contented myself with discharging the ordinary duties of a Representative to the best of my ability, and as I thought to the promotion of the best interest of my constituents.

On my return home, however, and before my re-election, I made no secret of my determination that, in case I should be re-elected, I would at the next session, introduce, advocate and support a bill authorizing a removal of our seat of justice. With a knowledge of this fact the people nominated and elected me. I accordingly introduced a removal bill into the House of Representatives in obedience to the requirements of a large number of petitions, and to what I knew to be the interest and wishes of a large majority of the people of the county. This bill had on file a considerable length of time; it was known to be there and my intention to call it up in due time also known, and yet I heard nothing from you that was not calculated to strengthen my conviction that in doing what I had done, I had fairly represented your wishes. Petitions in favor of the removal, from almost all parts of the county, came pouring in upon the Legislature, the signatures to which amounted to 2786, whilst the signatures to the remonstrances against the Removal, numbered but little over 1500. Under these circumstances, my duty was plain, and my course a clear one. I could not choose but urge the passage of the bill, even had my feelings and disposition been adverse to it. As a democrat I was bound to obey instructions, particularly such as these, coming as they did, directly and unquestionably from a large majority of my constituents.

The obedience I yielded to them on this occasion was not reluctantly done, I assure you, my fellow citizens; but with that pleasure every honest representative should feel in discharging his duty with fidelity to those whom he represents. On the 14th of March I called up my bill, but notwithstanding the exertion of myself and friends,—its opponents proved too strong for us, and the bill was lost on 2d reading, by a vote of Yeas 33, Nays 48. The friends of removal in the House it is true, were a little disappointed at this vote, for knowing the soundness and justice of our cause, we had a right, we thought, to expect a different result, but nothing disheartened, we determined to commence the battle anew, and to take our enemies on another tack; and for the purpose of testing (if they would permit us) the truth or falsity of the representation of those in the Danville interest, that a majority of the people were not in favor of a removal of the seat of justice, it was agreed that another bill should be introduced similar in its provisions, and details to the former; except that the question by this bill, was required to be submitted to the people for their decision, before the law could be carried into effect. An extra session had by this time been agreed upon, and it was thought advisable to defer the introduction of the bill until the re-assembling of the Legislature in the month of June following. Accordingly on the 13th of that month, I gave notice of my intention on the next day, to ask leave to bring in a bill entitled "An act to authorize the people of Columbia county, to vote on the question of the removal of their seat of justice from Danville to Bloomsburg," and in pursuance to this notice, a committee was appointed to prepare and bring in the bill, which I afterwards reported.

To this very fair and reasonable proposition, almost every disinterested man would think that very little if any opposition would be made by those who had contended, from first to last, that a majority of the people of Columbia county were opposed to a removal of their seat of justice; but so far from those interested in Danville, withholding their opposition; this bill, like its predecessor, had to encounter the whole force of that interest. Almost every means and appliance that could be made use of was resorted to by our opponents to stifle the voice of the people of Columbia county, and defeat the passage through the House of Representatives of this bill—but in this effort strong and great as it was our opponents failed, for on the 24th of June the bill was finally passed by the House in the shape of an amendment to another bill by a vote of Yeas 40 Nays 37 rather close to be sure, but the vote in its favor was quite as strong as its most sanguine friends could have reasonably expected under the circumstances of the case. The bill was then of course sent into the Senate, but the influence of the Danville interest was so powerful here that our friends in that body deemed it advisable not to proceed to its consideration, and therefore the session terminated without any further action being taken on it. Some of you, my fellow citizens; may object to the policy of this course, and say that some effort should have been made to have had the bill passed by the Senate as it was by the House, at that session. To those who so object, I would say that unless you had been at Harrisburg during the pendency of this question, you could form but a very imperfect idea of the influence—the exertions—the importunities—and borings the friends of removal were from the commencement to the end, obliged to contend with, whilst the bill was pending before the House; and to have made an effort to pass it through the Senate under these circumstances, and with a gentleman representing our county in that body, hostile to it, would in the unanimous opinion of its friends, have been entirely futile, and would have resulted in nothing but an unnecessary consumption of time and in the end our entire defeat.

Hence was pursued the course I have just adverted to. It will be unnecessary for me, fellow citizens, in this address, to dwell much upon what followed the adjournment of that Legislature. You are all as well aware as myself, of the contrivances and means of various kinds, (amongst which I am sorry to be compelled to class misrepresentation and falsehood) that were made use of by the Danville interest to defeat my election after I had been unanimously and unopposedly nominated for re-election by the friends of removal. The means and instruments then employed by my opponents, and the enemies of removal, were as discreditable to the individuals who made use of them, as they were conclusive to every one of the advocates and injustice of the cause they advocated, and the strength and justice of that they opposed. But through your partiality and kindness, and the great popularity of the question of removal, the acts and devices of my enemies, as directed against me and my principles, proved of no avail; for you triumphantly elected me to serve as your representative for a third time, by the proud majority of nearly nine hundred votes. On my return to the Legislature, after so flattering a manifestation of the renewed confidence of my constituents in me, my duty was again a plain one. Those who elected me had instructed me by their election itself, to continue and persevere in the course I had taken with regard to the question of removal, and I should have been recreant to every principle of honor and fidelity to those who had reposed their confidence in, and chosen me their representative, had I not done so. Accordingly during the first week of the session, namely, on the 5th of January, 1843, I gave notice of my intention on the next day, to ask leave to bring in a bill similar to the one I had introduced at the last regular session, providing for the removal of our seat of justice from Danville to Bloomsburg.

This leave was granted, and in four days afterwards, on the 9th I reported the bill & the House on motion, made it the order of the day for the following Wednesday. On the 12th of the same month it was called up for consideration, and passed through committee of the whole, and when on second reading, the further consideration of it was postponed until the 26th inst. On that day it again came up and passed through second reading. On the 28th it was ordered to be transferred for a third reading, by a vote of Yeas 40, Nays 27, and on the 1st of February it passed finally through the House without the Yeas and Nays being demanded on it. This was the second time the bill had passed the House, and then its friends thought they had reason to believe that it would receive favorable consideration on the part of the Senate. But the same order and arrangement of business, that had been maintained out and commenced at the previous session, was again resorted to and continued by our opponents. Notwithstanding the question was so fairly in issue before the people at their last election—notwithstanding the large majority the removal cause received, and notwithstanding too the previous and repeated declaration and promise of one of the most influential and active of those in the Danville interest, that if I should be elected again as the representative of Columbia county, that as far as he was concerned the contest should cease, and that we should have the removal without further opposition. I say, fellow citizens, that notwithstanding these clear and notorious facts the gentlemen of Danville poured into Harrisburg, in much greater numbers than I ever had the pleasure to see before, and commenced a system of boring, as it is familiarly called, almost unparalleled in the history of legislation. If the prosperity and happiness and I might almost say even the life of every man, woman and child in Columbia county, had depended upon the de-

feat of the removal bill, and they had been the greatest philanthropists of the age, they could not have been more active, untiring, importunate and persevering than they were in their efforts to have the bill defeated in the Senate. Members of that body were impudently in their seats, as well during the session as the recess. They were visited in their chambers and sitting rooms—arguments of every description, and I regret to say, in many instances, misrepresentations of the grossest character, particularly as to the feeling and wishes of the people of Columbia county were made use of by the opponents of the bill to effect its defeat, and in this effort as you already know, they were unfortunately too successful, for on the 25th of February, on the question of the passage of the first section of the bill, the vote stood Yeas 8, Nays 24, & consequently the bill fell by a majority of three to one.

I wish, fellow citizens, for the credit of some gentlemen of our county, that no more mischief and injustice had been attempted to be inflicted upon you at that session of the Legislature; that the enemies of your interests had contented themselves with defeating a bill, fair and reasonable in its provisions, and one that a large majority of the people had petitioned for, and had elected a senator and representative with the view of having passed into a law; but that I regret to say was not the case, and I am therefore here constrained by a sense of duty, to direct your attention to another matter, disreputable I must be permitted to say, to all concerned in it. I allude to the attempted division of Columbia county, for the purpose of forming a new county out of part of it and a part of Luzerne. You all know, fellow citizens, that such an attempt as I speak of, was made, but perhaps you do not know that this iniquitous scheme was not only countenanced and connived at, but absolutely urged on and electrocuted, by the whole Danville interest.

Connected with this attempt to divide & cut up our county, I could, if I was disposed to introduce the acts and names of particular individuals in this address, relate some circumstances of falsehood; misrepresentation; imposition and fraud, connected with the progress of this bill through the Legislature; which could not do otherwise than startle and astonish you. But I forbear my purpose is not to denounce or expose to your indignation any one; but to give you a fair and true account of what transpired in relation to our local question during my career as your representative. This famous, or rather infamous, Madison county bill, of which I have spoken, was introduced into the senate by Mr. Headley, on the 9th of January. On the 13th of the same month, the senate proceeded to the consideration of it, and on second reading the further consideration of it was postponed until the following Monday. It was then called up again, and again postponed for the present. On the 16th it was called up for the third time, and passed a second reading; by a vote of Yeas 15, Nays 14. On the 13th of February following it was ordered to be transferred for a third reading by a vote of Yeas 16, Nays 12. On the 21st of March it came up on third reading. A motion was made by Mr. Kidder and Mr. Crabb, to amend the bill in such a manner as to submit the question of division to the people living within the bounds of the contemplated new county. On this question, the vote stood Yeas 12, Nays 13. The question on the final passage of the bill then coming up it was carried by a vote of Yeas 15, Nays 13.

You will observe fellow citizens, that on all the votes connected with the progress and passage of this bill, the number of them was small. At no time could a majority of a full senate be obtained to support the bill but by boring of the most inconstant character, the enemies of removal always succeeded in procuring a sufficient number of dodgers to give their friends a majority; and consequently to pass the bill. I will not pretend, in the limited space I have allotted to myself in this address, to recapitulate the various and almost innumerable acts, devices, arguments and tricks; resorted to by the enemies of removal and friends of Danville and division, to succeed in their iniquitous purpose. I will, however, remark that the most cogent and effective one was, that the passage of this bill would forever put to rest the question of removal in the county, and hence save the Legislature in future much trouble and the state a considerable expense both of which would necessarily accompany a further agitation of the matter. So that fellow citizens, for the purpose of continuing the seat of justice at Danville, and saving the gentlemen of that place the trouble and expense of annually repairing to Harrisburg, to oppose and defeat the wishes, interests and voice of the people, the counties of Luzerne and Columbia were to be divided, and a new county formed against the interests and wishes of almost the whole of the people of both, and against the almost unanimous voice of those living within the proposed bounds. Here was disinterested patriotism displayed with a vengeance; and I submit to you whether the evidence of attachment to your interests manifested by the opponents of removal upon this occasion, is not in entire keeping with the whole course of their conduct upon this subject. From the very commencement of the agitation of the question has not their principle always been, every thing for Danville, no matter what sacrifice, cost or expense! Yes, fellow citizens, they would at any time if in their power gladly divide your county, even against your almost unanimous remonstrance to prevent the removal of the seat of justice.

I will now, by your permission, follow this bill into the House of Representatives and trace its progress in that body. On the 21st of March, the bill was brought in by the clerk of the senate when I moved to refer it to a select committee; but on motion of Mr. Barrett this motion was amended, and the bill was referred to the committee on the judiciary system, that being one of the standing committees of the body. Before that committee, Col. Wright, of Luzerne, myself and several opponents of the bill, appeared with your remonstrances against its passage, and endeavored by a true representation of facts, to induce the committee to report unfavorably to it. We were met by Mr. Headley, and others favorable to the bill, who, by their representation (I will not although I might with propriety and truth use a harsher term) endeavored to counteract our exertions and disprove our statements. On the 29th of the same month, Mr. Barrett reported the bill to the House as committed and it was laid on the table for the present. To tell you, fellow citizens, of all the dishonorable means that were made use of to carry this iniquitous bill through the House would occupy a larger space of this address than the limits I have confined myself to would admit of. Suffice it to say that nothing in the shape of misrepresentation and imposition was left untried to effect the object. Old memorials praying for the erection of new counties out of parts of Lycoming, Luzerne, Schuylkill and Columbia, were abstracted from the pigeon holes and shelves where some of them had been lying for years, and presented to the House as petitions from citizens of Fishing creek and other townships in Columbia county, praying for the erection of the new county of Madison. Yes, fellow citizens, disgraceful as this act was, yet it was done, and done so by men claiming to be honest and respectable citizens. I detected most fortunately the fraud myself, and of course promptly exposed it. If the truth of this allegation should be denied, I pledge myself to verify it at any time by my oath, and prove it by the testimony of a number of members of both branches of the Legislature who were eye witnesses to this foul transaction. So much for the means employed by our enemies to effect their object. What was the result? Why the House refused even to consider the bill. On the 14th of April, a motion was made to proceed to the consideration of it, which failed by a vote of Yeas 26, Nays 49. Another, and the last motion of the same kind, was made on the 17th, and on the question of its adoption, the vote stood Yeas 26, Nays 51, so that with all the boring, misrepresentation, falsehood and fraud that was made use of by the friends of Danville and division, not more than twenty six, out of the hundred members of the House of Representatives, could be found to countenance and support their nefarious scheme of dividing the county of Columbia. I have now fellow citizens traced up this question to the conclusion of the session of the Legislature of 1843.

It is of course unnecessary for me to recapitulate what occurred from that time to the commencement of the late session, that of 1844. As you all know, I had the honor to be again nominated and elected as your representative and the friend of Removal. In obedience then, to the pledges I made those who placed me in nomination, and through them to you my constituents, I again, on the 4th of January, introduced into the House of Representatives a bill authorizing a Removal of the Seat of Justice of our county. On the 11th of that month I moved to postpone the orders of the day for the purpose of proceeding to the consideration of it. A division of the question was called by an opponent of the bill, when the House by a vote of 71 yeas to 25 nays adopted my motion and proceeded to the consideration of it. It passed through committee of the whole, and came immediately before the House on second reading. A motion was made by another opponent to postpone the further consideration of the bill for the present; which was defeated by a vote of yeas 33, nays 60. Another was then made by the same gentleman to commit the bill to the committee on the Judiciary evidently with the view to put off action until the borers could get to work at the members; but this motion, like its predecessor, failed by a most decided majority, the yeas being 30, whilst the nays were 64. Nothing daunted however, by these repeated large votes and decided expressions of the House in favor of the bill and against any postponement of action upon it, a further opponent moved to postpone the further consideration of it until the 25th inst.; when it becoming evident that it was the disposition of our enemies to tire out our patience if possible by these vexatious motions so repeatedly made; the friends of the bill found it necessary to call the previous question, which was sustained by the house by a vote of yeas 61, nays 34, and the bill was then permitted to pass through second reading without a division, and on the question of suspending the rule to read it the third time, the vote stood yeas 61, nays 32; there not being quite two thirds in its favor the motion failed; but on the 12th the bill came up regularly before the House on third reading, and passed finally through that body the same day by the unprecedented and triumphant vote of yeas 65, nays 28. Thus a majority of 15 against, as was, by your perseverance, and the force and power of truth and justice, changed in the space of two years to a majority of 37, or more than two to one in our favor.

Was not this, my fellow citizens, a most glorious consummation?—was it not something like a reward as far as our branch of the Legislature was concerned, for your labor of thirty years in the cause of equity and justice? I wish as much could be said of the action of the other branch; but there it was that we always had to meet and contend with the most formidable opposition—for it was on that body the friends of Danville always brought their heaviest artillery to bear—it was on that body that they always thought to make the greatest and deepest impression; by that system of tactics which is always resorted to in deep-

rate or weak cases, viz: personal and importunate boring—at playing this game the gentlemen of Danville, I am willing to admit, are without superiors—and therefore in justice to them, I willingly and without hesitation yield them the palm. What they have failed to convince you of after laboring to do it for thirty years, namely, that the seat of justice in Columbia County was originally fairly located in Danville, and that it is to your interest that it should remain there, they have calculated upon and heretofore have but too well succeeded in boring the Senate of Pennsylvania to believe. But, fellow citizens, thanks to your spirit and determination, as well as to your righteous cause, this power is now and forever at an end, and if the friends of removal should only henceforth be true to themselves, my word for it, they have nothing to fear from either branch of the Legislature or any other quarter.

I will now in the last place, follow this bill into the Senate and trace its progress there. On the 2d of February, a motion was made by Mr. Kidder and Mr. Crabb to proceed to its consideration, which was agreed to, and the bill passed through committee of the whole and came up immediately on second reading, when a motion was made to recommit it to the committee on the Judiciary, which was agreed to, and on the next day Mr. Kidder, chairman, reported the bill again to the Senate in the shape in which you will find it appended to this address.

I ask you, my fellow citizens, to favor me by an examination of the provisions of this bill. You will all recollect that in the canvass between Mr. Fruit and myself, the opponents of removal charged its friends with endeavoring through me, to have a bill passed for the removal which would tax the people of the county to erect the public buildings at Bloom, and by that means add to their already too heavy pecuniary burdens I say to you, on my honor, that that never was my intention or wish; nor was it the wish of any man who is a friend of removal in the county, as far as my acquaintance or knowledge extends. It is true the bill which passed the House, provided that any change in the style or dimensions of the buildings should be made at the expense of an increase of county rates and levies if necessary, but that rested altogether with the Commissioners, who would doubtless have been governed by what they found to be the general feeling on the subject. But even this argument and objection was taken from our opponents by the bill which was introduced into the senate, and supported by the friends of removal, as one which they were perfectly willing to take. By reading it, fellow citizens, you will find that its passage so far from taking money out of the Treasury, would have absolutely put money in; for by its provisions the new public buildings were to be erected exclusively by private subscription, the old buildings sold, and the proceeds of the sale placed in the treasury for the benefit of the county. Yet this change in the features of the bill, produced no change in the pertinacity and violence by which its passage was opposed. The same system of tactics that I have before noticed, was resorted to and practised by those in the Danville interest, only to an increased extent. I will not attempt to describe to you, the various means resorted to by our opponents to effect their purpose for any description I could give would afford you but a very imperfect idea of the reality. I will however, repeat that this time, as before, no means were left untried, so far from taking money out of the Treasury, would have absolutely put money in; for by its provisions the new public buildings were to be erected exclusively by private subscription, the old buildings sold, and the proceeds of the sale placed in the treasury for the benefit of the county. Yet this change in the features of the bill, produced no change in the pertinacity and violence by which its passage was opposed. The same system of tactics that I have before noticed, was resorted to and practised by those in the Danville interest, only to an increased extent. 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