

# Columbia Democrat.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson

H. WEBB, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Volume X.]

BLOOMSBURG, COLUMBIA COUNTY, PA. SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1846.

Number 12.

COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

BLOOMSBURG, JULY 11, 1846.

## The Extension of the Union. —AN ADDRESS—

DELIVERED AT ORANGEVILLE, JULY 4,  
1846, BY

CHARLES R. HUCKLEW.

GENTLEMEN:—Our first census was taken in 1790. The population of the Union was then 3,929,829. At the time of the Revolution the number was about 3,000,000. The original number of States we knew was thirteen. We are to-day just fifty-six years distant from the date of that census, and seventy years from that of the Declaration of Independence. During these seventy years our population has gone up from three millions to twenty; and our national limits have been made to include fifteen additional States! We are just one lifetime removed—just "three score years and ten," from our national birth-day, and this is the result! Our experiment, for our Government was an experiment, has admirably succeeded, and the bitterest enemies of republicanism must now admit the practicability of its permanent and successful establishment.

When our Union was formed, great danger was apprehended, by some, on account of the extent of territory united. It was questioned whether so many States as thirteen—extending through eleven degrees of latitude, and along a sea coast of a thousand miles—would long hold together. But our fathers had faith in themselves and in the future: the experiment was tried—and here we are to-day—the second naval power in the world—almost without a debt—the Union firmer than ever—with fifteen new States—the great territories settling up—an increase of seventeen millions of souls—and the people, thank God, still free!

Mr. Madison was right in arguing that extent of territory was not dangerous to the perpetuity of the Union. Time has tested his argument and established it. Our Union has wonderfully and rapidly extended, without becoming weakened or corrupted—and by this, our example, it is demonstrated, as foretold, that "a Republic may be extended over a large region." (*Federalist No. 14*) [*See Appendix A*]

Our Government has made several important acquisitions of territory since 1800, beside extending Territories and States westward by extinguishment of Indian title. In 1803 Mr. Jefferson purchased of France the great territory of Louisiana for \$15,000,000. It has since been cut up into several States, and now constitutes a large portion of the Republic. Mr. Jefferson's purchase was most violently and bitterly assailed at the time, but he had sagacity and energy for the occasion, and supported by a majority of the nation, the great measure was effected. Who is there now to say that this purchase was unwise? Who would be willing that the States of Missouri, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana should be held by a foreign power—that the mouth of the great river of the west—"the Father of Waters"—should be upon alien territory? The fears of those who foresaw disunion as the result of that purchase, are shown to have been most foolish and unfounded: the Union has strengthened with age, and no part of it is more valuable, or possesses a warmer devotion for republican government, than this southern extension of the great Valley of the Mississippi. It is a part of the Republic, wisely acquired, and may the stars and stripes float over it forever!

Florida was obtained from Spain in 1819 after protracted negotiations, under the administration of Mr. Monroe—giving us an uninterrupted line of gulf coast from the ocean to the Sabine. John Quincy Adams, a man of singular fortune—who, never a strict partisan, has figured conspicuously in public life for 50 years—conducted the negotiations as Secretary of State. Florida is now a State, adding to the security and strength of the Union—enjoying the blessings of good government, and advancing rapidly in prosperity and power.

Another, a late acquisition of territory, seven times larger than Pennsylvania, has produced a warm, protracted discussion throughout the Union. It met with honest opposition—it had energetic support. In the bar-room, on the stump, in the debating club, in the chamber of legislation and by the fire-side, it was, for years, searchingly and ardently discussed. All this is past: it is historical—and to revive those discussions would be mischievous folly.

But this annexation has given rise to war—an existing war—and in so far as it is legitimately connected with that struggle, I propose to allude to it, and that not in a partisan spirit, but solely because it is so connected with existing foreign relations, and with the subject of this discourse.

GENTLEMEN:—The sympathy of this country was strongly enlisted in favor of Mexico in her struggle with Spain. At the earliest proper period we recognized her as an independent State, and we have ever since sought to cultivate with her the most friendly relations. These earnest and sincere efforts have not, as they ought, been entirely successful. Many years ago, citizens of Mexico committed numerous depredations upon our commerce. That they were unjust and indefensible has been fully admitted by Mexico herself; and the faith of her government was given to us to make adequate reparation. This has been long and vexatiously delayed. Our citizens suffering from Mexican wrongs, have gone uncompensated. Our government has made its repeated appeals, in their behalf, to Mexican magnanimity and justice, in vain. The recognition of the claims, and the settlement of three out of twenty instalments upon a portion of them, is all that Mexico has done. All the rest is shuffling, evasion, pretence. Long since, under the laws of nations, we would have been justified in declaring war against her, in asserting our rights by force. But our course has been forbearing. Under the provocations of insult and injury, we have restrained indignation and preserved peace. With a weaker power we could be long-suffering without incurring an imputation of cowardice; and hence, Mexico has escaped merited chastisement. Even now, the war between us is chargeable upon her. Not a blow was struck, or a gun fired by us, until she rendered it necessary by invasion and actual assault. Before the capture of Thornton's command our military operations had been precautionary and not aggressive.

When a nation has no just cause for war she pretends one—and Mexico has her pretence for invading our territory and slandering our citizens. She alleges that we have committed a sort of larceny upon her soil, and transferred to ourselves the allegiance of a people who was her subject; in other words, that Texas continues to be a right part of her territory, and that we have wrongfully annexed it.

I shall proceed to show that this Mexican assertion is untrue—and but few words will be necessary for that purpose. Let it be remembered that Mexico cannot make the same objections to annexation that were made in the United States when that measure was proposed. Mexico cannot use the local & peculiar arguments with which that measure was met among us. It was argued here very much as a question of expediency; and, clearly, to all considerations of that kind Mexico is a stranger. She has nothing to do with our political discussions about assuming the Texian debt—about the balance of power between the northern and southern States—about the policy of extending our territory, and questions of a similar character. She has no pretence for objection to annexation except upon one ground, and that is, that Texas was a part of her territory. This objection asserts on her part a right of domain—of control—of jurisdiction—and requires proof. Let her prove her assertion or abandon it. Let her make out her title to Texian soil before she brands this republic as a trespasser upon her rights.

Can she establish such title by showing that Texas entered into the Mexican confederation of 1824? But, is it not equally clear that that confederation was subverted,

was overturned by a military usurpation, and a government new in form and in fact substituted, into which Texas never entered and the authority of which over her she always denied?—The Mexican confederation of 1824 was modelled after our Union, and Texas entering into it along with Coahuila, placed herself in a situation similar to that of one of the states of this Union. Now if our General Government were destroyed,—the constitution of our union abrogated,—what would be the position of the several states? Why, precisely the position of Texas in 1834: they would be independent sovereignties—free to form new political connections, or not at their pleasure—and no one of them could rightfully be obliged to enter into a new general Government, differing in material features from the old. All rightful authority in government is founded upon the consent of the governed. Texas never having consented to enter into a new government founded on the ruins of the confederation of 1824, was never a part of Mexico subsequent to the destruction of that confederation. The assertion therefore of any right by Mexico over Texas since 1834, being without consent from its citizens, is nothing less than a flagrant usurpation. Annexation then, cannot afford Mexico a just cause for war, for the simple reason that she had no existing rights to be injured or affected thereby. Her rights were extinguished, utterly, when the confederation of '24 was sundered, and were never revived though the subsequent years of revolution and disorder with which that country has been cursed and degraded. We are therefore, without fault of ours, plunged into the existing war—a war hitherto most glorious to our arms and the result of which it is not difficult to foretell. The humbling of Mexico and the acquisition of California, are natural consequences of the pending struggle—and the judgement of the country will eventually approve of the acquisition that causes, and the acquisition that follows, the Mexican war of 1846. Hitherto no territory has been acquired by us from a foreign power by force. We have held in no reluctant subjection a vanquished people—we have made no conquests by the sword. In the case of Texas, no force was used to acquire, however it may be in defending it.

But, our acquisitions of Indian territory have been forcible. As regards the Indians the action of the whites, since their first settlement on this continent, has been aggressive. We have pushed westward the red-race, killed their warriors and occupied their hunting grounds. "The red race has disappeared from the Atlantic coast—the tribes that resisted civilization, met extinction." (Benton) True, Penn purchased Pennsylvania of the natives—an act that has been greatly lauded as one of justice and honor—and the general Government has made the Indians some compensation for their western cessions of soil. But it holds true, as a general remark, that the retreat westward of the red race has been the result of force. But is it clear, that in this the white-race has been in the wrong—that the natives of this continent have reason for complaint? At the creation the command was given to man, to "replenish the earth & subdue it" (Gen. 1.28) & after the fall, it is said, "the Lord God sent man forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground whence he was taken, and declared that "in the sweat of his face should he eat bread." (Gen. iii. 23 and 19.) These commands were never fulfilled by the aborigines of this continent. Was it our duty then, in the white race to "till the ground"—to replenish and subdue it—to extend to the new world the light of civilization and Christianity? Judge Brackenridge says, "the aborigines of this continent can have but small pretence to a soil which they have never cultivated." "The law of nature where the law of revelation is not known, sufficiently enjoins on every man that he contract his claim of soil to equal bounds and pursue that manner of life which is most consistent with the general population of the earth and the increase of happiness to mankind. And it will easily appear that the mode of life by pasturage or hunting requires a more extensive territory than by agriculture; and at the same time, from the very circumstance of thin political action and faith. And what scattered settlements in that state, the adds to the merit of this spectacle is, powers of genius are inactive, the arts and sciences remain unknown, and man continues to be an animal differing in nothing but in shape from the beasts of prey that roam upon the mountain. The life of these is therefore not human—for it is abhorrent from the way of life which God and nature point out as the life of man." (*Law Miscellany*, 124.)

The savage tribes are disqualified for worthily occupying this continent—for carrying out the designs of Providence upon it—and hence they melt away to give place to a more powerful race. The tribe of Snake Indians in southern Oregon, subsisted solely upon fish, caught easily during summer in Snake river and its branches, "but are not provident enough to lay up a sufficient store for winter, during which many of them die from absolute starvation." "While the summer and salmon last, they live contented and happy, and when snow falls retire to the mountains, where, in miserable groups they starve out the winter, half clothed, driven to every extremity for food, & eating every insect & creeping thing however loathsome and repulsive." (*Fremont*.) The Digger race of Indians, far to the south, are still more degraded. They are "dispersed in single families, without fire-arms—eating seeds and insects and digging roots" for a subsistence. Other Indians, "a degree higher, live in communities upon some lake or river supplying fish and from which they repulse the miserable digger." (*Fremont*.) Can it be possible that Providence intended this continent to be permanently occupied by such inhabitants; while the pinching want and the fierce cry among the surplus millions of Europe, should be for land? Here was an abundance of soil: it was partially occupied, but it was not used. A race came westward for its occupation: a race rich in the learning, the faith, the civilization and the vigor of the east; and this race—the Teutonic of the old world,—has become the invigorator of the new. It has worthily fulfilled its mission. It has made the wilderness "bloom and blossom as the rose"—it has shaken off the superstitions of the ancient time, the venerable errors of age—it has exhumed the liberty of the Greek from the sepulchre of centuries, breathed into it a new, purified and chastened life, suited to the age and the continent—and here, here whence it ejected the savage, has made the happiness of man to be the end and aim of human government!

And now, would it be desirable "to roll back the tide of time,"—undo the work of three centuries—blot out the only great Republic on earth, to fix again the Indian in his native wilds, that a desert land might be vocal again with the cry of wild beasts and of savage men? No—the extension of Republican government over Indian territory is our duty as it is our destiny, and an attempt to prevent such extension would be a war upon the interests of mankind and upon the decrees of fate. Let this continent be the seat of science, of art, of knowledge, of civilization, of peace, and above all, of liberty. So shall we perform our duty and advance the interests of humanity. [*See Appendix B*]

GENTLEMEN:—Over this vast extent of territory, made up of the original thirteen, and subsequent additions of foreign and Indian soil; what a wise system of government is extended! How admirably adapted to the wishes and wants of man! And how naturally it advances over new citizens and soil!—We have, joined in our population, the descendants of almost every people under Heaven; but from them all the Government receives a willing and sincere allegiance. We have widely diversified climates, productions, interests; and yet no part of the Union seeks to dissolve its voluntary connection with the rest. Racially, in the old world, antagonists, are here fused together & exist in blended harmony. Districts cut apart by great mountains, come willingly together, by representation, in

one council chamber; & assimilate closely by force. The connection of parts is voluntary, and producing rich fruits, may long endure is the wish of every true-hearted American; and that it may be extended until it binds together the whole of North America is, I think, the further wish, of most of the sagacious minds, in the Republic. At this last proposition, I know, the timid tremble, the doubtful hesitate, and the narrow minded sneer. But the ejection of all alien institutions from this continent—the purging of it from the curse of monarchical colonization on the one hand, and bastard republicanism on the other—the establishment of liberty in the Canadas and of order in Mexico—these ideas touched neither with fanaticism or folly and naturally spring from an examination of our position and history. But, how shall these things be done? Is it said that difficulties interpose—that hesitating opinion must be lashed into action—objections must be met—interests conciliated, and foreign powers appeased—before successful steps can be taken in the direction proposed? At the most, these difficulties may be but temporary—they may be surmounted, and the union of North America, eventually effected and with honor. Our fathers had faith in the future. We would do well to imitate their example—and shape our policy do as to extend; at the earliest moment, the institutions which they founded over this division of the western world.

But at every step in our Republican career; at the formation of the Government—at the purchase of Louisiana—when Florida was acquired—when ever a new State is added in the west—while Oregon is being settled—when Texas was annexed—while the existing war rages toward the Californias—while the patriotic eye turns to the future for further extensions of "the area of freedom"—we have been met and armed, with the croakings of the skeptical and the timid. "The Union will be dissolved" was the shout of 1803 as it has been the cavil of 1778—and it has had its repetitions at every actual and prospective accession of territory since. This cry of danger to the Union from extension, is founded upon a misconception of the character of our Government. By the division of the Union into States, and these again into smaller subdivisions—by a gradation of courts from national to township limits—by limiting the tenure of office—by means of frequent elections—by giving to religious faith unfettered freedom—by checks upon the entailment of property—and by equal distribution in case of intestacy, we prevent the concentration of political or social power. From such concentration, the fearing evils of society, and the insecurity of government, in all ages, have principally arisen. The unequal distribution of wealth, and the disfranchisement of the citizen, have been the fruitful sources of discontent, suffering and bloodshed. Our system is not perfect, but constitutional and social reform are practicable without convulsion, as experience may exhibit their necessity. Already wonderful in its excellence, our system is one of progress; and the people of these States are fully competent to rectify in it what is wrong, and to add what is wanting. New York is now engaged in the work of constitutional reform, and it is to be hoped that she will "strike home," without rancor, to all the rotten and defective points in her organic law.

Reverence for error is perhaps more to be combated than rashness of innovation, as the chain of habit is stronger than the charm of novelty. True radicalism is always sincere and often sagacious—and when it stands in advance of the time, its position is one of honor, and the future will do it justice. Strike then, out hearts of New York! fearless and true! and be assured that the plaudits and gratitude of the friends of good government throughout the Union, will accompany your labor and reward your zeal. Pennsylvania eight years ago, and other States more recently, have amended their constitutions—and the work of reform will go on hereafter. It is the division of the Union into such States, that constitutes its strength and insures its perpetuity. Its extension is but the extension of States; with powers constitutionally reserved, upon all subjects not purely national in their character, and with capacity and disposition to amend and adapt their local constitutions and laws to the wishes of the people and the progress of public sentiment. In what few matters are of national concern, and administration the very diversity of interests produced by extended territory, is a bond of strength. They neutralize the capacity of each other for mischief. No one interest will be oppressed or insulated by another—for other interests will interpose—both from a sense of justice and from a prudent apprehension of needing in their turn such interposition.

Our Union is very much a device for preserving peace among independent States, and to protect them from foreign aggression. The first of these objects is what the Peace society propose to effect by a Congress of nations. We have here the instance of peace and concord insured among twenty seven States or Republics, by a device similar to that by which an organization of Philanthropists propose to harmonize the world. Extend then this peaceful instrumentality of Union. Philanthropy invites and Experience sanctions it.

APPENDIX.  
(A) As to the strength of a confederate Republic—Montesquieu says:—"It has all the internal advantages of a republic, together with all the extended force of a monarchical government." (*Spirit of Laws*, vol. 1. b. 2. ch. 1.) And as to its extent, Mr. Madison says:—"Its natural limit is that distance from the centre, which will barely allow the representatives of the people to meet as often as may be necessary for the administration of public affairs." (*Federalist*, No. 14.) It will be recollected, that when this sentiment was written by Mr. Madison nothing was known of the wonderful capacities of steam and electricity for producing speedy intercourse & business connections between places far distant from each other. The recent discoveries of the powers of steam and telegraph are among the most wonderful ever made in the world—and render it practicable to extend the Union of states, without inconvenience or danger, much farther than was originally contemplated.

(B) The aborigines of America had resembling possession of the country; and the question is, did this give them a good title to the soil, as against all other races, under all circumstances? If it be granted, that they had a perfect right to the soil, all acquisitions by the whites, without their consent, would clearly be unjust. But if it appear that they had no perfect right to the soil, the settlement of it by other races may be highly laudable instead of censurable. This brings us to inquire,