

**Address to the Citizens of Worcester upon the arrival of the  
Lady Carrington by way of the Blackstone Canal on October 7,  
1828 by Selectman, Colonel Merrick**

***Printed in the National Aegis, October 15, 1828***

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**On the completion of the great enterprise which we have here assembled to witness in the passage of the first Boat along the whole route of its peaceful waters, the common feeling of universal congratulations which animates every bosom in the great multitude around us, ought not to be silenced or repressed: and as one of the Municipal authorities of the Town in which this inland navigation terminates, I cheerfully yield to the request of my neighbors to express a few of the unpremeditated thoughts which crowd upon us on the occurrence of this interesting occasion.**

**It is a consideration worthy of our attention, that this great work of internal improvement has at length been effected mainly by the wealth and enterprise of the citizens of a sister State, which was formerly the residence of one, now no more, of great vigor and forecast, who more than forty years ago projected the enterprise which is now accomplished; the legacy of whose example, improved upon as it has been, is far more precious than the bequest of the princely fortune which his successful industry had amassed.**

**This work so long the subject of speculation is at last accomplished. The doubts of the skeptical are put at rest, and the hopes of the confident find their vindication and triumph in the event we assembled to witness. This day should be, as it is, to all who are within the reach of the influence of this great work, a day of congratulation and rejoicing. The spirit of patriotism is animated in beholding the development of the resources which have opened a new channel for industry and competition, which in their results may add alike to the wealth and the comfort of the people; and to us, who are at the head of these now navigable waters, the day should be one unqualified gratification.**

**We may learn from the past, how much we are indebted to this enterprise for our present prosperity, and what the hopes which may be reasonably indulged, as to its future advantages. For twenty years previous to the grant of the charter of the Blackstone Canal, the population of this village was nearly stationary. The annual census of the minors of the Centre School District, taken for the purpose of distributing the monies raised by the town for the education of youth, exhibits the fact, that the increase in minors from 1802 to 1822 was only seventy; the number having been in the former of those years, 447, and in the latter, 517; - While in the space of five years, from 1822 to 1827, the increase was three hundred and ninety seven: the whole number being in the latter year 914. The census of the present year has not yet been taken; but the increase is unquestionably great as in any during the last mentioned interval. It is not perhaps certain that the annual enumerations of which I have spoken were made with entire accuracy; but they are sufficiently certain to mark the great impetus which has recently been given to the tide of population within our limits. - There are other facts, too, which indicate a similar result. The street that passes parallel to the head of this Canal, bearing the name of one of our most venerable citizen, was long a lonely and neglected pathway; a solitary and untrodden place. Look at it now; and behold its convenient well built mansions; the shops and manufactories which have now nearly filled it; and mark the constant passage along its way; now scarcely less than twenty years ago since was seen in the Main Street and great post road which leads through our village. Look too at the spot where we stand. These lands which, as it were but yesterday, were well nigh waste and desolate are now held as the most valuable of our property. Ask the owners for the prices for which they will part with them, and you will find that feet are now deemed as valuable as acres once were. The morass has risen to solid land; and the waters which have heretofore stagnated on its surface, gathered into this excavation, and these basins now a wealth and value where before they blighted and destroyed.**

**These are but few and scarcely the most striking of the evidence of the new prosperity which is giving life, activity and value to all around us. It may be seen in the enlargement of all parts of our**

village; in the increase of its people, in the busy labors of the mechanic arts and of the various employments of life; and above all, in the consistent occupations and universal contentment of an industrious and thriving population.

I will not speak of our future hopes. Whatever and how great soever they may be, they are not the vain imaginations of visionary idlers, but of men who shrink not from the struggle of competition, whose hands are ready to grasp whatever labor is able to accomplish.

Our hopes are indeed high; but we are not unmindful of the foundations on which they rest. We see in the great improvement in which we rejoice; new channels of industry and new means for enterprise. We know, and we are grateful that it is so, that this noble work is not the lap of inglorious ease or soft effeminacy spread out for our response. Far hence be the day, when wide spread luxury shall embrace the hardy muscles of the vigorous race of men who dwell on the confines of these inland waters – who have subdued the rough hills and given beauty to the vallies of this heart of the Commonwealth. We rejoice in this day: not that we are rich; not that we are at ease; but in the conviction that this more expanded field of enterprise will be diligently harvested by the energetic exertions of our population. Let then the products of the verdant hills and teeming vallies around us be wafted to a market on this new and easy pathway – Let it partake of the benefits of all our resources; of the gatherings from the surface of the earth and the treasures beneath it - treasures inexhaustible we trust in the masses of Coal which lie buried in our neighboring hills. It will bring back to us an ample reward – a reward which will be seen in the daily and yearly increase of all classes of population, and in the increased demand for the various occupations of industry already so successfully prosecuted here.

The day then that witnesses the mooring of this boat at the head of this artificial navigation is fitly devoted to our rejoicing. The multitudes that throng these banks and wharfs are yet but few of those who shall hereafter participate in the benefits which may be anticipated from it; nor can the pealing canon, which is even

**now to proclaim our rejoicings to a wider circle than is here assembled; send the faintest echo of its thunders to that far distance; which shall feel the grateful and awakening influence of the great work, which we may say to day is done.”**