I consider myself one of the luckiest Members of Congress, to have a Robert Moss, a man of two worlds, who's able to travel among the spirit world and the real world, the past and the present, to tell the stories of our heroes and villains, of virtue and vice. He's not just chronicling history, he's bringing it to life through remarkable stories about an underreported part of America, and helping people to understand events, victories, and tragedies that are essential to understanding who we are and what cooperation among cultures it took to get us here.

Lastly, with cooperation again in the valley, we can dream about all the possibilities that we can achieve. Thank you Robert Moss. The people of the valleys salute you and your work and wish you that greatest success.

I am including for the RECORD "The World of the Firekeeper," which was prepared by Robert Moss for this event.

THE WORLD OF THE FIREKEEPER

The North-East frontier was the decisive frontier in American history. In the 1600s and 1700s, New York, New England, and Pennsylvania were the scene of three gigantic and often tragic struggles: between the newcomers and the native inhabitants, between the British and French empires, and between Loyalists and Patriots. The battles that were fought here—especially at Saratoga and Oriskany, in upstate New York, in 1777—decided the fate of the American Revolution and opened the way to the West.

In many ways, it was on this first frontier, already 150 years old by the end of the French and Indian Wars, that a distinctively American identity was born—diverse, self-reliant, impatient with the Old World conceptions of inherited rank and station. The first wave of mass immigration from Europe came from Europe to New York in 1710, with the arrival of 3,000 Palatine Germans. Colonial New York and Pennsylvania became the first "melting pots," with the rising tide of immigrants from many nations.

On the Northern Frontier, the pioneer settlers encountered two families of Indian nations: the Iroquoians and the Algonkians. Before first contact with Europeans, five Iroquois nations, guided by a prophet called the Peacemaker, had come together to form a great Confederacy whose constitution impressed Ben Franklin so powerfully that he recommended it as a model to the divided colonists. Renowned for their oratory and statecraft, feared by their enemies as ruthless and courageous fighters, the Iroquois commanded two vital river-roads through the forests that were all-important in early trade and warfare: the Hudson-Champlain route between New York and Canada, and the Mohawk River-Oswego route that led from the English colonies towards the Great Lakes and the North American heartland.

The warrior Iroquois were also a matriarchal society. A Mohawk myth recalls how a woman led the people's long migration across the north of the continent to an area near modern Quebec City and finally down into the Mohawk Valley. The clanmothers picked the chiefs, and the women occasionally "de-horned" a chief who failed in his duties. The women insisted on the ancient teaching that a chief must consider the consequences of his actions down to the seventh generation after himself.

But the arrival of the Europeans threw traditional Iroquois society into turmoil. The newcomers brought firearms and metal tools; it became vital to have these. The newcomers created a new appetite for alcohol, which was previously unknown to the Woodland Indians, and which they had little ability to metabolize. The traders wanted furs—and increasingly, land—in return for guns and goods and liquor. The Iroquois were soon caught up in savage warfare with neighboring tribes over the control of the fast-diminishing supplies of beaver and other furs. Their losses in battle were less devastating than the terrible inroads of alien diseases—smallpox, influenza, and measles—to which the Indians had never been exposed and for which traditional healers had no remedies.

By the early 1700s, caught up in a struggle for survival, the Iroquois were deeply divided. Should they side with the British or the French, or stand neutral, in the conflict between world empires that was now being played out on American soil? Should they reject their ancient spiritual traditions—which taught the necessary balance between humans, the earth and the spirit worlds and the supreme importance of dreaming—or follow the God of the foreigners who came with cannons and horses?

Into this scene walked William Johnson (1715–1774), one of the most extraordinary men in American history. His Irish roots and his rise to power and fortune on the first frontier are described in vivid detail in "The Firekeeper." Johnson came to the New World, like so many other immigrants, in hopes of getting ahead. Starting out as a trader and farm manager in the Mohawk Valley, he eventually succeeded in making himself one of the richest men in the colonies. Through fair dealings and by immersing himself in their lives and customs, Johnson developed a personal influence among the Iroquois that enabled him to persuade them to fight on the British side in the French and Indian wars. This was a decisive contribution to the eventual British victory, since the British never won a significant battle in the American woodlands without the help of Iroquois scouts and auxiliaries. As an amateur general, Johnson led a restive force of New England militiamen and Iroquois rangers to victory over a professional French commander at the Battle of Lake George.

But the significance of Johnson's achievement, in the history of the American frontier, goes much deeper. Though he became the King's Superintendent of Indians, he was as much the Iroquois agent to the colonists as the King's agent among the Indians. Indeed, he became an adopted Mohawk warchief before he held a commission from the Crown. He championed the Iroquois against land-robbers and racist officials, like the British general who advocated killing off the Indians en masse during Pontiac's revolt by spreading smallpox among them with the aid of infected hospital blankets. Johnson promoted Indian school and inoculation against the smallpox virus, once the method (first observed in Africa) became known in the colonies. He encouraged Iroquois women to go into business as traders. He introduced new crops and methods of agriculture. In his later life, with a Mohawk consort—known to history as Molly Brant—at his side, Johnson presided over a remarkably successful experiement in interracial cooperation.

Johnson's homes in the Mohawk Valley—Fort Johnson and Johnson Hall, both memorably described in "The Firekeeper" and "Fire Along the Sky"—are well-preserved and open to visitors, as are many of the other sites of frontier New York, such as Fort William Henry (scene of the Battle of Lake George), Fort Ticonderoga, the Saratoga battlefield, the Old Stone Fort at Schoharie, Fort Plain, Fort Stanwix, and Old Fort Niagara. Sadly, funding problems have led to the—hopefully only temporary—closing of the Oriskany battlefield site, scene of the first American civil war as well as a critical turning point in the American Revolution. Budget constraints threaten other sites. As Robert Moss comments, "I hope my historical novels will help revive public interest in the places where—in so many ways—America was born. The Iroquois say that a tree without roots cannot stand. I believe they are right."

Asked to explain how The Firekeeper differs from previous accounts of the North-East Frontier, Moss explains:

"First, I tried to give the women their revenge. Amongst white Europeans, the 18th century was pretty much a man's century. But the dominant character in "The Firekeeper," in many ways, is Catherine Weissenberg. She is a historical figure—a Palatine refugee who came to the colonies as an indentured servant and became Johnson's life partner (though never his wife) and the mother of his white children. Another poserful character in the book is Island Woman, a member of a lineage of women healers who became Mother of the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk Nation. Through her eyes, we see the women's mysteries and the reverence for women within a native culture whose primary pronoun is she not he.

"Second, in the Firekeeper I have married executive archival research to oral tradition, both from Native Americans and from descendants of Valley settlers. To borrow a phrase from the anthropologists, I have 'upstreamed' what I have learned about native culture and spirituality today to help illuminate how things may have been then.

"Third, I have tried to go inside the mindset—the interior worlds—of different people and peoples. In "The Firekeeper," you can read a blow-by-blow account of a battle, a traders' sharping, or a machiavellian plot laid in a back room. Or you can find yourself deep inside the realms of the shaman, for whom the dream world is the real world and spirits walk and talk at the drop of a feather. I tried to make the book as multidemensional as its players."

ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 30, 1995

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, I love to get involved with projects that involve our younger generation. One of the projects I sponsor every year along with the high schools and junior high schools in my district, is an essay contest. I asked the high school students to write about how we amend the Constitution and how is it different than passing a law, and the junior high students were to write about life in colonial times. I would like to thank Mrs. Vivian Turner, the former principal of Blackhawk Junior High School, who judged the hundreds of entries received. I want to congratulate Chanda Evans from Addison Trail High School and Kathleen Steinfels of Mary, Seat of Wisdom School in Park Ridge the first place winners for their very creative papers. I was very impressed with the essays and want to share them with my colleagues.

HOW DO WE AMEND THE CONSTITUTION?

WHY IS IT DIFFERENT THEN PASSING A LAW?

(By Chanda Evans)

Most people realize that changing the structure of the Constitution is a difficult process, and much more involved than passing a law. What most people do not know is the methods of proposing and ratifying a amendment set forth in the Constitution, or any of the specific differences between amending the Constitution and passing a

law. The United States Constitution provides two methods of proposing and ratifying a amendment, both of which allow the interests of the national and the state government to be taken into consideration equally.

The first step in amending the Constitution is to have the amendment proposed by one of two possible ways. An amendment can be proposed by a two-thirds vote in both houses of Congress, or by a National Constitutional Convention called by Congress, on a petition from the legislatures of two-thirds of the states. All amendments proposed thus far have originated from Congress.

The second step is getting the proposed amendment ratified. The Constitution also provides for two alternative methods of ratification, both methods however, leave the ratification decision to the states. Article V of the Constitution sets out two distinct modes of state ratification, leaving the choice of mode to the Congress. For each amendment proposed, whether by Congress of by a national convention, Congress must choose whether to submit the amendment to state legislatures or to conventions in each state for ratification. If the proposed amendment is given to the state legislatures for ratification, a total of three-fourths of the states must agree for the amendment to be passed. Of the thirty-three amendments that have been proposed, thirty-two have been sent to the state legislatures for ratification. The second method involves sending the proposed amendment to the state conventions for ratification. During this process each state must choose delegates, who will then vote for or against the amendment. For this method of ratification there must also be a total of three-fourths (thirty-eight) of the states in agreement.

Having the Constitution amended is a difficult process simply because of the many people that must agree on an amendment for it to become passed. Our founding fathers included these alternative means of both proposing and ratifying amendments in an effort to balance the power between federal and state factions, while allowing input from the common people.

A Constitutional amendment and a law are both rules that the people of the United States must obey. However, the processes that take place are quite different. Although Congress's role in amending the Constitution and in passing a law are similar, there are some differences; the percentage of votes required, the President's role, and the approval process.

Both a proposed amendment and a law are put before Congress for a vote. For each of these the two houses of Congress must also approve identical forms of the amendment of law. A law however, may only be introduced by a Senator or Representative while Congress is in session. The major difference between the voting processes in Congress is the percentage of votes required. In the amendment process a two-thirds vote is required, sixty-six percent. When passing a law a simple majority vote is required, as low as fifty-one percent. This difference obviously makes it easier for a law to get a passing vote in Congress.

The second difference between the amending and the law making process is the President's role. When an amendment is being proposed and ratified it goes through Congress or a Constitutional Convention, then the states. The President has no part in this procedure. When a law is being passed it goes directly to the President after being voted on in Congress. In this situation, the President has three choices. He can sign it, allowing it to become law, he can veto it, or he can ignore it and allow it to become law in ten days (excluding Sundays) without his signature. The President has a much greater role in the law making process, and has a direct influence on the content of the bill.

The third difference between amending the Constitution and passing a law is the approval process, more specifically, who is involve in it. When an amendment is put up for ratification it must go to the state legislatures or the state conventions for approval before becoming an official amendment. A law, on the other hand, requires no approval or input from the states. When passing a bill into law it requires only the majority vote of Congress and the signature of the President. However, if the President decides to veto the bill Congress can override his decision by two-thirds vote in both houses. This process makes passing a law a decision involving only the legislative and executive branches, or possibly just the legislative branch. This is clearly a decision of the federal legislation, requiring little or no assistance from the state government. This process effectively cut out the state government, unlike the amendment process that requires an agreement between the state and national government to be passed.

At the Constitutional Convention of 1787 George Mason of Virginia said, ''Amendments will be necessary, and it will be better to provide for them, in an easy, regular and constitutional way than to trust to chance and violence.'' Our forefathers obviously realized that laws would change and evolve over the years, and that new laws they couldn't even visualize at that point would be needed as times also changed. Fortunately, they also realized that the process to change the very framework and structure of the government, the United States Constitution, must be a much more controlled process. By providing two different methods of proposing and ratifying amendments to the Constitution they made sure that such major changes would be made in agreement by the state and national government. Protecting the interests of both factions, and also reflecting the interests of the people.

TIMES TO REMEMBER

(By Kathleen Steinfels)

Snowshoes . . . candlelight . . . fireplace . . . animal fur . . . buckets of water . . .

All of these are images of life in colonial America. Life was very harsh, especially when compared to life in twentieth century Park Ridge.

Colonia life was centered around the family—much more so than modern American life. Because colonial families were relatively isolated and because each member of the family was counted on to help the entire family survive, family members were close and worked as a team. Chores were distributed: milking cows, feeding chickens, tending crops, chopping firewood, keeping the house in repair and as weathertight as possible, making candles, keeping the fire, collecting water for washing, for watering gardens and animals, making clothes, hunting meat, making food, and caring for younger children. All of these demanded energy and concentration. Often things like schooling became a luxury because education itself was not mandatory for survival. Each family had to be able to provide all basic necessities on its own. Sometimes trading would allow for special treats such as ready-made cloth from overseas, special foods, and shoes.

These things are often taken for granted in modern America where families rarely work together, or, for that matter, rarely even see each other. They have become disjointed as each person pursues independent interests and activities. How often does the nuclear family even sit down at the table to eat a meal together? Does this help explain the disintegrating family of modern America?

Colonial families were large. Many hands were needed to share the workload. Life expectancy was shorter and there was a higher infant mortality rate. Nowadays, families are much smaller and do not have such a strong common focus.

In colonial times the hearth or fireplace was the center of the home, the place from which came both food and warmth. The location of the fireplace affected the way buildings were built. There were few openings to the outside, to minimize heat escaping and for security. Nowadays, the kitchen is still the center of many homes, the source of food, but because of central heating, houses have gotten more complex and full of windows.

Children in colonial times usually worked with their parents whether it be as farmer, cooper, weaver, or blacksmith. Children learned a trade. Each child was important. Nowadays, parents typically go off to work someplace else and the children have little or no connection to the parents' place of work or to the work they do.

In colonial times schooling was not mandatory and schoolhouses were often one-room with a single teacher for many grades. Today schools are much larger and have many teachers, often even more than one per grade.

Colonial Americans came to this New World, abandoning friends, families, and the life they knew to face a challenging new life. Often immigrants came seeking the opportunity to worship God as they wished: Puritans in New England, the Quakers in Pennsylvania, and the Catholics in Maryland. Religion was probably especially important because of the hardships their life imposed. Even if they could not regularly have formal services, God was an important part of life. Today religious freedom is guaranteed, and perhaps even taken for granted.

Gone are the snowshoes, the candles, and the hearth and so too it seems the family-centered life which characterized colonial times.

THE REPUBLIC OF CAPE VERDE'S INDEPENDENCE DAY: REACHING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 30, 1995

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, today, as the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Cape Verde's independence approaches, I want to take a moment to commemorate this anniversary and mention the people that have made it possible. As a nation committed to protecting individual freedom and establishing economic stability through democracy, the country's independence celebration is a testament to the will of the Cape Verdean people who, brought together by their struggle for freedom and the archipelago's environment, remind us of their American counterparts. Indeed, Cape Verdeans are very familiar with American history; they are, in fact, an integral part of it. Since the 18th century, Cape Verdeans have represented an assiduous and determined part of the American spirit, particularly in New England. Cape Verdeans were builders of the whaling and fishing industry, cultivators of the cranberry bogs and workers in the textile mills. Their arts and crafts have enhanced the beauty of our lives, and their songs and dances have touched our hearts