

On May 8th, the Colfax Area Historical Society in my Congressional District will place a monument along Highway 174 at Cape Horn, near Colfax, California to recognize the efforts of the Chinese in laying the tracks that linked the east and west coasts for the first time.

With the California Gold Rush and the opening of the West came an increased interest in building a transcontinental railroad. To this end, the Central Pacific Railroad Company was established, and construction of the route East from Sacramento began in 1863. Although the beginning of the effort took place on relatively flat land, labor and financial problems were persistent, resulting in only 50 miles of track being laid in the first two years. Although the company needed over 5,000 workers, it only had 600 on the payroll by 1864.

Chinese labor was suggested, as they had already helped build the California Central Railroad, the railroad from Sacramento to Marysville and the San Jose Railway. Originally thought to be too small to complete such a momentous task, Charles Crocker of Central Pacific pointed out, "the Chinese made the Great Wall, didn't they?"

The first Chinese were hired in 1865 at approximately \$28 per month to do the very dangerous work of blasting and laying ties over the treacherous terrain of the high Sierras. They lived in simply dwellings and cooked their own meals, often consisting of fish, dried oysters and fruit, mushrooms and seaweed.

Work in the beginning was slow and difficult. After the first 23 miles, Central Pacific faced the daunting task of laying tracks over terrain that rose 7,000 feet in 100 miles. To conquer the many sheer embankments, the Chinese workers used techniques they had learned in China to complete similar tasks. They were lowered by ropes from the top of cliffs in baskets, and while suspended, they chipped away at the granite and planted explosives that were used to blast tunnels. Many workers risked their lives and perished in the harsh winters and dangerous conditions.

By the summer of 1868, 4,000 workers, two thirds of which were Chinese, had built the transcontinental railroad over the Sierras and into the interior plains. On May 10, 1869, the two railroads were to meet at Promontory, Utah in front of a cheering crowd and a band. A Chinese crew was chosen to lay the final ten miles of track, and it was completed in only twelve hours.

Without the efforts of the Chinese workers in the building of America's railroads, our development and progress as a nation would have been delayed by years. Their toil in severe weather, cruel working conditions and for meager wages cannot be under appreciated. My sentiments and thanks go out to the entire Chinese-American community for its ancestors' contribution to the building of this great Nation.

NATIONAL GRANGE WEEK

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, last week Colorado Grangers joined more than 300,000

of their colleagues in celebration of National Granger Week. Today, I rise to pay tribute to the Grangers and their time-honored American values.

Organized in 1867, the Grange is a grass-roots organization designed to promote the best interests of agriculture and preserve family values. Grangers are known for many community-centered projects including youth scholarships, activities for the deaf, emergency relief for farmers and ranchers and lobbying legislatures to provide opportunities and education for all family members. In my home state of Colorado, the Granger combined forces to fund relief for Colorado ranchers who lost cattle in the blizzards of 1997.

Mr. Speaker, our nation began as many small communities and families working together to support one another. Today, local Granges work hard to preserve our American traditions. Therefore, I proudly rise in recognition of National Grange Week. With confidence, I look forward to the continuing success of Grangers nationwide.

“KITTY HAWK REVISITED”

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 1999

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to submit a poem entitled “Kitty Hawk Revisited” into the RECORD. This poem was written by Ms. Marion Brimm Rewey of Verona, Wisconsin, and I believe she captures the adventurous spirit of the Wright brothers first flight with her words.

KITTY HAWK REVISITED

(By Marion Brimm Rewey)

I wish I had seen them, the quiet men who built bicycles and odd machines, pushing and dragging their da Vinci dream over sea grass and sand.

It might have been a good day to change the world, full of cumulus clouds, strings of pelicans flying ragged formations, a sandpiper or two and curlew calls . . . and the wind of December purring off the Atlantic, plucked wires and struts, hummed such music as had not been heard since sirens lured Ulysses to forbidden shores.

So, while running seas rearranged the sand and every man stood with feet planted firmly on solid ground, here, under untried skies, on Kill Devil Hill, a hand-made skeleton, like a prehistoric bird, teetered on the ledge of the last frontier.

In the broken silence of birds, wind, tide, Orville belly-flopped on the waiting wing.

Then came a universe splitting roar-propellers spun, sand exploded and ballooned, chains rattled and slapped through metal guides, the engine's pitch climbed to a scream.

The plane shuddered, rocked like a cradle, lumbered over the dunes, rose, hung between ocean and space, floundered, twisted sideways, steadied, caught the wind and flew!

To touch the moon.

“WE THE PEOPLE . . . THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION”

HON. EARL POMEROY

OF NORTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 29, 1999

Mr. POMEROY. Mr. Speaker, on May 1st through 3rd of this year, high school students from across the country will compete in the national finals of the “We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution” program. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the students of Flasher High School of Flasher, North Dakota, who will represent my home state in this event. These students have worked hard to reach this stage of the competition and have demonstrated a thorough understanding of the principals underlying our constitutional democracy.

We the People is the most extensive program in the country designed to teach students the history and philosophy of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The three-day national competition is modeled after hearings held in the United States Congress. These mock hearings consist of oral presentations by the student participants before a panel of adult judges. The students testify as constitutional experts before a “congressional committee” of judges representing various regions of the country and appropriate professional fields. The students' testimony is followed by a question and answer period during which the judges test students on their depth of understanding and ability to apply their constitutional knowledge. The knowledge these students have acquired to reach the national level of this competition is truly impressive. Mr. Speaker, I ask that a copy of the questions posed to the students at these hearings be included in the record.

I would also like to especially recognize our talented representatives from Flasher High School, of Flasher, North Dakota. This is the first year that Flasher High School has competed in the We the People program, and after months of hard work and preparation, all 31 students in the senior class will be coming to Washington to represent North Dakota in the national competition. In just over a month, these students raised \$17,000 to fund this trip. I would like to recognize by name the dedicated students from Flasher High School: Ashley Bahm, Lori Boeshans, Cheryl Breiner, Nikki Erhardt, Scott Fisher, Nadine Fleck, Nicole Fleck, Joe Fleck, Sherry Gerhardt, Albert Heinert, Amber Heinz, Nathan Honrath, Sylvia Koch, Randy Kovar, Jody Kraft, Jessy Meyer, Adrian Miller, Justin Miller, Sunshine Schmidt, Travis Schmidt, Dan Schmidt, Brielle Schmidt, Joy Schmidt, Keesha Stroh, Brent Ternes, Kyle Ternes, Kevan Thornton, Mitch Tishmack, Thomas Tschida, Paul Wienberger, Steve Zeller.

I would also like to recognize and thank their teacher, Michael Severson, for his critical role in these students' success and their interest in American government.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the student team from Flasher High School to Washington, and wish them the very best of luck. They have made all of us in North Dakota very proud.