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COMMITTEE:
BANKING AND CURRENCY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

At Grubville 3rd Surv. in Dec, 1949.

We are met to-day to celebrate the annual coming of the descendants of Simon Frost and also to Commemorate the Centennial of the trip of these sturdy pioneers who left this Community in 1849 to cross the plains and climb the mountains in search of gold. So far as I can learn there were eight ^{men} in that little band who departed for that long and perilous journey from the home of E. F. Frost in Grubville about the 1st of May 1849. One ^{of the men} was Simon Frost, who was born in Ky in 1789 and came first to Washington Co. Mo. and then to Crawford Co. He was the father of Franklin, George and Christopher Frost and Mrs Robert Wilson, ^{and others}. He died on the trip about 10 miles west of Independence and was the only casualty among the group. The others were George Frost, ^{Mr} M. C. Atwood, ^{George} Mr. Fover, Mr. Mothershead, Ewing Mitchell, My grandfather John Macion and my father Frank Williams. There may have been others. There were several others who went ^{to Cal. about that time} from Jefferson Co. and surrounding counties. Among them were James A. Wilson of Bethlehem, James McCulloch, Booker and Skelton Richardson, Mr. Duckworth, Thomas Harbison, father of Dr. M. C. Harbison who was known to every body in this surrounding country 50 years ago. So far as I have ever heard Skelton Richardson was the only man who made the trip, returned to Jeff. Co. and then made the second trip and stayed some

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five years. The one trip seems to have satisfied all
the rest.
What little I have been able to learn about this eventful
journey of the eight who left here together comes from
a letter written by George Frost to his brothers Franklin
and Christopher. The letter was dated Nov. 12, 1849 and
was written at Feather River Cal. the mining settlement
where they stopped and which is about 100 miles from Sacramento
the Capital of Cal.

I have not been able to secure a description
of the equipment of this adventuresome band as
they embarked upon their long, tiresome and hazardous
journey, we can imagine their confusion, excitement
and anxiety as they made great preparations for their
departure. It is known that they traveled by wagons
drawn by oxen. How many wagons and oxen
I do not know. They, of course, did not have the
elaborate equipment of the trade caravans of that
and earlier days, which traveled over the Santa Fe
trail from K. C., Topeka and other points to the Southwest.
The wagons used that business carried 3 or 4 tons and
were drawn by 6 yokes of cattle. We can suppose
our little band had two or three wagons with two
yokes of oxen for each wagon. ^{They wagon, no doubt, were home made,} There were a number
of local blacksmiths and wagon makers, ^{of that day,} among
them was Geo. W. Haverstick, father of Oas W. Haverstick
who lived near Victoria, ^{and} who made many wagons
that crossed the plains. In the letter above mentioned
it is stated that the writer and Mr. Manton left their
wagon and double teamed with Frank Williams and
got through with one wagon and 4 yokes of cattle.
The wagons of course ^{were well filled with provisions and bedding} were covered with wagon sheets
and I can imagine ^{that} each one of the party had
his trusty rifle and at least one faithful dog to the
wagon. The guns served the double purpose of

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of protection from the Indians and providing game to eat, Our group, no doubt, was joined along the way by others who were on a like mission. The letter mentions that they passed many on the way who were carrying their packs on their backs and were begging their way. Perhaps those who were traveling by wagon fell in together and formed a kind of caravan and at night, as was the custom of the trade groups, formed a circle with the wagons as a means of protection from the wild beasts and the Indians. The day's drive was likely divided into two parts, an early start in the morning and a drive of 5 or 6 miles, then a stop at noon for food and drink and then the afternoon drive of about the same distance. It took them 6 mon. and 7 days to make the journey and while it is not known just what route they took they would have had to travel ^{almost directly west} a distance of at least 2000 miles to reach ^{their destination in} the Sacramento Valley in Cal. There were many hardships and dangers and much sickness along the way but only the one death in this group, Thomas Harbison who went about the same time but not with this band, died of cholera after reaching Cal. That dread disease was raging at that time and took its toll from among those crossing the plains as well as throughout the entire country. In St. Louis about out of a population of some 60,000. - about one out of every 10 died of the terrible malady.

I have no information of how Mr. Frost's letter was transmitted or how long it was on the way. The rush of thousands to Cal, made necessary a quicker transit of the mail. To meet the situation the Pony Express was organized which carried mail from St Joseph Mo. to San Francisco Cal. a distance of about 1800 miles. The distance was covered in 8 days. There were 80 riders constantly in the saddle, 40 going each way at the same time. The mail was carried in relays, each rider making 40 or 50 miles and then transferring the mail immediately to another who at the end of his line delivered to the next rider and so on. \$5.00 was charged for carrying each letter. When the Pacific Telegraph was completed and began sending messages the Pony Express was abandoned.

At the writing of the letter it was stated that Mr. Dover had been sent to Sacramento to lay in winter provisions where the price was cheap compared to that at the mines.

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that at the mines. Here is a sample of the prices
at the mines, pork \$1.00 a pound, flour 75¢, potatoes
\$1.50 a pound, corn meal 50¢ per pound and ^{the charge for} hauling
50¢ a pound. Mr Frost in his letter said that he and
my father had been out that day, fixed up their
washer, carried the rock, dirt and gravel about 20
yards in a pan and washed out better than an
ounce of gold which should be something like
#20. While money was plentiful the going was
rough and rugged and ^{in the letter} he advised his brothers
to stay where they were and that he hoped to return
the next fall by water as he never expected to
cross the plains again. Living in a tent in
a mining camp in all kinds of weather without
any of the comforts of home and the association
of loved ones was enough to make them homesick
and as he said he wished a thousand times
that he was back on Jones Creek. ~~I do not remember~~
~~how long he stayed but my father returned~~
~~in about 2 yrs by water and across the Isthmus~~
of Panama. These were perilous and trying
times and it took ^{the greatest} courage and fortitude to
undertake such an adventure. XXX The pony
express.

It took those pioneers over 6 mon. to make that journey. Today one can go from St Louis to San Francisco in 6 hours, which is about 720 times faster than they traveled, I wonder if we today are living over 700 times ~~as fast~~ ^{as fast} than they did. During the 100 years which have intervened since those pioneers crossed the plains vast and momentous changes have taken place, changes ^{far} greater ^{and more} varied than all those which took place in the entire history of mankind before that ^{time}. If those living at the beginning of the Christian Era, nearly 2000 years ago, could have been brought back to earth in 1849 they would have recognized it as much the same as when they lived. But if Geo. Washington could be brought back here to-day he would not recognize this earth as the same upon which he lived a century and a half ago. Scientific research and inventive genius have transformed our manner of living and mode of life in every ^{field of human activity}. This has been truly a period of transition, a change from the old to the new, many material comforts & conveniences and even luxuries have been showered upon us. The improved means of communication and the modern methods of transportation have made us all neighbors and we should be friends. It is a long cry from that day 100 yrs ago when that little band ^{of pioneers} left Wmville on that long and perilous trek to Cal.

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But with all the progress and advancement that has been made perfection has not yet been reached, Disease and crime are still prevalent, ignorance, prejudice and superstition, ^{and intolerance} are still wide spread; jealousy, envy and greed are still common; inequality, poverty and want are still to be found; ^{among me} Go with me to day to the far away places in other lands and into the big cities, see the little children, ^{hungry and ragged} living in huts and hovels, in dark and dusty tenements, children who have never breathed a breath of pure unpoisoned air, who have never enjoyed a clear bright beam of sunshine, who have never heard the song of a bird or smelled the fragrance of a flower, and as you see look into their sad and forlorn faces we realize that with all our boasted progress has not brought contentment and happiness to all the people. Strife, selfishness and ^{particularly} ambition are still with us. Within the last few decades our nation has been called upon to fight two of the most destructive and devastating wars in the world's history. Wars which brought death, sorrow and suffering to millions of men and women and which have left in their ^(aftermath) wake hardships and burdens, which will be felt for generations to come. If mankind is to survive on this earth the 3rd world war must not come, Now, five years after our last war

the nations of the world are earnestly and feverishly
striving to perfect an association of nations that will
bring us universal and lasting peace. Let us pray that
their efforts will not be in vain. Surrounded by on all
sides by the ^{constantly} rising, ceaseless, surging tide of unsettled
thought and unstable, uncertain conditions, during all these
vast upheavals and terrible calamities, in the midst of
of the confusion, turmoil and strife, the fundamental
principles of human life and conduct ^{have} remain firm
and unshaken. We must hold steadfastly to ^{those} sturdy
traits of character which supported and sustained our
forefathers, which made them great and noble and
which they transmitted unimpaired to us. Brotherly
love is just as important relief of the distressed is
just as imperative and truth is just as vital ^{to day} as
they ever were. Faith in God and man must remain
as solid as the Rock of Ages. Charity must be ever flung
of foot and ready of hand to serve humanity.

Friendship, loyalty and devotion must live on, Patriotism,
Love of home and country must be true and lofty,
Honor, integrity and virtue must ever remain unsullied
and undefiled. These are the things worth while.
They are the great unshaken realities of life which are
the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. They must
and they will abide. Let us all hope that these
noble virtues may be enshrined in the hearts of
men everywhere and that the nations of earth animated
and inspired by these lofty ideals may at last find
the path way that will lead us to the way of peace, that
~~we may find~~ that broad highway along which we may
all march together, side by side, shoulder to shoulder,
hand clasped in hand and heart locked in heart until we
reach that ^{great} tableland of tomorrow from which can be seen
the dawn and sunrise of a brighter a better and a happier day.