

I wish Dr. Freed and his wife, Catherine, all the best as they approach this new adventure of retirement together.

TRIBUTE TO THE VETERANS OF  
FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED  
STATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. DAVID E. BONIOR**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 1999*

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to recognize the Centennial Anniversary of a proud organization. Today, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Tenth District in the State of Michigan will celebrate the VFW's 100th Anniversary. The members will gather at the Charles Schoor Post 796 in Port Huron Michigan in honor of this historic occasion.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars dates back to the time of the Spanish-American War of the late 1800's. The first local organizations were founded by veterans in 1899 to secure rights and benefits for their service. Three separate groups were founded in Ohio, Colorado, and Pennsylvania, and later banded together to become known as the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

Today, the organization has over two million members, and includes veterans from World War I through Bosnia. Each new generation of members adds to the strength and focus of the VFW. However, the VFW has remained committed to recognizing military service and remembering those who gave their lives for freedom.

Under the motto, "Honor the dead by helping the living," the VFW has provided assistance to countless veterans across the United States. The VFW has more than 15,000 trained service officers who assist veterans and their families with government services, discharge upgrades, and other much-deserved benefits awarded to Veterans. Through national programs, the Veterans of Foreign Wars is able to provide members with information, scholarship, safety programs, and youth involvement activities.

On the 100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, we celebrate the people who have made this organization successful. I would like to extend my congratulations on this historic occasion and best wishes for the future.

BANKRUPTCY REFORM ACT OF 1999

SPEECH OF

**HON. JOSEPH CROWLEY**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 5, 1999*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 833) to amend title II of the United States Code, and for further purposes:

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, while I believe that H.R. 833 is an important step towards ending the abuse and restoring responsibility to our nation's bankruptcy system, I believe that the effectiveness of this legislation

could be improved by adjusting the homestead exemption for bankruptcy filers to more adequately reflect the current costs of housing in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, in my home State of New York, the homestead exemption for individuals is just \$10,000 while couples are limited to only a \$20,000 exemption. Clearly this amount is woefully inadequate when compared to the current high costs of housing faced by the residents of New York.

Mr. Chairman, while I think that H.R. 833 sets a reasonable cap on homestead exemptions at \$250,000, I believe it is imperative that the homestead exemption for individuals and couples in New York be raised to sufficiently reflect the prevailing costs of housing in New York so that while consumers are working to meet their financial obligations and get back on their feet, they are not burdened with the prospect of losing their homes.

HONORING THE SILAS AND ELLA  
LEWIS FAMILY REUNION

**HON. RONNIE SHOWS**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 1999*

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Family of Silas and Ella Lewis as they plan to celebrate their first Family Reunion from July 2nd through July 4th, 1999 in Monticello, Mississippi.

Silas Lewis was one of the first African-Americans to own land and a horse-drawn buggy in the early 1900's. Descendants of Silas and Ella Lewis continue to live in the area and have become productive and prominent members of the community.

All Americans come together as a family to honor our national heritage on the Fourth of July. It is a fitting tribute to Silas and Ella Lewis that so many members of their family have made the commitment to come together during the Fourth of July holiday to celebrate their personal heritage. Silas and Ella Lewis are role models for modern Americans. The principles of hard work and determination they instilled in their children and grandchildren continue to represent the strong family values we need to foster as we prepare to begin a new millennium.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today to honor the memory of Silas and Ella Lewis. I am proud of their family for coming together to celebrate their noble heritage. And I am most proud that I am able to rise before this Congress—the People's House—to share their story and praise Silas and Ella Lewis.

MARKING THE 300TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE TOWN OF PLAINFIELD,  
CONNECTICUT

**HON. SAM GEJDENSON**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, May 12, 1999*

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 300th anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Plainfield, Connecticut. I join the residents of the community in celebrating this special occasion.

Within only a few decades of landing at Plymouth Rock, citizens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were migrating into the "hollowing wilderness" of eastern Connecticut and settling along the banks of the Quinebaug River. Today, it is hard to believe that Connecticut was once considered "frontier" territory, but the families who began to develop towns east of the Connecticut River in the 1640s and 1650s were pioneers well before the first Conestoga wagon set off along the Oregon trail. The Winthrop and Fitch families began to establish settlements on the Quinebaug in the mid-1650s. The Winthrop settlement on the eastern side of the River would ultimately become the Town of Plainfield when its inhabitants were granted the "powers and privileges of a township" on May 11, 1699. The name Plainfield—bestowed by Governor Fitz-John Winthrop in 1700—can be directly traced to the topography of the area which is dominated by fertile meadows and fields.

The development of Plainfield over the past three centuries is a microcosm of the history of New England and the nation as a whole. Plainfield was an agrarian community throughout the 1700s dotted by small family farms growing corn, rye, barley and other crops in the fertile lands surrounding the Quinebaug. Men from Plainfield joined colonists from across Connecticut and New England to fight for our independence during the Revolutionary War. The Community hosted 6,000 troops under the command of French General Rochambeau as they traveled from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, Virginia to participate in the decisive campaign of the Revolution.

Beginning in the first decade of the nineteenth century, Plainfield began a fundamental transition which would forever reshape its character, population, economy and culture. In many respects, the history of this community, and many others throughout New England, is defined by the development and expansion of the textile industry. And Plainfield was an ideal place for this industry to grow. The rivers which run through Plainfield, including the Moosup and Quinebaug, offered an ideal source of power for early mills. The Hartford-Providence Turnpike, the major transportation route between the state capitals, ran through town. Moreover, Plainfield benefitted from its close proximity to Rhode Island—the birthplace of the factory-based textile industry in the United States. The early mills received important financial support from Rhode Island investors and utilized technology developed by Samuel Slater.

The first textile mill was established in the community by the Plainfield Union Manufacturing Company in 1809 along the Moosup River. Within a decade, the company employed 74 people who produced shirts, sheets, bedding and other products. In the years following 1809, which author Christopher Bickford describes as "those frenetic first years of growth of the textile industry," several other mills were established along the Moosup and Quinebaug Rivers, including one owned by the Moosup Manufacturing Company. By 1820, the character of Plainfield had changed significantly as the textile industry became more and more widespread.

Over the coming decades, the textile industry would grow exponentially, remaking the