

officially incorporated as a city in December 2006.

What a wonderful and gratifying time this is for the people of Milton. They worked tirelessly to make this day a reality and have chosen to honor Mr. Joe Lockwood as the first mayor of their new city.

Milton is a pastoral, involved and respectful community. They have seized the opportunity to have a direct impact on their future. This achievement also comes with many new responsibilities. I am confident that the citizens will successfully embrace these new challenges. It is my honor to represent this new Georgia municipality.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the privilege of bringing the recognition of this House of Representatives as we congratulate the people of Milton, Georgia and wish them the very best during this exciting transition.

THE AMISH SCHOOL SHOOTING OF THE LITTLE GIRLS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, in the 16th Century, during the period of religious reformation in Europe, the Mennonite faith was formed. Due to problems within the religion, a man named Jacob Amman separated himself, and a group of followers, from the Mennonite faith and established the Amish. Facing religious persecution for their beliefs, the Amish fled Europe in the 18th Century. They came to settle in America, primarily in the rich farmlands of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana.

During the last 300 years, the Amish have maintained a peaceful existence among these farmlands, holding steadfast onto their beliefs of old, and not conforming to modern-day society. They live a simplistic life without the everyday modern conveniences we have all become accustomed to. They do not use electricity, telephones, computers, or television, and they do not own automobiles. The Amish are governed by a set of unwritten rules known as the "Ordnung." These rules establish the protocol and acceptable behavior for an Amish community and vary in each community. For example, the Ordnung in a particular community may forbid ever deviating from conservative, dark, heavy forms of clothes, even during the summer months, whereas other communities Ordnungs may relax the dress code during the summer heat. In general, the Amish avoid anything that would be considered "hochmut," meaning proud or arrogant, and choose to live their lives in "demut," humility, and "gelassenheit," submission.

The most important part of an Amish community is the family. Each family has an average of seven children. While it is considered "God's Will" to how many children one family will have, it is also vital that there be enough children to help run the family farm. Amish children attend school, usually in a one-room school house run by the Amish community. Most Amish children do not receive anything higher than an 8th grade education. The belief is that the education level is sufficient enough to adapt the children into their future adult Amish life.

Amish communities, although surrounded by modern society, are generally untouched by

violence plaguing today's world. They do not read newspapers, which depict the crimes of modern society. They do not own televisions, which run continual news coverage of random acts of violence occurring throughout modern society. Their lives could be deemed innocent and idealistic, sheltered to the evils of society.

All that changed on Monday, October 2, 2006. On this warm, sunny, fall Pennsylvania day, Charles Carl Roberts IV came home from his night shift as a milk delivery man, walked his children to school, and kissed them goodbye. He went home and wrote four notes: one to his wife and one to each of his three children. Arming himself with a handgun, a shotgun, a rifle, and more than 600 rounds of ammunition, Roberts drove to the quiet Amish community of Nickel Mines.

Mr. Speaker, Roberts, with malice aforethought, and a heart fatally bent on mischief, calmly walked into that one room Amish schoolhouse and took it, and the children, hostage. Roberts ordered all of the Amish boys and the adults from the room. He then tied up 10 little girls, as they stood against the chalkboard. For the next hour, these little girls were trapped with this sadistic monster, who had vile intentions for their innocence.

It is unclear what triggered Roberts to start shooting after the initial hour. Perhaps it was the police presence, perhaps he was haunted by past sins, or perhaps he was just evil. Regardless of his reason, Roberts opened fire on these 10 little girls, at point blank range, before turning the gun on himself. When the smoke had cleared, Anna Mae Stoltzfus, Marian Fisher, Naomi Rose Ebersol, and sisters, Mary Liz and Lena Miller, had not survived Roberts' violent rampage. Young girls—young victims.

Anna Mae, Marian, Naomi Rose, Mary Liz, and Lena had their whole lives ahead of them. Lives full of love, family, and new beginnings as they matured into adulthood. Lives that were brutally, viciously, and tragically cut short by Charles Carl Roberts IV, a man too coward to take just his own life, so he took 5 little girls with him. The Good Book says that it is better for a person to be thrown into the sea than to harm a child.

In the days that followed Roberts' violent rampage, questions immediately arose to why a hard working husband and father would commit such a crime against the innocent. In a note written to his wife moments before he entered the school, Roberts stated several reasons for the school siege: his anger at God for the death of his infant daughter in 1997, his haunted memories of molesting two child female relatives 20 years previously, and his thoughts of molesting children again. So to quell that anger and the demons within, he took his life. Too bad he took the lives of little girls as well.

The devastation which befell the Amish community of Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania could have destroyed a community unaccustomed to such violence. Yet, the Amish were determined to overcome this unimaginable tragedy. In acts of tremendous kindness, generosity, and forgiveness, the Amish community not only tended to the families of the slain little girls, but to the killer's family as well. Within hours of the attack, members of the Amish community spoke out about the killings, stating that in the midst of this tragedy, they forgave Roberts. They also visited his wife and children to offer comfort and aid. Perhaps, in an

even greater act of mercy, the Amish asked that a portion of the funds collected for the families of these girls, be donated to the Roberts family. Mr. Speaker, it is true generosity and mercy to comfort and care for the family of the evil who brutally murdered five children in your community.

Sadly, the tragedy which occurred in a little Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania is not isolated. Barely a week before, in September, an armed gunman took six female students hostage in Platte Canyon High School in Bailey, Colorado. During those horrific hours held prisoner inside a classroom, Duane Morrison subjected the girls to brutal sexual assaults. As police proceeded to enter the classroom, Morrison executed a 16 year old student and then the criminal took his own life. The Nickel Mines tragedy 5 days later was eerily reminiscent of the devastation which took place at Platte Canyon High School. The Platte Canyon tragedy was reminiscent of the Columbine Massacre, which had taken place in Colorado 7 years earlier.

As a father of 4, 3 of whom are girls, and a grandfather of 5, 3 of whom are girls as well, the death of a child is a parent's worst fear. No parent should experience such a heartbreaking loss. The worse thing that can happen to a parent is to lose a child before their time. It is the worse thing that can happen to a community; and it is the worse thing that can happen to a nation.

These school tragedies reinforce the need for adequate school safety and security throughout this country. A school no longer exists as a safe haven for children, but rather has become a violent battleground that demands our intercession. A school is an environment of learning and enrichment, not fear and brutality. We must strive to do everything within our ability to ensure the safety and well-being of our most precious commodity—our children. We need to strive to protect schools from outside intruders and inside rampages. School safety must be a priority—without it, children have very little places left to feel safe.

That's Just the Way It Is.

TRIBUTE TO ESSEX NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA 10TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. MARTIN T. MEEHAN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the 10th anniversary of the Essex National Heritage Area and to congratulate the Essex National Heritage Commission on their outstanding work.

I can still remember when Tom Leonard came down to Congress in September of 1995 to testify in support of legislation that Senator KENNEDY and I had filed to create the Essex National Heritage Area.

One of the most poignant moments in Tom's testimony was when he laid out his vision for a true public private partnership to preserve the rich history of Essex County.

During his testimony Tom said, "Let me stress this point about cooperation. The legislation that is before you today anticipates a true partnership between the private and public sectors. We are not seeking federal handouts and controls."