

Version for 7th grade:

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE TOWN OF ORFORD NH
CONTAINING THE ORATION POEMS AND SPEECHES
DELIVERED ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 7 1865 WITH SOME
ADDITIONAL MATTERS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF
THE PLACE

by Joel Mann

The account also appears in: HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF NEW
ENGLAND NEW HAMPSHIRE BY J AJ COOLIDGE & JB MANSFIELD
BOSTON AUSTIN J COOLIDGE 89 COURT STREET 1 8 6 0 (How could this
possibly be?) Adaptation by Marguerite Ames

@I. In the history of Hanover, Plymouth County Mass, it states that Richard Mann, a planter, came in the May Flower with the Pilgrims. His descendants spread in Plymouth & Norfolk counties, where many now reside. Richard Mann's son Richard purchased a farm in Hebron CT and removed himself there for life. It was in Hebron that my parents were brought up & eventually, married, on the Sabbath day Feb 17 1765. My grandfather, John Mann, learned that the original proprietors of this town (Orford) were offering these distant uninhabited lands for sale. So, he selected & purchased one lot of fifty acres at the lower end of this village, for which he paid one dollar an acre. He gave this piece of land to my father, John.

@II. For this Eldorado , John Mann (my father) started on the 16th of October 1765, on horseback with my mother, "who carried with her a wardrobe by no means ample for a bride. My father rode part of the way, carrying a knapsack & some tools for coopering and an axe "which in such hands wrought wonderous changes." On the day of their departure for the wilds of Coos the people of the village assembled to take an affectionate leave of these pioneer emigrants & with many tears & prayers, they bade them farewell scarcely expecting ever to see them again. Indeed it was a greater & far more hazardous undertaking than now to go to California or Oregon.

@III. At Charlestown, NH, (fort #4?) Mann purchased a bushel of oats for his horse, & some bread & cheese for himself & his wife. They set off, he on foot and his wife, with the supplies, on horseback. From Charlestown to Orford, a distance of 60 miles, there was no road, only a foot path with marked trees to guide them. The path was frequently blocked with fallen trees. When they came to an obstruction which could not be passed around, the young bride was dismounted & the horse unladen. Then the horse was made to leap the windfall! This was many times repeated, but in one instance the impatient animal did not wait to be unladen & leaped over a large tree, throwing the fair rider & all the luggage in a heap upon the ground! Through a kind Providence no limbs were broken & no joints dislocated. All things being readjusted the journey was soon resumed.

@IV. In Claremont, two young men had made some clearing, while in Cornish there was but one family that of Moses Chase. In Plainfield there was one family, Francis Smith; in Lebanon there were three families, those of Charles Hill, his son, & his son-in-law Mr Pinnick. In Hanover there was one family. Col Edmund Freeman, & several young men making settlements. In Lyme there were three families all by the name of Sloan. These afforded stopping places for rest & refreshment at night. As newcomers in the solitary wilderness my parents were kindly welcomed & treated hospitably to the scanty fare. When they came to a stream that was too deep for wading it was necessary to go up till a place was found for safe crossing, & this with steep banks & tangled underbrush must have been quite dangerous.

@V. The whole of this fatiguing & hazardous journey of about two hundred miles was performed in eight days averaging twenty five miles in a day. They arrived here October 24 1765. We this day commemorate the advent of the first residents here & the settlement of this goodly town. Orford was founded by a Mann of the Puritan stock, a man of pure & noble aims & of greatly useful life. Over the years, human skill &

diligence has made a rich landscape of a gloomy wilderness. The home of the savage has become the home of an intelligent cultivated Christian people, happy in the enjoyment of social literary & religious privileges.

@VI. My oldest brother, Major Mann, wrote in an account of the early settlement that when our parents arrived in Orford, there were Mr Daniel Cross and wife. (They had come in June & some time afterward left.) They were living in a small log hut near the bank of the river. It was covered with barks of tree & had a floor of split logs, but no chimney or hearth. Mr Cross welcomed the new comers into his cabin. They agree to share the cutting of wood & to keeping a fire in the middle of the cabin. They divided the space using blankets.

@VII When an augur was needed to make a bedstead it was only to step nine miles through the woods to a Mr John Chamberlain's in Thetford to borrow one from he who was the only person then living in that town. When the bedsteads & two or three chair frames were put together it was only to step through the nine mile woods to return the augur. This labor & fatigue was considered as nothing!

@VIII Since there was no land cleared nor grain raised yet, Mr Mann, made use of his coopering skills in the evenings making pails and tubs. As soon as the river was frozen, he piled them on a hand sled and drew them to Newbury Vt, about 20 miles away. There he exchanged them for corn with the three families of Johnston, Bailey, & Hazen, who had been there three years had cleared land and raised corn. The corn was pounded in large mortars which were made of hardwood logs which had been hollowed out at one end by burning, making a bowl deep enough to hold from three to eight quarts. The finest ground part of this grain was made into cakes. The coarser part, called hominy, was boiled and eaten with milk from Mr Cross's cow. After they were settled in their own tent, Mrs. Mann went to the river and brought all the water they used in a three pint basin, except on washing days. What would our young lasses think of beginning house keeping in that way?

@IXI have heard my father say that soon after their arrival here on a morning after a pleasant day they found a great depth of snow on the ground which became two feet deep and in a few days after there fell as much more. They began to think that if this was to be the style of winter in their new home, they might be buried alive before the spring.

Fortunately plenty of wood was close at hand. He had built a log cabin on a little rise of ground near the river and the melting of such a mass of snow in the Spring, so swelled the river that one morning they found themselves entirely surrounded with water. So, he took his wife in his arms and carried her to a place which it had not reached. The labor of felling such a forest as nature had reared in this valley may be imagined from the fact which I have heard my father state that the pine trees were on an average two hundred feet high and of enormous size as was plainly seen from the decaying stumps which in my boyhood I helped to eradicate. When my parents first arrived, there had been endless forest, the prowling wolf and the timid deer.