

By: Kitzman

H.R. No. 142

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, February 20, 2023, marks the 150th anniversary of
2 the death of the Honorable Louis Franke; and

3 WHEREAS, Born Ludwig Carl Ferdinand Francke in 1818, Louis
4 Franke grew up in the Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which is now
5 part of Germany; he studied music before earning a law degree from
6 the University of Jena; in the mid-1840s, he joined the wave of his
7 countrymen emigrating for the freedom and opportunity of the United
8 States; he arrived at Galveston, and during the Mexican War, he
9 served with the Texas Rangers; in 1853, he became a naturalized
10 citizen and formally adopted an anglicized version of his name;
11 that same year, he wed the former Bernhardine Helene Friederike
12 Dorothea Romberg; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Franke began their life together on a
14 farm near Cedar but soon bought land from her family in the Black
15 Jack Springs community in Fayette County; for several years, the
16 couple also spent time at Independence, where Mr. Franke taught
17 music, French, and German at the old Baylor College; after 1959, he
18 focused on his farm while practicing law on the side; he served on
19 the local grand jury and as a county commissioner and overseer of
20 roads; becoming active in the local Lutheran community, the Frankes
21 donated land for the establishment of an Evangelical-Lutheran
22 academy; and

23 WHEREAS, At the close of Reconstruction, in 1872, Mr. Franke
24 was elected to the House of Representatives from what was then

1 District 26, covering Bastrop and Fayette Counties; he served as
2 chair of the Immigration Committee and as a member of the committees
3 on Agriculture and Stock Raising, Redistricting, and Public Lands
4 and Land Office; near the end of the session, on February 19, 1873,
5 at seven in the evening, Mr. Franke was leaving the old Capitol
6 Building to head to his committee meeting at the Land Office when he
7 was brutally attacked by two men, who made off with the \$260 in pay
8 he had just received; although help came almost immediately, he had
9 sustained a grave head injury and passed away at 3:30 the following
10 morning; and

11 WHEREAS, Stunned legislators in both parties deeply mourned
12 the loss of a widely admired colleague; the expenses of his burial
13 were borne by the government, and as he lay in state in the Hall of
14 Representatives, the entire legislature attended the funeral
15 service; his coffin was conveyed down Congress Avenue to the train
16 station on Pecan Street in a long procession that included the
17 lawmakers, the governor, the Supreme Court, a military escort,
18 heads of departments, city fire companies and other societies, a
19 band, and citizens in carriages, on horseback, and on foot; a
20 deputation of representatives accompanied his remains on the final
21 journey home to his family; and

22 WHEREAS, Widowed at a young age, Mrs. Franke was left to
23 raise eight children, the youngest still an infant; she proved a
24 woman of steely fortitude, and with astute business sense and the
25 help of her industrious offspring, she expanded the land holdings
26 of the family and secured their prosperity; and

27 WHEREAS, Louis Franke exemplified the boldness, resilience,

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1 and community spirit of the early Texans, and his tragic and
2 untimely death robbed the state of a born leader and true public
3 servant; now, therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas
5 Legislature hereby commemorate the 150th anniversary of the death
6 of State Representative Louis Franke.