

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 564

WHEREAS, A Historic Texas Cemetery medallion and plaque are being dedicated at Wilson Chapel Cemetery in central Newton County; and

WHEREAS, More than 125 years old, the cemetery is located on a one-acre tract in the J. M. Pierce Survey in the Woods community; Mr. Pierce donated the tract to the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1883, and the land belongs today to the First United Methodist Church in nearby Newton; upkeep of the cemetery is carried out by the Methodist Men of that congregation; and

WHEREAS, The church of Wilson Chapel was established by David McMahon, son of the Reverend Friend McMahon, Sr., a local pioneer Methodist minister, and named in honor of the Reverend Francis A. Wilson, a prominent East Texas Methodist preacher and circuit rider who made his home in the Newton County community of Belgrade; and

WHEREAS, Containing four marked and several unmarked graves, Wilson Chapel Cemetery is the resting place of several prominent area residents; David McMahon, who also served as Newton County's first county attorney, lies there, as does his brother, the Reverend Friend McMahon, Jr.; another marked grave belongs to Edward Gerald Didham, an Englishman who taught school in Orange and Newton counties; and

WHEREAS, Buried at Wilson Chapel, in addition, is Josephus Somerville Irvine, who is thought to have been the youngest soldier to fight with Sam Houston at the battle of San Jacinto; Mr. Irvine later dealt in land, became a Methodist preacher, and served in the Civil War, during which he rose to the rank of major; a member of the committee that chose the location for the county seat, he hosted meetings of the commissioners court in his home for about two years after Newton County was created in 1846; and

WHEREAS, Also reportedly buried in the cemetery are Tommie Knight, who helped to organize the Watson Chapel Methodist Church near Bleakwood, in Newton County, and Dr. J. S. Peavy, one of whose daughters, Alice King, donated the courthouse tower clock to the county in 1929; Mollie Pierce, daughter of Matilda and Jacob Monroe Pierce and granddaughter of Friend McMahon, Jr., is believed to be interred there as well; and

WHEREAS, Like other historic Texas burial grounds, Wilson Chapel Cemetery is an irreplaceable cultural resource, and recognition is indeed due to the dedicated volunteers who researched and documented this site, together with those who work to maintain it; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 78th Legislature, hereby commemorate the dedication of a

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Historic Texas Cemetery medallion and plaque at Wilson Chapel Cemetery and extend to all those involved with this project sincere appreciation for their dedication to preserving the heritage of the Lone Star State.

Staples

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 7, 2003.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate