

By: Escobar

H.C.R. No. 172

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Vaqueros are one of the iconic figures of the Lone
2 Star State, and today their contributions and heritage remain
3 especially evident in Jim Hogg County, where, from the arrival of
4 the earliest settlers, they have played a fundamental role in that
5 society's economy and culture; and

6 WHEREAS, Renowned for their horsemanship and stock-handling
7 abilities, vaqueros were crucial to the advance of Spanish ranching
8 into South Texas; from the mid-18th century onward, their skills
9 and fortitude contributed greatly to the development of large,
10 open-range cattle ranches in the region south of the Nueces River;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, These ranches left an imprint on the landscape that
13 is visible today in fortified stone blockhouses and in ranch
14 outbuildings, in chapels and cemeteries, in hand-dug wells, and in
15 man-made reservoirs that made it possible to assemble enormous
16 herds of livestock for drives north; and

17 WHEREAS, With the expansion of the Texas cattle industry in
18 the 19th century, the vaquero's traditions came to shape ranching
19 practices far beyond the Nueces; over the years, much of the
20 vaquero's equipment--his chaps, bandana, sombrero, lasso, spurs,
21 and saddle--became the standard gear of all Texas cowboys, while
22 elements of his craft, such as mounted herding and roping
23 techniques, also influenced early Anglo-American methods; the
24 system of range management and working cattle that evolved in

1 Texas, a system infused with vaquero lore, subsequently spread
2 across the High Plains and western part of the United States; and

3 WHEREAS, Endowed with soils better suited to livestock
4 production than farming, the area of present-day Jim Hogg County
5 has beckoned ranchers for the past two centuries; the first known
6 grant within the borders of today's county was made to Xavier Vela
7 in 1805 and encompassed nearly 18,000 acres; altogether, between
8 1805 and 1836, approximately 25 grants were conferred within the
9 county; and

10 WHEREAS, Among the first ranches founded in the area were
11 Randado, Las Noriacitas, Las Animas, San Antonio Viejo, Las
12 Enramadas, Las Viboritas, El Baluarte, and San Javier, while
13 important spreads in the latter 1800s included Randado, Las
14 Noriacitas, San Javier, and El Sordo; and

15 WHEREAS, Some of the earliest ranches to be established in
16 Jim Hogg County are still held by descendants of the original
17 owners; the most famous of these venerable ranches, Randado, was
18 originally occupied in 1830 by Hipolito Garcia and is now one of the
19 oldest continuously operated ranches in the nation; and

20 WHEREAS, Formerly embracing more than 100,000 acres, Randado
21 was famed both for its vast herd of Spanish ponies, which by the
22 1870s numbered some 3,000 head, and for the fine leather and
23 horsehair accouterments fashioned by its vaqueros; the name of the
24 ranch, in fact, refers to the production there of an elaborate style
25 of lasso, the *randa*; Robert E. Lee, who spent time in Texas before
26 the Civil War, wrote about his visit to Randado, and the ranch
27 figured in literary works by John Houghton Allen, Tom Lea, and J.

1 Frank Dobie; and

2 WHEREAS, Ranching remains one of the chief pillars of the
3 economy in Jim Hogg County, and most communities in the area have
4 ranching roots or associations; Agua Nueva, Cuevitas, Guerra, and
5 Randado all originated as ranching settlements; and

6 WHEREAS, Hebbronville, the county seat, is located on land
7 that once formed part of Las Noriacitas; the town's namesake, W. R.
8 Hebbron, acquired the site from descendants of the original grantee
9 about 1880, and in 1883 he established Hebbronville along the route
10 of the Texas Mexican Railway; and

11 WHEREAS, For a time, Hebbronville ranked as the largest
12 cattle shipping center in the country, and it continues to be a hub
13 of ranching activity; when award-winning director/producer Hector
14 Galan made a documentary about the vaquero in the mid-1980s, he shot
15 most of the film in Hebbronville; and

16 WHEREAS, Today, a number of area ranchers take pleasure in
17 extending a warm welcome to visitors and in providing special tours
18 and programs that open an expansive window onto the ranching
19 history of this storied region; in addition, Jim Hogg County
20 features as part of the Llanos Mestenos South Texas Heritage Trail;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Through a deep appreciation of the land and through
23 expertise honed over centuries, the vaquero has contributed
24 immeasurably to the settlement of South Texas and to the rich
25 ranching heritage of the Lone Star State, and it is fitting that the
26 county where he has played such a far-reaching role be
27 appropriately recognized; now, therefore, be it

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1 RESOLVED, That the 79th Legislature of the State of Texas
2 hereby designate Jim Hogg County as the official Vaquero Capital of
3 Texas.