

By: Hughes

H.C.R. No. 159

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1           WHEREAS, The driving, danceable sound of boogie woogie music  
2 is a distinctive American art form, and its energetic style is all  
3 the more notable for having been born in the Lone Star State; and

4           WHEREAS, Music historians have traced boogie woogie to  
5 northeastern Texas in the 1870s, when large numbers of African  
6 Americans were working in railroad construction and in logging and  
7 turpentine camps in the Piney Woods region; a common feature of the  
8 work camps was a barrelhouse, which often contained a piano to  
9 provide entertainment for the workers during off hours; and

10           WHEREAS, In those makeshift gathering spots, a new,  
11 percussive style of piano developed, marked by a repeated "walking"  
12 bass line, a fast tempo, and a 12-bar blues arrangement; this  
13 spirited music quickly grew in popularity and became known by a  
14 number of names, including "barrelhouse," "fast western," "fast  
15 Texas," and--as it became best known--boogie woogie; and

16           WHEREAS, As the hub of the Piney Woods and the headquarters of  
17 the Texas and Pacific Railway, the city of Marshall played an  
18 especially important role in these events; this crossroads town was  
19 a frequent meeting place for the piano players that traveled from  
20 camp to camp, and it figured prominently in the early development of  
21 boogie woogie; and

22           WHEREAS, The city's status as a rail center made it a fitting  
23 home for the music because boogie woogie was heavily influenced by  
24 the locomotive; with their pounding piano, musicians imitated the

1 huff and clatter of the trains and drew their rhythmic inspiration  
2 from the propulsive rotation of the steam engine driver wheel; and

3       WHEREAS, Ultimately, the railroad helped to transport boogie  
4 woogie far beyond its birthplace; as wandering musicians took the  
5 style to cities throughout the country, its rollicking sound rolled  
6 across the South and Midwest and on to big cities such as Chicago  
7 and New York; through the decades, its elements would be melded into  
8 other genres, including the uniquely American sounds of jazz,  
9 rhythm and blues, and rock and roll; and

10       WHEREAS, This interesting chapter in Texas history further  
11 underscores the Lone Star State's reputation as a center for  
12 musical creativity, and by hosting concerts and festivals and  
13 establishing a boogie woogie artist-in-residence, Marshall is  
14 embracing its part in creating this important musical innovation;  
15 now, therefore, be it

16       RESOLVED, That the 82nd Legislature of the State of Texas  
17 hereby designate Marshall as the official Birthplace of Boogie  
18 Woogie.