

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 704

In Memory
of
Alphonso Steele

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to pay tribute to the life of Alphonso Steele, a treasured Texas patriot who fought in the Battle of San Jacinto and survived to live a long and fruitful life; he was the last of the Texas survivors to die; and

WHEREAS, Alphonso Steele was born on April 9, 1817, to a pioneer family in Hardin County, Kentucky; in 1835, he joined Captain Ephraim M. Daggett's company of volunteers in Louisiana and traveled with the company to Texas to aid in the Texas Revolution; and

WHEREAS, The company arrived at Washington-on-the-Brazos on New Year's Day in 1836; since Texas had not yet declared its independence, many volunteers disbanded and returned home; Alphonso remained until after the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence; he then joined a company of men who were serving under Captain Joseph L. Bennett, and the company later joined General Sam Houston's army; and

WHEREAS, Alphonso served in the Battle of San Jacinto as a private in Captain James Gillespie's company of Sidney Sherman's regiment; he was severely wounded in the early stages of the battle, but he continued to fight until the end; during much of the battle, Alphonso's gray horse was ridden by General Sam Houston, until the animal was shot beneath him; and

WHEREAS, After months of recuperation, Alphonso made his way to Montgomery County, where he began to farm and raise cattle; he married Mary Ann Powell in 1838, and the couple moved in 1844 to a part of Robertson County that later became Limestone County; the couple had eight children, and many of their descendants went on to distinguish themselves in military service; and

WHEREAS, In 1907, Alphonso revisited the San Jacinto Battleground at the invitation of Andrew Jackson Houston, the son of Sam Houston; on February 10, 1909, the 31st Texas Legislature presented Alphonso with a gold medal for his bravery at the Battle of San Jacinto; Alphonso died on July 8, 1911, near Kosse, at the home of a grandson; he was 94 years old; a poem dedicated to him and entitled "The Last Hero" was written in the year of his death by Jake H. Harrison; and

WHEREAS, A life-size picture of Alphonso is in the San Jacinto Monument; there are two portraits of Alphonso in the State Preservation Board's permanent Capitol art collection; a large portrait by Marie Cronin, commissioned by the state in 1909, hangs prominently in the Senate Chamber, and a smaller portrait hangs in the House clerk's office; and

S.R. No. 704

WHEREAS, Alphonso Steele represents those early pioneers who loved Texas and had the courage and dedication to fight for its independence; he and his colleagues endured unbelievable hardships and challenges and emerged from them victoriously to help shape the state that we all take pride in today; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 82nd Legislature, hereby honor Alphonso Steele and celebrate the life of this intrepid Texas hero by paying tribute to his courage and his invaluable contributions to our state; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for his descendants as an expression of highest esteem from the Texas Senate, and that this Resolution be presented to Gene C. Steele, the oldest living great-grandchild of Alphonso Steele.

Birdwell

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 4, 2011, by a rising vote.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate