

By: Gooden

H.R. No. 130

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, The Sand Flat Cemetery in Henderson County has been  
2 recognized with a Historic Texas Cemetery marker from the Texas  
3 Historical Commission; and

4           WHEREAS, In 1856, pioneer Joseph M. Stirman donated land in  
5 the Sand Flat community northwest of Athens for a church and school  
6 to serve all residents, regardless of race or religion; two acres  
7 were set aside as a graveyard for African Americans, and the first  
8 burial was recorded in 1884, when Clarissa Andrews Royal was laid to  
9 rest; her husband, Abraham Royal, and a number of their descendants  
10 were interred nearby in later years; and

11           WHEREAS, Other prominent settlers buried in the Sand Flat  
12 Cemetery include Henry Givens and Joseph Manion; believed to have  
13 been brought to Henderson County as slaves in 1855, both men became  
14 farmers, and like Abraham Royal, they were registered on the Black  
15 Voters List; Mr. Givens further served as a school trustee in the  
16 early years of the community; and

17           WHEREAS, In time, the graveyard became the final resting  
18 place for many education professionals and for veterans of the two  
19 World Wars, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam War; today,  
20 descendants of the settlers provide much of the care for the site;  
21 the current officers of the Cemetery Association are president  
22 George Jones, vice president Earl Brown, treasurer Ivory Joe  
23 Givens, secretary Kim Allen, and board member Edward Johnson; and

24           WHEREAS, The preservation of Sand Flat Cemetery reflects a

1 profound respect for the contributions of those who helped build  
2 the community in the 19th and 20th centuries, and the receipt of  
3 this prestigious honor from the Texas Historical Commission will  
4 allow visitors to gain a greater appreciation for the rich heritage  
5 of this locality; now, therefore, be it

6         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
7 Legislature hereby commemorate the dedication of a Historic Texas  
8 Cemetery marker at Sand Flat Cemetery and commend all those  
9 associated with the care of the site and with the effort to secure  
10 this award; and, be it further

11         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
12 prepared for the Sand Flat Cemetery Association as an expression of  
13 high regard by the Texas House of Representatives.