

By: White

H.R. No. 984

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Members of Dixie Missionary Baptist Church in Jasper  
2 are marking the 160th anniversary of the founding of their church in  
3 July 2013; and

4           WHEREAS, Thought to be the oldest African American house of  
5 worship in Texas, Dixie Missionary Baptist Church was organized  
6 around 1850 under the leadership of Richard Seale, who also served  
7 as its first pastor; and

8           WHEREAS, Dick Seale was born a slave in Virginia in 1798 and  
9 moved to Texas in 1850 with his master, who established a plantation  
10 west of Jasper near Bevilport; Mr. Seale was a devout Christian who  
11 had acquired an education as a child, and he was much in demand to  
12 conduct Bible readings and to attend to the spiritual needs of the  
13 local African American community; he held his first formal  
14 devotionals under a beech tree before a sanctuary was constructed  
15 in 1853; part of that original structure stood until 1967 and was  
16 awarded a historic building medallion, and today the Dixie  
17 Missionary congregation of 500 still worships in a sanctuary at the  
18 same location; and

19           WHEREAS, Through the years, the church has benefited from the  
20 dedicated efforts of many outstanding clergymen; the list of  
21 distinguished men who preceded the current pastor, the Reverend  
22 Barry Keys, includes Reverends Griner, Grigsby, Reed, Brown,  
23 Peacock, Bridges, Gipson, and Norsworthy; and

24           WHEREAS, Dixie Missionary Baptist Church has long served as a

1 source of inspiration and guidance to those who worship there, and  
2 its continued existence is a tribute to the unwavering commitment  
3 of its members and leaders, both past and present; now, therefore,  
4 be it

5         RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
6 Legislature hereby commemorate the 160th anniversary of the  
7 founding of Dixie Missionary Baptist Church and extend to the  
8 congregation sincere best wishes for the future; and, be it further

9         RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be  
10 prepared for the church as an expression of high regard by the Texas  
11 House of Representatives.