

By: Isaac

H.R. No. 1752

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, April 21, 2013, is the 130th anniversary of the
2 death of the legendary Texas Ranger John Coffee "Jack" Hays, and
3 this occasion provides a fitting opportunity to celebrate his
4 extraordinary life and career; and

5 WHEREAS, Jack Hays was born on January 28, 1817, in Little
6 Cedar Lick, Wilson County, Tennessee, to Harmon and Elizabeth Hays;
7 his father had fought alongside Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston in
8 the War of 1812, and with the outbreak of the Texas Revolution,
9 young Jack Hays decided to join the Texians' cause; by June 1836, he
10 had enlisted with the troops under General Thomas Jefferson Rusk,
11 and while serving in the Texas Army, he helped to bury the remains
12 of victims of the Goliad Massacre; subsequently, Sam Houston
13 advised him to join a company of Texas Rangers under the command of
14 Erastus "Deaf" Smith, and in 1837 Hays participated in a cavalry
15 engagement near Laredo, earning the rank of sergeant; and

16 WHEREAS, For the next several years, Hays worked as the
17 deputy surveyor of the Bexar District, and during that time, he made
18 a study of the Indian techniques of warfare to better protect the
19 surveying parties under his authority; he became an exceptional
20 tracker and was able to follow signs in the dry terrain of West
21 Texas that no one else could see; and

22 WHEREAS, It was in the early 1840s, first as a captain and
23 then as a major, that Jack Hays earned his reputation as one of the
24 greatest Texas Rangers in history; in the bitter struggle between

1 the Rangers and the Comanche, Hays proved to be a fierce fighter and
2 a gifted leader, using the Comanches' own techniques of concealment
3 and surprise against them; he pioneered the use of the new Colt
4 revolver in fights with the Indians, and though he and his men were
5 often outnumbered, he never lost a battle; and

6 WHEREAS, In one famous engagement along the Nueces River,
7 Hays and 14 of his men boldly charged a force of 200 Comanche
8 warriors, chasing them for three miles; in another noted encounter,
9 Hays and his men were attacked in the Hill Country and Hays became
10 separated from the rest of his group; he retreated to the top of
11 nearby Enchanted Rock, where he used a hollow on the summit as a
12 fortification and single-handedly fought off repeated charges by
13 the Indians with a rifle and two pistols until his men were able to
14 rescue him; and

15 WHEREAS, During the Mexican-American War, Hays led the First
16 Regiment of the Texas Mounted Riflemen at the rank of colonel,
17 scouting for the army of General Zachary Taylor and taking part in
18 the siege of Monterrey; regarded as a perfect gentleman by the young
19 ladies of San Antonio, he married Susan Calvert in 1847 at the
20 Magnolia Hotel in Seguin, and they later became the parents of three
21 sons and three daughters; in 1849, he was appointed as the Indian
22 agent for Gila River territory in New Mexico and Arizona, and the
23 following year he and his wife emigrated to California, where he
24 went on to serve as the sheriff of San Francisco County and as U.S.
25 surveyor general, helped to found the city of Oakland, and became
26 successful in real estate and ranching; he died on April 21, 1883,
27 and is buried in California; and

1 WHEREAS, Slender of build, with a clear, high voice, Jack
2 Hays may not have fit the traditional image of a hero, but in the
3 field he was a natural leader and a brilliant guerrilla warrior,
4 self-possessed, rational, and cool-headed, keenly aware of his
5 surroundings and an expert judge of the capabilities of his men; he
6 personally trained such other renowned Rangers as Ben McCulloch and
7 Sam Walker, and his example of calm authority in command and
8 decisiveness in action has inspired generations of Texas peace
9 officers; the right man in the right place at the right time, Jack
10 Hays is one of the most vividly colorful figures in the history of
11 our state, and his name and achievements will be remembered for as
12 long as the stars shine over Texas; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas
14 Legislature hereby pay tribute to the life of Jack Hays on the 130th
15 anniversary of his death and commemorate his enduring legacy of
16 courage and determination.