

By: Bonnen of Brazoria

H.C.R. No. 58

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, A former slave who rose to prominence as a
2 businessman and civic leader, Charlie Brown played a significant
3 role in the history of Brazoria County, and his life and legacy are
4 indeed worthy of tribute; and

5 WHEREAS, Born in Virginia, Charlie Brown traveled west to
6 Texas following his emancipation and settled in Brazoria County;
7 though unable to read or write, he had an innate business sense that
8 led him to a number of successful entrepreneurial endeavors; he
9 harvested cedar lumber to be milled in Galveston and shipped to
10 furniture makers in New York, and his interests grew to include a
11 gristmill, a syrup mill, and a cotton gin; and

12 WHEREAS, With the wealth he acquired, Mr. Brown purchased
13 land, eventually amassing some 3,000 acres near present-day
14 Danciger and another 200 in what is now West Columbia, where at one
15 time he owned a third of the town's property; he married a former
16 slave of the Dance family, Isabella, and the couple acquired the
17 Dance estate for their home; and

18 WHEREAS, Mr. Brown donated land for schools in Danciger,
19 Linville, and West Columbia; the latter of the three became the
20 Charlie Brown School, which educated children of color in the
21 community for many decades before it was closed in 1965; Mr. Brown
22 believed strongly that students should learn about and understand
23 the struggles of their African American forebears, and he began a
24 Juneteenth Celebration to commemorate the end of slavery in Texas;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, When Charlie Brown passed away in 1920 at the age of
3 92, he was thought to be the wealthiest African American in the
4 state, and he was highly respected by people from all walks of life;
5 in 1955, a street was dedicated in his name by order of the city
6 council of West Columbia, and most recently, his achievements and
7 generosity were recognized with the mayoral proclamation of Charlie
8 Brown Day in West Columbia on August 30, 2014; and

9 WHEREAS, Although he lived through slavery and its
10 injustices, Charlie Brown became a prosperous landowner and a force
11 for good in his community, and his remarkable story serves as an
12 enduring source of inspiration; now, therefore, be it

13 RESOLVED, That the 84th Legislature of the State of Texas
14 hereby commemorate the life of Charlie Brown and honor the unique
15 contribution he made to the history of Brazoria County and the State
16 of Texas.