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H.C.R. No. 32

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Forever associated with Jim Bowie and the heroic
2 Battle of the Alamo, the Bowie knife has long been a vivid and
3 colorful symbol of the history and heritage of Texas; and

4 WHEREAS, It is thought that the first Bowie knife was made by
5 Rezin Bowie, Jim's brother, during the 1820s, when the two siblings
6 were in business together in Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana; after Jim
7 was involved in a gunfight, Rezin gave him the large hunting knife
8 for personal protection, and in September 1827, in the chaotic
9 aftermath of a duel near Natchez, Louisiana, Jim used it to stab an
10 assailant who was trying to kill him; the story of the "Sandbar
11 Fight" ensured Jim's reputation as a deadly knife fighter, and all
12 across the South, men began to ask blacksmiths to make them a knife
13 like Jim Bowie's; and

14 WHEREAS, The weapon's fame grew when Jim Bowie took it with
15 him to Texas, and he and other defenders of the Alamo are thought to
16 have used the knives during the battle; the Bowie knife later became
17 popular with the Texas Rangers who served under the legendary Jack
18 Hays and Ben McCulloch, as well as with Confederate soldiers, who
19 were known to engrave "Sunny South" and other mottoes on the blades
20 of their knives; and

21 WHEREAS, During an era when guns often misfired, the Bowie
22 knife was a valuable back-up weapon, and schools were set up to
23 teach the technique of using the blade in a fight; knife makers
24 throughout the country met the increasing demand by creating

1 versions of the blade, and a journalist in Louisiana wrote that "all
2 the steel in the country, it seemed, was immediately converted into
3 Bowie knives"; they became internationally famous as well, and
4 cutlers in the English steel town of Sheffield began crafting
5 models that featured elaborately etched titles and slogans, such as
6 "Arkansas Toothpick," "Rio Grande Camp Knife," and "Americans Never
7 Surrender"; and

8 WHEREAS, The blade became less widely used as firearms became
9 more reliable, but it has continued to be popular with hunters and
10 collectors; designs have varied over the years, but today, the
11 Bowie knife typically features a steel blade that is at least an
12 inch and a half wide and eight inches long and between 3/16 and 1/4
13 inch thick, with a clip point that gives the weapon its distinctive
14 shape; the knife's handle often incorporates an S-shaped guard,
15 with the upper part angled forward so as to catch an opponent's
16 blade during a fight; and

17 WHEREAS, In 1958, one scholar wrote that "in the history of
18 American arms, three weapons stand out above all the rest: the
19 Kentucky rifle, the Colt's revolver, and the Bowie knife"; since
20 the days of the Alamo, the knife has served as an evocative reminder
21 of Texas' storied past, and it is forever linked with the fierce and
22 independent spirit of the Lone Star State; now, therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas
24 hereby designate the Bowie knife as the official State Knife of
25 Texas.