

No. 23

(House Joint Resolution 22)

Joint Resolution memorializing the death of Matthew Alexander Henson.

On March 9, 1955, there died in New York City, at the age of eighty-eight years, a native son of Charles County, Maryland.

This man was Matthew Alexander Henson, co-discoverer of the North Pole with Admiral Robert E. Peary on April 6, 1909.

Although the discovery of the North Pole brought fame to Admiral Peary and the others who assisted him, Matthew Henson remained unhonored and unrecognized by his native State of Maryland, although he received many honors from others outside of his own State, among them being a Medal of Honor from the Congress of the United States.

Matthew Henson exemplified the true explorer who did his work, not for any hope of reward or honor, but because the thing that he set himself to do was part of his being and must be done for the sake of its accomplishment.

Few people then realized the great import of the words spoken by Admiral Peary on April 6, 1909, when, in the icy fastness of the Arctic regions, he said:

"I have today hoisted the national ensign of the United States of America at this place, which my observations indicate to be the North Polar axis of the earth, and have formally taken possession of the entire region, and adjacent, for and in the name of the President of the United States. I leave this record and the United States flag in possession."

In 1909, a remote icy wilderness, uninteresting to all, of no national importance; today, in the year of 1955, the North Polar region is a bastion of defense, protecting our country and our citizens from any attack by air that an unscrupulous and cunning foe might launch.

Now, in death, Matthew Alexander Henson is beyond the reach of any mortal words or acts that could be spoken or inscribed among the records to reflect the great sense of esteem and humility that the citizens of the State of Maryland, through this body, the General Assembly of Maryland, desire to have enrolled, by this Joint Resolution, among the permanent records of our State, to the honor and glory of Matthew Alexander Henson; now therefore be it

Resolved by the General Assembly of Maryland, That the Secretary of Maryland be directed to send copies of this Joint Resolution, under the great seal of the State of Maryland, to the President of the United States; to the Governor of the State of Maryland, and to the Matthew Henson Commemorative Projects, c/o Herbert M. Frisby, Chairman, 1806 Druid Hill Avenue, Baltimore 17, Maryland.

Approved April 25, 1955.

EXPLANATION: *Italics indicate new matter added to existing law.*

[Brackets] indicate matter stricken from existing law.

CAPITALS indicate amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken out of bill.