



HR1256

LRB100 23976 ALS 43060 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate the City of Albion on the bicentennial anniversary of its founding; and

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WHEREAS, In 1816, George Flower and Morris Birkbeck, affluent Englishmen, sought to immigrate to America from England to form a colony that prized independence and political representation; after traveling through Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, and Tennessee, the pair became convinced that the prairies of Edwards County were the best place for an English settlement; and

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WHEREAS, In March of 1818, the first party of 88 immigrants embarked from Bristol, England; a month later, a second group of more than 60 immigrants departed aboard a chartered ship; a rift that had developed between Birkbeck and Flower divided the settlers into two factions; as a result, two settlements, Albion and Wanborough, developed two miles apart from one another; and

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WHEREAS, The settlements grew quickly, and in 1821, the county seat of Edwards County was moved from Palmyra to Albion, cementing the town's influence and securing its future; this move was not without controversy, as the residents of nearby

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1 Mount Carmel felt their town should be the county seat and  
2 marched their militia toward Albion to seize the documents  
3 stored in the courthouse; this situation was eventually  
4 resolved with the creation of Wabash County; and

5 WHEREAS, Morris Birkbeck was instrumental in consolidating  
6 anti-slavery forces in Illinois; he wrote numerous editorials  
7 in newspapers through the region under the pen name Jonathan  
8 Freeman to ensure that Illinois remained a free state; in 1824,  
9 Edward Coles, a London native who became the second Governor of  
10 the State of Illinois, appointed his friend Birkbeck as the  
11 Secretary of State of Illinois; Morris Birkbeck held that  
12 office until his death a year later; and

13 WHEREAS, Morris Birkbeck's death, along with the  
14 competition from Albion, devastated the town of Wanborough, and  
15 it was abandoned by 1840; all that remains of the settlement is  
16 a historic cemetery; and

17 WHEREAS, Today, Albion has a population of approximately  
18 1,900, many businesses, the Edwards County High School, and a  
19 variety of historic sites, including the pagoda on the  
20 courthouse square, which was originally built to protect the  
21 town's mineral well; and

22 WHEREAS, Albion is home to the Edwards County Fairgrounds

1 and the Edwards County Fair, where residents enjoy harness  
2 racing, midway games, carnival rides, a demolition derby, and  
3 livestock shows; and

4 WHEREAS, The Albion Library is the oldest public library in  
5 Illinois and dates back to 1819; the library provides free  
6 services to the residents of Albion and has been in its current  
7 location since 1922; and

8 WHEREAS, Several notable figures have called Albion home,  
9 including Louis Emmerson, the 29th Governor of Illinois, H.H.  
10 Kohlstaat, a newspaper publisher and advisor to five United  
11 States Presidents, Jeff Keener, a pitcher for the St. Louis  
12 Cardinals, Harold Basset, a United States Air Force Major  
13 General, and Harold Garman, a United States Army Medic and  
14 Medal of Honor recipient; therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
16 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
17 congratulate the City of Albion on their bicentennial  
18 anniversary and celebrate the many contributions the citizens  
19 of Albion have made throughout the history of the State of  
20 Illinois; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
22 presented to the City of Albion as an expression of our esteem

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1 and respect.