

By Senator Wise

5-03168B-08

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Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing Clay County and the accomplishments of its residents since its establishment in 1858 and celebrating the County's Anniversary Celebration Day, May 10, 2008.

WHEREAS, the first permanent European farmers, tradesmen, and businessmen first settled along the banks of the St. Johns River, Doctors Lake, and Black Creek in 1763, lands continuously inhabited since then under the various flags of Great Britain, Spain, and the United States, and

WHEREAS, during the fall of 1858, the residents of Middleburg, Clay Hill, and Magnolia Springs signed a petition to form a new county, and John G. Smith, the representative for the area, helped to craft and guide through the Florida Legislature the formation of a new county to be called Clay in honor of Henry Clay, whose Whig ideals were popular with the residents, and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 1858, Governor Madison Starke Perry signed into law the establishment of the new county, whose residents voted to make Middleburg the first county seat, and

WHEREAS, in the postwar period, Clay County residents banded together to rebuild the county and promote tourism along the St. Johns River with magnificent hotels such as the Magnolia Springs Hotel, The Park View Hotel, The Clarendon, The Union Hotel, and The St. Clair, and

WHEREAS, Francis P. Fleming and William S. Jennings, two sons of Clay County, rose to become governors of the state, and residents of Clay County have achieved prominence in various fields, including Marine Corps General Roy S. Geiger in Military

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30 Service; Charles Merrell, James Cash Penney, and Paul E. Reinhold
31 in Business; Primatologist Robert Yerkes, founder of the Yerkes
32 Primate Lab (Orange Park, Florida), in Psychology; Augusta Savage
33 in Art; and Slim Whitman and Lynyrd Skynyrd in Music, and

34 WHEREAS, the county's population growth over the years led
35 to the incorporation of the towns of Green Cove Springs in 1874,
36 Orange Park in 1877, Keystone Heights in 1925, and Penney Farms
37 in 1927, and

38 WHEREAS, during the Great Depression, Clay County residents
39 were employed by the Civilian Conservation Corps and built Gold
40 Head Branch State Park, one of the first state parks in Florida,
41 and

42 WHEREAS, the United States military has established military
43 posts and airfields in Clay County since 1836 including Fort
44 Heileman in 1836, Fort Number 11 in 1839, Fort Van Cortlandt in
45 1839, Magnolia Springs in 1864, Camp Blanding in 1939, and Lee
46 Airfield in 1941, and

47 WHEREAS, the military trained more than 800,000 soldiers at
48 Camp Blanding during World War II and Clay County residents are
49 currently involved in fighting the War on Terror, NOW, THEREFORE,

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51 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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53 That the Senate recognizes and honors the achievements of
54 Clay County residents and the significance of the roles they have
55 played in the history of Florida and the United States of
56 America, and joins Clay County in celebrating its Anniversary
57 Celebration Day, May 10, 2008.