



HJ0083

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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, It is highly fitting that the Illinois General  
3 Assembly pays honor and respect to the truly great individuals  
4 who served our country in its time of greatest need; and

5 WHEREAS, George Rogers Clark was born on November 19, 1752  
6 in Albemarle County near Shadwell, Virginia; he passed away at  
7 the age of 66 on February 13, 1818 in Jefferson County,  
8 Kentucky; and

9 WHEREAS, As with most children of the time, George Rogers  
10 Clark was tutored at home; he eventually became a farmer and  
11 surveyor; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1777, as the American Revolutionary War  
13 intensified in the territory west of the colonies, George  
14 Rogers Clark was commissioned as a Lieutenant Colonel in the  
15 Virginia militia and was authorized to capture the British  
16 posts in the region; and

17 WHEREAS, During the winter of 1778, British soldiers,  
18 French volunteers, and Indian warriors under the direction of  
19 British Lt. Governor Henry Hamilton, captured Fort Sackville  
20 located at Vincennes, in what is now known as Indiana; and

1           WHEREAS, Under George Rogers Clark's determined leadership  
2 and direction, a force of approximately 170 men made an  
3 incredible eighteen-day trek from Kaskaskia, through the  
4 freezing flood waters of the undeveloped Illinois countryside,  
5 to Fort Sackville; and

6           WHEREAS, Upon arriving at nightfall on the evening of  
7 February 23, 1779, George Rogers Clark surrounded the enemy  
8 with his men and masterfully displayed sufficient flags for an  
9 army of 500 men, thus giving the impression of having a much  
10 larger army than he actually had; and

11           WHEREAS, Along with other military maneuvers, George  
12 Rogers Clark's men continued firing at the fort and discharging  
13 explosives under the walls of Fort Sackville; and

14           WHEREAS, The British Flag would not be raised above Fort  
15 Sackville on the morning of February 25, 1779, as Lt. Governor  
16 Hamilton and his garrison marched out of the fort and  
17 surrendered to American Colonel George Rogers Clark; and

18           WHEREAS, George Rogers Clark's recapture of Fort Sackville  
19 at Vincennes is credited by historians as confounding the  
20 British plans to attack the newly formed United Colonies, as  
21 well as the British war efforts from the west; and

1           WHEREAS, Without George Rogers Clark's brilliant military  
2 actions, General George Washington would have faced a  
3 debilitating war on two fronts that might well have changed the  
4 outcome of the American Revolution; and

5           WHEREAS, As a result of George Rogers Clark's successful  
6 battles, the British ceded to the United States a vast area of  
7 land west of the Appalachian Mountains, which includes the  
8 present states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan,  
9 Wisconsin, and the eastern portion of Minnesota; and

10           WHEREAS, George Rogers Clark was a peerless military  
11 leader, who knew his enemy as well as he knew his own men; and

12           WHEREAS, The virtues that George Rogers Clark exhibited  
13 transcended his era; his actions during times of great distress  
14 serve as a reminder that acts of truly great heroes should be  
15 recognized and preserved for future generations; and

16           WHEREAS, The United States National Park Service maintains  
17 a George Rogers Clark National Historical Park and a beautiful  
18 George Rogers Clark Memorial in Vincennes, directly across the  
19 Wabash River from Illinois on what is believed to be the site  
20 of Fort Sackville; and

21           WHEREAS, A portion of U.S. Route 50 extends from Salem to

1 Vincennes, Indiana, and most closely represents the path that  
2 Clark and his men took after marching north from Kaskaskia;  
3 therefore, be it

4       RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
5 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
6 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the portion of U.S. Route 50,  
7 extending east between Salem and the Indiana border at  
8 Vincennes, be designated the George Rogers Clark Memorial  
9 Highway; and be it further

10       RESOLVED, That the Illinois Department of Transportation  
11 is requested to erect at suitable locations, consistent with  
12 State and federal regulations, appropriate plaques or signs  
13 giving notice of the name of the George Rogers Clark Memorial  
14 Highway; and be it further

15       RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be  
16 delivered to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of  
17 Transportation, the Secretary of the Illinois Department of  
18 Transportation, and the Mayors of Lawrenceville, Bridgeport,  
19 Sumner, Claremont, Olney, Clay City, Noble, Flora, Xenia, Iuka,  
20 and Salem.