



HR1147

LRB100 22205 MST 40858 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, On May 5, 1868, John A. Logan, commander of the  
3 Grand Army of the Republic, issued General Order No. 11  
4 designating the 30th day of May "for the purpose of strewing  
5 with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who  
6 died in defense of their country ... "; and

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WHEREAS, In so doing, John Logan established the national  
8 Memorial Day holiday; and

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WHEREAS, This Memorial Day will mark the 150th reading of  
his "Memorial Day Order" at thousands of Memorial Day  
observations across America; and

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WHEREAS, Despite this, John Logan, according to biographer  
Gary Ecelberger "may be the most noteworthy 19th century  
American to escape notice in the 20th and 21st centuries"; and

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WHEREAS, John Alexander Logan was born in Murphysboro in  
Jackson County in 1826, the son of Dr. John and Elizabeth  
(Jenkins) Logan; and

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WHEREAS, John Logan grew up in southernmost Illinois, a  
region derisively called "Egypt", whose residents, according  
to the Boston Liberator, were "mostly poor whites from the

1 Southern States too poor to own slaves themselves, too ignorant  
2 to know any better than to indulge the prejudices and ape the  
3 conduct of those who did."; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1853, John Logan succeeded in passing a severe  
5 "Black Code" prohibiting African-Americans from entering  
6 Illinois and blocked the passage of a bill to allow  
7 African-Americans to testify in court; and

8 WHEREAS, After returning from the Mexican-American War,  
9 John Logan entered politics as a Jacksonian Democrat, serving  
10 as Jackson County Clerk; in 1858, he was elected to represent  
11 the Ninth Congressional District of Illinois and won reelection  
12 in 1860; and

13 WHEREAS, With the outbreak of the Civil War, John Logan,  
14 being from "Egypt", had a foot in both the South and the North,  
15 and for too long sought a compromise; he finally declared his  
16 support for the Union in June of 1862; and

17 WHEREAS, John Logan took part in the First Battle of Bull  
18 Run as a Congressman and, when he returned home to Marion, told  
19 his constituents, "The time must come when a man must be for or  
20 against his country, not for or against his state...I for one  
21 will stand or fall with the Union."; and

1           WHEREAS, John Logan then raised the 31st Illinois Infantry,  
2           telling all who volunteered that should Lincoln free the slaves  
3           he would bring his men back home; he is credited by Ulysses S.  
4           Grant for saving Southern Illinois for the Union; and

5           WHEREAS, John Logan entered the war as a colonel and rose  
6           in rank to major general; it was after his victory at Vicksburg  
7           that he earned the privilege of leading the first troops after  
8           the cities surrender, and it was after this victory that he  
9           gave his "Great Union Speech" which brought President Lincoln  
10          to absolve Logan "in his own mind for all of the wrong he ever  
11          did and all he will do hereafter"; and

12          WHEREAS, As the war progressed, John Logan's longstanding  
13          racist attitudes changed, and he came to accept the  
14          Emancipation Proclamation; by the end of the war he supported  
15          the 13th Amendment; and

16          WHEREAS, In 1866, John Logan won election to the U.S. House  
17          as a Republican, and in 1870 he became a U.S. Senator for the  
18          State of Illinois; he was the Republican vice-presidential  
19          candidate in 1884, and it was during this time that he  
20          supported the adoption of the 14th and 15th Amendments; and

21          WHEREAS, The actions of John Logan brought Frederick  
22          Douglass to endorse him for the Republican presidential

1 nomination in 1884, however James Blaine would eventually end  
2 up winning the Republican primary; and

3 WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass continued his support for John  
4 Logan and said of him in a speech, "But what of John A. Logan? I  
5 will tell you. If there is any statesman on this continent, now  
6 in public life, to whose courage, justice and fidelity, I would  
7 more fully and unreservedly trust the cause of the colored  
8 people of this country, or the cause of any other people, ...  
9 no man has been bolder and truer to the cause of the cause of  
10 the colored man and to the country, than has John A. Logan.  
11 There is no nonsense about him. I endorse him to you with all  
12 my might, mind, and strength and without a single shadow of a  
13 doubt"; and

14 WHEREAS, Senator John A. Logan died on December 26, 1886 in  
15 Washington D.C.; and

16 WHEREAS, As our state celebrates its bicentennial, few  
17 Illinoisans remember John Logan, or the fact that just a little  
18 over a century ago Illinois considered itself the land of  
19 "Lincoln, Grant and Logan"; the bicentennial seems a perfect  
20 time to remember this forgotten Illinois hero who put his  
21 country above party loyalty and who rejected long-held racist  
22 beliefs to help the nation's former enslaved peoples gain equal  
23 rights; therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE  
2 HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
3 applaud John A. Logan for his sense of duty for country, for  
4 his dedication to public service, for his work done to promote  
5 equal rights, and for starting the proud tradition of  
6 celebrating Memorial Day every year in this country.