

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 123

By Burks

A RESOLUTION recognizing the joint efforts of the Board of the Smellage Cemetery of Putnam County, Tennessee, and the Hendley Family Association, Inc. of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the Smellage Cemetery of Putnam County, located near the town of Boma, came into being in the mid-1800s. Its existence was propagated by the death of the youngest daughter of Adin S. Hendley and Elizabeth J. Gentry- Hendley, progenitors of descendants who form The Hendley Family Association, Inc. of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, their daughter, Margaret Elizabeth Hendley, (born March 6, 1861, died July 3, 1864) was buried in what was the front yard of the homestead of Adin Hendley and his family, which they lived on and tended as sharecroppers for the Smellage family; and

WHEREAS, the Smellage family soon donated the land to be used as a cemetery, which allowed the parents of Margaret Hendley to be buried beside her and gave the Smellage family a place for the burial of their family members; and

WHEREAS, in 1911, Lucrecia M. Hendley- Wells and her husband, William Byrd Wells, sold to the Smellage Cemetery board an acre of land across from the cemetery on the south side of Hopwell Road to be used as a public hitching ground for horses; and

WHEREAS, a few years ago, the current Smellage Cemetery Board was approached by The Hendley Family Association, Inc. of Tennessee about honoring the progenitors of their family association with a historical marker and honoring and fulfilling the wishes of Lucrecia and William Wells by erecting a hitching post stockade, which now surrounds the historical marker under the only tree beside the road and across from the cemetery; and

WHEREAS, the Smellage Cemetery Board adopted a resolution on May 27, 2007, granting the placement of the historical marker and construction of a hitching post stockade.

The Winell Lee Lumber Company of Boma, headed by Connie Lee Gentry, volunteered as a subcommittee of the Smellage Cemetery Board to oversee the erection of the historical marker and the construction of the hitching post stockade, along with delivery of the historical marker to the Buffalo Valley Saw Mill Company, owned by Vernon C. Markel; and

WHEREAS, on Sunday, May 25, 2008, the official Decoration Day at Smellage Cemetery, a dedication was held. William H. Hendley, President of The Hendley Family Association, Inc. of Tennessee emceed, telling about the Hendley connection to the cemetery. He stated, "We are proud to bring honor to the site that began our family's journey in Tennessee over 175 years ago, especially thankful and appreciative of the Smellage Cemetery Board and its helpers who have preserved this site for future generations of our family to come and see and appreciate the heritage it represents." President Hendley then presented special recognition certificates to Connie Lee Gentry, whose Winell Lee Lumber Company erected the historical marker and hitching post stockade, and to Audrey J. Lambert, who maintains an internet website on the cemetery and those buried there; and

WHEREAS, President Hendley introduced the honorable Kim Blaylock, County Executive of Putnam County, who read a Proclamation declaring May 26, 2008, as "The Great Hendley Family Of Tennessee Day." This quote was coined by the late State Senator Tommy Burks in Senate Joint Resolution 128 adopted on March 20, 1989, and its listing, together with Senator Burks name, is enshrined at the top of the front side of the historical marker; and

WHEREAS, President Hendley went on to present a letter from State Senator Charlotte Burks commending "the descendants of Adin Hendley for keeping together throughout the years for this historical event... Preserving the local cemetery serves as a reverence for your ancestors is commendable, and may your family always have an infinite link with their ancestors... While their voices are now still their spirits and accomplishments will remain with you," together with certificates of appreciation from Governor Phil Bredesen to the Smellage Cemetery Board Members and certificates from The Hendley Family Association, Inc. of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, President Hendley then read the Hendley Family Association's letter of Thanks/ Benediction from Staff Pastor Ronald "Andy" A. Hendley II (oldest son of Association

Vice President Ronald Andrew Hendley, Sr., and great-great-great grandnephew of both Lucrecia and William Wells) of Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Boise, Idaho, which stated, "To the Smellage Cemetery of Putnam County, Tennessee's Board of Directors. Thanks to all of you for your efforts to safeguard the final resting place of our ancestors. Your labors and stewardship mean more to our family than you could know. My prayer for our family is that as we reflect on those who have gone before us. We would find strength from their example, and that the thread of love that is so prevalent in our family's history, would carry on into our future. I believe that this is the most Christian thing that we can do, that we would love each other without measure, the way our Savior loved us and gave His all to set us free."; and

WHEREAS, President Hendley then dedicated the "historical marker to the Hendley family and to the preservation of Smellage Cemetery." The ceremony was video taped by Mr. Jimmy L. Medley of Silver Point and photographed by Michael Lambert of Sterling Heights, Michigan. After the ceremony, President Hendley presented a plaque in the shape of Tennessee to Mr. Fred W. Shanks, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Smellage Cemetery, which was engraved : To: THE SMELLAGE CEMETERY OF PUTNAM COUNTY, TENNESSEE; BOARD OF DIRECTORS; Fred W. Shanks, Jr., Chmn.; Bethelda Bilbrey, Clerk; Ted Huddleston; Harlold Ralph Maynard; James M. Maynard; Linda S. Collier; Freddy W. Shanks; and Betsye A. Walker. "With Grateful Appreciation"; and

WHEREAS, President Hendley presented another plaque in the shape of Tennessee to Ted and Carolyn Huddleston with the following engraving: To: TED & CAROLYN HUDDLESTON; For all your steadfast efforts over all the years, Your tireless dedication to preserving Smellage Cemetery of Putnam county, Tennessee. Site of the founding of the Great Hendley Family of Tennessee. "With Grateful Appreciation." Carolyn Shanks Huddleston is descendant of Nancy C. Hendley, the oldest daughter of Adin & Elizabeth Hendley. She and her husband have worked tirelessly to preserve Smellage Cemetery; she facilitated the project until its completion, serving as liaison between the Smellage Cemetery Board and the Hendley Family Association while also putting together the subcommittee for construction. She made contact with President Hendley in 1992 after seeing his photo in the Herald-Citizen, after he had

been honored on the floor of the Tennessee State Senate by the late State Senator Tommy Burks; and

WHEREAS, the officers and members of the Hendley Family Association, Inc. who served on the Historical Marker Commission were Honorary Chairman Association Chief Elder John Aden Hendley, Chairman National President William Haydon Hendley, Vice Chairman Vice President Ronald Andrew Hendley, Sr., Association National Secretary Terri Lynn Hendley-Webb, Association Genealogist Linda Bess Havens – Hendley, Association Board of Directors Billy Frank Hendley, Carol Ann Hendley-Eubank, Timothy Howard Hendley, and William Kenneth Hendley, Sr., Association Members Donald E. Hendley, Lilly M. Hendley-Eisenmenger, Julie J. Tappan-Hendley, Sheila K. Hendley-O’Steen, Kathy J. Ross, Robert D. Kinser, and Association Honorary Members Carolyn Shanks Huddleston, Ted Huddleston, Harold Ralph Maynard, and Audrey J. Lambert; and

WHEREAS, the efforts of the Smellage Cemetery Board, together with the efforts of the members of the Hendley Family Association, can be summed up by the official motto of the Hendley Family Association, taken from the first inaugural speech of former Governor Ned Ray McWherter on January 17, 1987: “It is appropriate today that we pause to remember who we are, where we came from and what we have been taught” and the epitaph on the grave marker of the matriarch of the great Hendley Family, Elizabeth Jane Gentry-Hendley, which reads, “She was a kind and affectionate wife, a fond mother and a friend to all,” both of which are enshrined on the historical marker at Smellage Cemetery; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we recognize the efforts of the Smellage Cemetery Board of Putnam County, together with the Hendley Family Association, Inc. for their dedication in preserving this historical cemetery as a legacy to their ancestors and to the heritage it represents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate number of copies of this resolution be sent to the Chairman of the Smellage Cemetery Board of Putnam County for presentation to its members and to the National President of the Hendley Family Association, Inc. for presentation

to its members and officers who served on the historical marker commission with this final clause omitted from such copies.