

105TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. RES. 495

Relating to the recognition of the connection between the emancipation of African slaves in the Danish West Indies, now the United States Virgin Islands, to the American Declaration of Independence from the British Government.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 25, 1998

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN (for herself, Ms. KILPATRICK, Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas, Mr. JEFFERSON, and Mr. CONYERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Relating to the recognition of the connection between the emancipation of African slaves in the Danish West Indies, now the United States Virgin Islands, to the American Declaration of Independence from the British Government.

Whereas, prior to July 3, 1848, many Africans were held as slaves on the islands of the Danish West Indies, now the United States Virgin Islands;

Whereas, on July 3, under the leadership of Moses “General Buddhoe” Gottlieb, the African slaves on the Island of St. Croix responded to the signal of the blowing of conch shells by leaving their plantations to converge on Fort Frederik in the town of Frederiksted;

Whereas in Frederiksted the African slaves demanded their freedom and threatened to destroy the island by fire unless it was granted by 4 o'clock that afternoon;

Whereas, confronted by reports of arson and insurrection, the Danish governor, Peter von Scholten, met the African slaves in Frederiksted and declared that "all unfree in the Danish West Indies are from today free";

Whereas the heroes of this rebellion paid a high price, General Buddhoe being sent into exile, and Governor von Scholten being convicted in Denmark of dereliction of duty and of exceeding his authority;

Whereas the American people declared their independence from the British on July 4, 1776; and

Whereas the courage of these heroes serves to connect Virgin Islanders and all Americans to their past and to reinforce their unwavering commitment to preserve, protect, and defend freedom: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives urges—

2 (1) the American people to recognize the historical
3 significance of the emancipation of African
4 slaves in what is now the United States Virgin Islands; and
5 lands; and

6 (2) Virgin Islanders and all Americans to maintain
7 their unwavering commitment to preserve, protect, and
8 defend human rights and freedom.

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