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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 993

Offered February 20, 2009

Commending the George Pearis Cemetery Committee.

Patrons—Crockett-Stark, Albo, Athey, Bowling, Byron, Carrico, Cline, Cole, Cox, Fralin, Griffith, Hamilton, Hugo, Iaquinto, Lingamfelter, Lohr, Loupassi, Marshall, R.G., Massie, May, McQuinn, Merricks, Nutter, O'Bannon, Oder, Orrock, Plum, Pogge, Rust, Shannon, Vanderhye and Wright; Senator: Wampler

WHEREAS, Captain George Pearis was born February 16, 1746, and became a soldier in the American Revolution; and

WHEREAS, after the war, Captain Pearis purchased 204 acres of land in Montgomery County, which is now Giles County, and operated a ferry at Bluff City across the New River; he donated 53 acres of land for a town and for county buildings; and

WHEREAS, the first sessions of court were held in the new County of Giles on May 13, 1806, in the home of Captain Pearis; and

WHEREAS, Captain Pearis died on November 4, 1810, and was buried in a family cemetery on top of a hill; and

WHEREAS, in 1927 Nancy Pearson, Regent of the George Pearis Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) obtained a tombstone for Captain Pearis' grave and collected \$120 for a brick enclosure for the grave site; and

WHEREAS, the Pearisburg Town Council, Ruth Blevins of the George Pearis Chapter DAR, Charles Perry of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and William Compton of the United States Forest Service reignited a 10-year town discussion and established the George Pearis Cemetery Committee; and

WHEREAS, the George Pearis Cemetery Committee had three objectives: to promote awareness and appreciation of Giles County history, preserve the valuable landmark by making an accessible trail to the site, and honor Captain Pearis, who donated the land for their town; and

WHEREAS, the George Pearis Cemetery Committee members are chairwoman Ruth Blevins, Pat McCracken, Mary Jane Burn, Wanda Stump, Kerry Wood, Teresa Martinez, Judy Stafford, Dianne Rader, Ken Vittum, Chris McKlarney, Corbin Vierling, and Sheryl Lyles; and

WHEREAS, committee members have diverse areas of expertise from their affiliation or employment with the George Pearis DAR, Pearisburg Women's Club, United States Forest Service, Garden Club, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Town of Pearisburg, and Giles County; and

WHEREAS, with the assistance of an archeologist, Pat McCracken and Ruth Blevins documented and recorded 205 graves and placed 75 permanent marble markers; seven tons of top soil were carried by bucket brigade to the site for grave restoration; and three stone benches were added to provide a restful spot within the boundaries of the cemetery; and

WHEREAS, over 1,300 hours of volunteer efforts went into the project with \$30,000 in materials, resources, and contractor hours donated; and

WHEREAS, contributions were made by many generous organizations and individuals, including the American Legion Post 68, VFW Post 6000, Appalachian Electric and Power Company, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Boy Scout Troop 34, Burn Digital Photography, Celanese Corporation, 4-H Club, George Pearis DAR Youth Volunteers, Giles County Chamber of Commerce, Giles County Public Schools, Giles County Sheriff's Office, Giles County Historical Society, Givens Funeral Home, John Carroll Children of the American Revolution, Macy Mentors, McCracken and Associates LLC, New River Valley Sons of the American Revolution, Olde Towne Pearisburg, Order of the Arrow, Outdoor Club of Virginia Tech, Pearisburg Garden Club, Town of Pearisburg, Pearisburg Women's Club, United States Forest Service, *Virginia Leader* newspaper, and the County of Giles; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly commend the George Pearis Cemetery Committee and its dedicated supporters for their outstanding efforts to restore the historic George Pearis Cemetery in Giles County; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the George Pearis Cemetery Committee as an expression of the General Assembly's gratitude to the members for their commitment to preserving the rich history of Giles County for its citizens to cherish and remember.

INTRODUCED

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