

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 212

*Commending the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 5, 2016

Agreed to by the Senate, February 11, 2016

WHEREAS, in August and September of 1716, just two years after settling the first colony of German immigrants to Virginia at Fort Germanna, built along the bank of the Rapidan River, Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant Governor of the Virginia colony, led a group of men over the Blue Ridge Mountains; and

WHEREAS, the expedition, which originated from Fort Germanna, comprised a group of about 50 rangers, pioneers, Meherrin Indians, and servants, that became popularly known as the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe; and

WHEREAS, Fort Germanna was then the westernmost settlement of the British Empire, 20 miles above the fall line, providing security to Virginia's western frontier; the fort was situated in an ideal location to provide iron ore and fuel for the nascent iron industry of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the expedition marked the first passage over the Blue Ridge by Virginia colonists, reaching the banks of the Shenandoah River, which the explorers dubbed the Euphrates; a journal of the expedition, which has been transcribed and preserved to this day, was maintained by expedition member John Fontaine; and

WHEREAS, the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition has taken on the aura of legend in the succeeding 300 years since its occurrence, but is remembered as fact through John Fontaine's account, historic documents, literature, and family histories and traditions; and

WHEREAS, during the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition's 300th anniversary year in 2016, the Germanna Foundation will celebrate the history and legacy of the expedition through continuing archaeological field work at the Fort Germanna site, the presentation of a historical conference program centered on the expedition at a four-day conference in July, and a living history encampment portraying the dramatic story of 18th-century Virginia and the expedition in September, drawing on historical information that has been revealed by archaeological and documentary research; and

WHEREAS, the National Geographic Society recognized the historical significance of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition by producing a video about Germanna and the new archaeological exploration work being undertaken by the Germanna Foundation; and

WHEREAS, the 300th anniversary of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition is a historic opportunity for the citizens of the Commonwealth and visitors from throughout the United States and the world to come to Germanna on the banks of Virginia's Rapidan River, visit the Blue Ridge Mountains traversed by the explorers, and experience firsthand the area's many contributions to the rich and diverse history and culture of the United States; and

WHEREAS, all Virginians are encouraged to support and commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition by participating in programs and festivities in communities across the Commonwealth that will increase awareness, knowledge, and enjoyment of the history of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition and the Germanna settlement in Virginia and their preeminent role in the origin of the nation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition on the occasion of its 300th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Germanna Foundation as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the historical significance of the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe Expedition.

ENROLLED

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