



**PROCLAMATION
RECOGNIZING THE ST. JOHN COLONY
ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION 2024**

WHEREAS: Owning land of their own motivated the visionaries of the Freedman Community of St. John Colony, Texas with a desire and a vision to purchase 2200 acres of land to establish The St John Colony Emancipation Grounds and The Freedman Community of St. John Colony;

WHEREAS: The 2,200 acres of land that was purchased for the Freedman Colony of St. John Colony, Texas was within an established settlement which was already inhabited by our Native American relatives, who were indigenous to the area, and other diverse settlers who worked, lived, and thrived in various areas of this settlement;

WHEREAS: Reverend John H. Winn, Sr. and fourteen pioneer families purchased this St. John Colony site, and with an entrepreneurial spirit developed churches, schools, cemeteries, farms, ranches, a general store, a post office, dry good stores, a cotton gin, a grist mill, a sorghum mill, and a large hall that was operated by the community and located in the middle of St. John Colony and Mackiesville, along with the community libations entertainment areas;

WHEREAS: By agreement, the families worked and thrived until all 2,200 acres was paid for. The land acquired incorporated Mackiesville, which was founded by George Mackey, and the section of land that is now in Bastrop County known as Lower St. John and Upper St. John;

WHEREAS: The Freedman Colony of St. John Colony was established by industrious, proud, independent, resourceful, self-reliant and self-sufficient African American Pioneers of freed slave preachers, businessmen, educators, industrial innovators and workers, midwives, distinguished citizens of the Fractional Order, men and women of the various military services and hardworking committed productive citizens who celebrated Juneteenth together;

WHEREAS: In homage to ensuring lasting legacies, rich in historical significance and as a tribute to the celebration of freedom, seven years after the reading of the Emancipation Proclamation, by Gordan Granger in Galveston Texas, the celebration of June 19th began in 1872 in St. John Colony, Texas as Juneteenth;

WHEREAS: To appreciate the challenges that our ancestors met with strength and confidence to ensure for us a legacy, of gathering for the celebration of Juneteenth on our Emancipation grounds on this celebratory occasion, our annual celebration of Juneteenth is how we, the dependents of these pioneers demonstrate our homage for our unrequited gift;

WHEREAS: The founding fourteen pioneers' legacy draws their descendant families and offsprings to come together, in the old-time tradition, with festivities of barbequing, serving traditional recipes, singing, dancing, and fellowshiping, supporting and recognizing our great deep-rooted amazing history of St. John Colony, Caldwell County, State of Texas and the United States of America;

WHEREAS: This historical celebration memorializes, educates, informs and continues the legacy of ex-slaves that accomplished so much with so little by standing together in unity and love in the heart of adversity with celebrations for the great hope of that freedom promise;

WHEREAS: For the sake of our legacy and for the sake of our future generations and their education we must continue to preserve this cultural heritage with purposefulness and with all thar lies within our power; and

WHEREAS: Our pioneer ancestors established Juneteenth as a legacy that ensures a continuum to the relevance of this St. John Colony Freedman Community. Our legacy does not only stand on landmarks, and structures of seasons past. Our legacy stems from the dreams, the accomplishments, and the continued purposefulness of our ancestors.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE CALDWELL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT THAT that the third Saturday of June be designated as:

**THE WEEKEND OF THE ANNUAL JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION IN
ST. JOHN COLONY, TEXAS**

And do hereby call upon surrounding communities, counties, agencies at all levels of government (federal, local and state), interested parties, historical organizations, and individuals everywhere to note this observance of Juneteenth in St. John Colony and encourage everyone to give observance to Juneteenth with activities and ceremonies with your families, neighbors, social organizations and communities.

PROCLAIMED this 11th day of June, 2024.



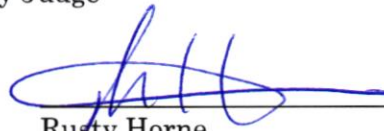
Hoppy Haden
Caldwell County Judge

Absent

B.J. Westmoreland
Commissioner, Precinct 1



Ed Theriot
Commissioner, Precinct 3

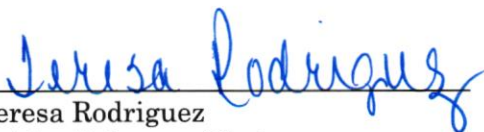


Rusty Horne
Commissioner, Precinct 2



Dyrall Thomas
Commissioner, Precinct 4

ATTEST:



Teresa Rodriguez
Caldwell County Clerk

