

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 91-4685, by Representatives Basich, Jones, Jacobsen, Fraser, Zellinsky, Heavey, Ogden, Riley, Moyer, Wilson, Hargrove and May.

WHEREAS, The United States Navy undertook the United States Exploring Expedition, 1838, the nation's first maritime attempt to pursue the international pastime of seeking new lands for commercial exploitation and the wealth and prestige such opportunities would bring the parent nation; and

WHEREAS, The United States Exploring Expedition, U.S. Ex. Ex., circumnavigated the earth between 1838 and 1842, establishing the United States as a great scientific and maritime power; and

WHEREAS, Under the iron-handed, irascible command of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, a skilled navigator, the squadron of vessels, including the brig Porpoise, the sloops-of-war Vincennes and Peacock, and the schooner Flying Fish, established the United States presence world-wide, creating detailed charts eventually used during World War II and observations of military and national import; and

WHEREAS, The collections gathered by the scientific specialists enlisted to the U.S. Ex. Ex. have formed the nucleus of the National Institute, the Smithsonian and Botanical Gardens, paintings, and illustrations to the National History Museum, Washington D.C.; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Ex. Ex. placed names on hundreds of geographical locations in what now is Washington State, including Elliott Bay, Bainbridge Island, Commencement Bay, Wasp Islands, Brackenridge Bluff, Gig Harbor, Point Wells, and Mount Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Wilkes penned in his own hand, "I, notwithstanding stood for the bar of the Columbia River, after making every

preparation to cross it; but on approaching nearer, I found breakers extending from Cape Disappointment to Point Adams, in one unbroken line" at his first observation of what now is Washington State on April 28, 1841. On May 8, 1841, Wilkes, when describing "the Narrows," wrote, "Nothing can be more striking than the beauty of these waters without a shoal or rock or any danger whatever...";

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives, in observation of the sesquicentennial of the Wilkes United States Exploring Expedition's approach to the Northwest, sighting the Columbia River, and contributions to our knowledge about the geography and ethnographic heritage of the Northwest, declare April 28, 1991, to be known as Charles Wilkes United States Exploring Expedition Day in Washington State.