

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO.4715, by Representatives Kessler, Anderson, Chandler, Kenney, Roach, Morris, Linville, Hasegawa, McCoy, Skinner, Hankins and Ericksen

WHEREAS, In 1884 an angry mob calling themselves the "Nooksack Vigilance Committee" crossed the United States-Canada border from Washington territory to British Columbia in search of Louie Sam, a 14-year-old boy from the Sto:lo Nation community of Kilgard, Canada, whom they accused of the murder of a Nooksack shopkeeper; and

WHEREAS, Having found the boy in the custody of a special deputy and awaiting being transported back to Canadian officials, the mob forcibly removed Louie Sam and lynched him; and

WHEREAS, The Washington territorial government was requested by federal officials in Washington, D.C., at the request of the Canadian government, to conduct an investigation to determine the identity of the members of the lynch mob, but failed to adequately do so; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that members of the 1884 cross-border lynch mob openly bragged about their participation in the crime, the Washington territorial government of the day reported that they were unable to determine the identity of those involved in the lynching; and

WHEREAS, Canadian undercover detectives sent into Washington Territory determined that Louie Sam was not responsible for the murder yet failed to follow up with the evidence that they had gathered thus compounding the injustice; and

WHEREAS, The family and neighbors of Louie Sam were so afraid of further cross-border violence that they permanently abandoned their village adjacent to the Canadian-American border to live with relatives; and

WHEREAS, By acknowledging this unfortunate historical injustice, the House of Representatives of the State of Washington join our peers in the Government of British Columbia and seek to promote healing among the Sto:lo people and reconciliation between Natives and nonnatives on the Pacific Coast;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the State of Washington recognize that the territorial government of Washington and the Government of British Columbia both failed to take adequate action to identify the true culprit of the murder and bring the organizers and members of the lynch mob to justice; express the deepest sympathy to the descendants of Louie Sam, who was deprived of his life, and whose relatives were denied the opportunity to see his murderers brought to justice; and remember this tragic moment in the relations of Natives and nonnatives, to ensure that such a tragedy will neither be forgotten nor repeated; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the leaders of the Sto:lo Nation; John van Dongen, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations for the Province of British Columbia; Ms. Iona Campagnolo, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia; Washington State Governor's Office of Indian Affairs; members of our state's congressional delegation; and the Secretary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

I hereby certify this to be a true and correct copy of  
Resolution 4715 adopted by the House of Representatives  
March 1, 2006

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Richard Nafziger, Chief Clerk