

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLICATION OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*.

WHEREAS, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, was published in 1852, one hundred fifty years ago; and

WHEREAS, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* came to be regarded as the greatest American propaganda novel, despite the fact that its author was relatively unknown and had never before published a book-length work of fiction; and

WHEREAS, Harriet Beecher Stowe was born on July 14, 1811 in Litchfield, Connecticut, where her father was a minister, and the Beecher children were raised to believe they had a reforming mission in life; and

WHEREAS, Harriet was sent to private school when she was six, and her tendency to bury herself in her books became a matter of concern to her father; and

WHEREAS, she moved with her father to Cincinnati in 1832, where her father was appointed president of Lane theological seminary; and

WHEREAS, she married Calvin Stowe in 1836 and gave birth to seven children; and

WHEREAS, the family lived on a meager income from Calvin's teaching position at Bowdoin college in Maine, and Harriet began writing to augment the family income; and

WHEREAS, in 1850, congress enacted the Fugitive Slave Law, giving bounty hunters license to hunt down runaway slaves even into northern states, and this law outraged many Americans; and

WHEREAS, Harriet devoted herself to writing about slavery, interviewing abolitionists in Boston and writing to Frederick Douglass for advice; and

WHEREAS, she sold the story of Uncle Tom to an abolitionist newspaper as a serial, starting in 1851, for three hundred dollars (\$300); and

WHEREAS, she could not contain her passion while writing the story, saying that "the Lord himself wrote it" and that the writing "boils and bubbles daily and nightly"; and

WHEREAS, the book was published in two volumes on March 20, 1852 and more than three hundred thousand copies were sold by August of that year, earning Mrs. Stowe more than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in royalties; and

WHEREAS, the book was the first novel in the world to sell over one million copies and was published in twenty-one languages; and

WHEREAS, Ralph Waldo Emerson said that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* spoke "to the universal heart, and was read with equal interest in the parlour, in the kitchen, and in the nursery of every house"; and

WHEREAS, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, successively and synergistically, worked to midwife the creation of the only successful third party in American history, the republican party; and

WHEREAS, the territory of New Mexico actively resisted the institution of slavery no doubt due in part to the efforts of Mrs. Stowe and like-minded individuals; and

WHEREAS, it is a supreme irony that a relatively unknown woman of modest means, raising seven children, a woman who could not even vote, let alone participate in the political process, changed the course of American politics and history by writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that March 20, 2002 be celebrated in remembrance of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the woman who changed American history; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the Harriet Beecher Stowe center in Hartford, Connecticut.
