

State of New York
Legislative Resolution

Assembly No. 1460

BY: M. of A. Espaillat



RECOGNIZING the 1824-1825 migration of the 6,000 free American slaves to the island of Hispaniola.

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Assembled Body to recognize significant events which represent turning points in our unique history and which are indelibly etched in the saga of our great Nation; and

WHEREAS, This Assembled Body is justly proud to recognize the 1824-1825 migration of the 6,000 free American slaves to the island of Hispaniola; and

WHEREAS, To compile the little known historical facts listed below to recognize this migration, This Assembled Body draws heavily from the original Hostos Community College study abroad research entitled "Dominican Identity and Migrations to Hispaniola," which was conducted by New York City University faculty member Nestor Montilla and commissioned by Ana I. Garcia Reyes, Director of Hostos Community College International Programs and Community Relations; and

WHEREAS, Hispaniola is the second largest island of the West Indies between Cuba and Puerto Rico; it consists of Haiti which occupies the western third of the island, and the Dominican Republic is the remainder; and

WHEREAS, By the year 1508, African slaves were forcefully shipped from the African continent to the island of Hispaniola; thereafter, arrivals of contingencies of slaves became customary along with the slavery of the island's indigenous people; and

WHEREAS, Soon, the French slavery system proved too harsh and provoked looming slave uprisings, which started as early as 1791; eventually, in 1793, slavery was abolished in this part of the island, but continued in force in the Spanish colony even until the 1820s; and

WHEREAS, After the Haitian Revolution and since 1816, America experienced changes in its racial ideologies and postures; at this juncture was born a movement in the United States favoring the emigration of free blacks to Africa; as slave uprisings became prevalent in the U.S. South, these instances influenced Americans' thought about the presence of the increasing African-American population; despite uncertainties, the plan was implemented and many free slaves boarded ships headed back to Africa; and

WHEREAS, The journey across the Atlantic Ocean took weeks and produced countless fatalities; the venture soon proved costly and impractical; and

WHEREAS, Attempting to remedy the situation, new, more convenient venues were contemplated, including Nicaragua and other Latin American sites; under such circumstances were the free slaves in America when Haitian President Boyer extended an invitation in 1822 to the U.S. President James Monroe to consider allowing those who qualified to voluntarily migrate to Hispaniola; and

WHEREAS, President Boyer invited the free slaves of the United States to emigrate to Haiti, in preference to Africa, promising them protection and assistance; his invitation was welcomed in the U.S. and soon the coordination of expected voyages to the island was realized via a specially formed Haitian Emigration Society and the commissioning of former slave Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME) formed in the U.S. in 1814; and