

1 [Recognition.]

2

3 **Resolution recognizing William Alexander Leidesdorff, Jr. as the African Founding**  
4 **Father of California.**

5

6 WHEREAS, On March 26, 1810, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. was born in St.  
7 Croix, Danish Virgin Islands to Anna Marie Sparks, an African woman, and William  
8 Leidesdorff Sr. of Denmark; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1834, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. was naturalized as a U.S.  
10 citizen in New Orleans, Louisiana and became a leading cotton broker and sea merchant  
11 trading in New York, Maryland, Hawaii, Alaska, Mexico, South America, and throughout his  
12 birth home, the Caribbean; and,

13 WHEREAS, In 1841, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. sailed the first legal U.S.  
14 commercial shipping vessel, the Julia Ann, into the sleepy Mexican fishing village of Yerba  
15 Buena, modern San Francisco, to establish a world maritime center; and,

16 WHEREAS, In 1843, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. was naturalized as Mexican  
17 citizen to facilitate acquiring a vast land grant from the Mexican authorities in Sacramento  
18 Valley as an early advocate of creating dual citizenship; and,

19 WHEREAS, In 1844, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. obtained title to Rancho Rio de  
20 Los Americanos, over 35,000 acres of prime commercial real estate along the south bank of  
21 the American River, and through his global trade and commerce projects, financed,  
22 developed and helped stabilize the Sacramento Valley; and,

23 WHEREAS, In 1845, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. accepted the position of United  
24 States Vice-Consul in the Mexican Alta California region and for serving our nation in this  
25

Supervisor Maxwell , Dufty  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1 capacity, he became the first U.S. African-American Diplomat in history and was  
2 affectionately known as the "African Founding Father of California"; and,

3 WHEREAS, In 1846, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. was an active leader in the  
4 Bear Flag Revolt during the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848 and his official reports are  
5 valuable accounts of the U.S. acquisition of California from Mexico; and,

6 WHEREAS, In 1847, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. captained the first and only  
7 steam ship, the Sitka, in California prior to the Gold Rush and his maiden steam voyage up  
8 the Sacramento River is immortalized on our California State Seal and recognizes his vision  
9 for increased maritime transportation of California's agricultural products to world markets;  
10 and,

11 WHEREAS, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr., a leading civic leader and pioneer in the  
12 successful quest for California to become the 31st State in the United States, was elected  
13 Treasurer, owned the largest home, constructed the first City Hotel, built the first commercial  
14 shipping warehouse and donated the land to build the first public school of education in the  
15 City of San Francisco; and,

16 WHEREAS, In 1848, William Alexander Leidesdorff Jr. received official notification of  
17 vast quantities of gold on his immense cattle and wheat ranch along today's State Highway  
18 50 corridor prior to his untimely death on May 18, 1848; and,

19 WHEREAS, It is a fitting tribute to the legacy of a great American pioneer that the  
20 Board of Supervisors join in the celebration of "Discover the Legacy, William Alexander  
21 Leidesdorff Jr.", March 21-27, 2004; now, therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizes William  
23 Alexander Leidesdorff, Jr. as the African Founding Father of California.  
24  
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City and County of San Francisco

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Tails

Resolution

File Number: 040156

Date Passed:

Resolution recognizing William Alexander Leidesdorff, Jr. as the African Founding Father of California.

February 10, 2004 Board of Supervisors — ADOPTED

Ayes: 9 - Alioto-Pier, Ammiano, Daly, Dufty, Hall, Ma, Maxwell, Peskin, Sandoval


Absent: 2 - Gonzalez, McGoldrick

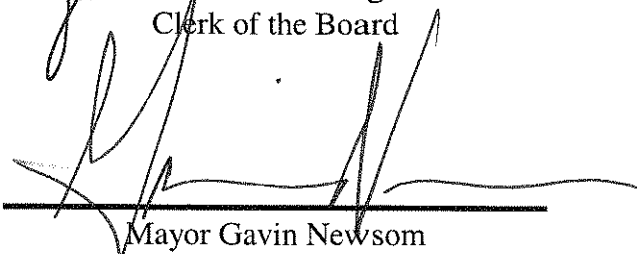
File No. 040156

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on February 10, 2004 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

FEB 19 2004

Date Approved

  
Gloria L. Young  
Clerk of the Board

  
Mayor Gavin Newsom