

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 49—SENATORS JACOBSEN, AMODEI, CARE, CARLTON, COFFIN, JAMES, MATHEWS, MCGINNESS, NEAL, O’CONNELL, O’DONNELL, PORTER, RAGGIO, RAWSON, RHOADS, SCHNEIDER, SHAFFER, TITUS, TOWNSEND, WASHINGTON AND WIENER

MAY 24, 2001

JOINT SPONSORS: ASSEMBLYMEN HETTRICK, ANDERSON, ANGLE, ARBERRY, BACHE, BEERS, BERMAN, BROWER, BROWN, BUCKLEY, CARPENTER, CEGAVSKE, CHOWNING, CLABORN, COLLINS, DE BRAGA, DINI, FREEMAN, GIBBONS, GIUNCHIGLIANI, GOLDWATER, GUSTAVSON, HUMKE, KOIVISTO, LEE, LESLIE, MANENDO, MARVEL, MCCLAIN, MORTENSON, NEIGHBORS, NOLAN, OCEGUERA, OHRENSCHALL, PARKS, PARNELL, PERKINS, PRICE, SMITH, TIFFANY, VON TOBEL AND WILLIAMS

Read and Adopted

SUMMARY—Commemorates contributions of legendary mail carrier John A. “Snowshoe” Thompson. (BDR R-1553)

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EXPLANATION – Matter in ***bolded italics*** is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION—Commemorating the contributions of legendary mail carrier John A. “Snowshoe” Thompson in anticipation of the memorial to be dedicated in his honor in Genoa on June 23, 2001.

1 WHEREAS, Jon Torsteinson-Rue, more widely known as John A.  
2 “Snowshoe” Thompson, was born in Norway in 1827 and arrived in  
3 California in 1851 with high hopes of staking a claim and realizing his  
4 fortune; and

5 WHEREAS, Finding that mining did not suit his temperament, John  
6 Thompson abandoned the miner’s life and bought a ranch in the  
7 Sacramento Valley, but the mountains to the East beckoned him and he  
8 looked for a reason to spend his life in the Sierras; and

9 WHEREAS, In 1856, John responded to an ad in the *Sacramento Union*  
10 which read “People Lost to the World: Uncle Sam Needs a Mail Carrier”  
11 and was offered the position which required him to carry mail across the  
12 Sierras over snowdrifts as high as 50 feet on a 90-mile route that served  
13 isolated mining communities of the California foothills which until that



1 time had been cut off from the rest of the world during the winter months;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, All attempts by previous postmen to cross the Sierra on  
4 woven snowshoes had failed until John Thompson carved a pair of "ski-  
5 skates" fashioned after the ski-shaped snowshoes he remembered from his  
6 childhood days in Norway, and his skill in using them quickly earned him  
7 the nickname "Snowshoe"; and

8 WHEREAS, Twice a month every winter from 1856 to 1876, Snowshoe  
9 Thompson made the daunting and danger-filled 3-day trek from  
10 Placerville, California, to Mormon Station, later renamed Genoa, and, upon  
11 delivery of his precious cargo and preparation of his load for the return  
12 journey, would reverse his course and return to Placerville; and

13 WHEREAS, Dressed in his Mackinaw jacket and wide-rimmed hat with  
14 his face covered in charcoal to prevent snow blindness, Snowshoe  
15 Thompson carried no gun, heavy coat or blankets in order to focus his  
16 strength on the important sack that often weighed more than 100 pounds  
17 and contained the mail as well as life-saving medicines and other items  
18 needed by the early pioneers; and

19 WHEREAS, Despite a constantly changing, snow-covered landscape  
20 where landmarks were often obliterated and only the stars were available to  
21 guide him when he traveled at night, Snowshoe Thompson did not use a  
22 compass because, as he once said, "There is no danger of getting lost in a  
23 narrow range of mountains like the Sierra, if a man has his wits about  
24 him"; and

25 WHEREAS, Never thinking of the cost to himself, Snowshoe Thompson  
26 often rescued prospectors caught in the snow, and in one instance, his  
27 heroic efforts saved the life of a starving, half-frozen trapper; and

28 WHEREAS, In the 1860s, Snowshoe Thompson homesteaded in  
29 Diamond Valley and married Agnes Singleton with whom he had a son,  
30 Arthur Thomas, who is buried next to his father in the Genoa cemetery;  
31 and

32 WHEREAS, Although Snowshoe was never fully compensated for his  
33 efforts as a lifeline between Nevada and California, he continued his  
34 "Snowshoe Express" until his death in 1876 just for the look on the faces  
35 of the people living in isolation; and

36 WHEREAS, To honor his 20 years of courageous service, a monument in  
37 Mormon Station State Park in Genoa will be dedicated on June 23, 2001,  
38 during the Snowshoe Thompson Festival; now, therefore, be it

39 RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, THE ASSEMBLY  
40 CONCURRING, That the members of the 71st session of the Nevada  
41 legislature do hereby commemorate the contributions and the heroic deeds  
42 of the legendary mail carrier John A. "Snowshoe" Thompson during his  
43 years of service to the early pioneers of Western Nevada; and be it further

44 RESOLVED, That this body congratulates the Snowshoe Thompson  
45 Committee of the Greater Genoa Business Association for their unceasing  
46 efforts to honor this great man with a fitting memorial in Genoa; and be it  
47 further



- 1       RESOLVED, That the Secretary of the Senate prepare and transmit a copy
- 2       of this resolution to the Snowshoe Thompson Committee.

