

2017-K1397

Assembly Resolution No. 1397

BY: M. of A. Finch

CELEBRATING 19th Century Publisher Derby & Miller
upon the occasion of the 165th Anniversary of the
firm's publication of Twelve Years a Slave in
Auburn, New York

WHEREAS, New York State has long been the birthplace and home to
great historical figures, men and women who, through their great
personal and professional achievements, have furthered the causes of
humanity, government, education, medicine, social reform and science;
and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its
long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to
celebrate 19th Century Publisher Derby & Miller upon the occasion of the
165th Anniversary of the firm's publication of Twelve Years a Slave in
Auburn, New York; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of Derby and Miller's great contributions, a
historical marker will be dedicated on Sunday, July 15, 2018, marking
the 165th Anniversary of Derby & Miller's publication of Solomon
Northup's Twelve Years a Slave in Auburn; and

WHEREAS, In 1793, General John L. Hardenbergh founded Hardenbergh
Corners in Aurelius; the settlement would be renamed Auburn, New York,

in 1805, when it became the county seat of Cayuga; and

WHEREAS, A young man by the name of James Cephas Derby was born in Little Falls, New York, on July 20, 1818, and arrived at Auburn about 1832; Norman Charles Miller was born in Skaneateles, New York, on March 23, 1824, and moved to Auburn about 1844; and

WHEREAS, James C. Derby began his lifelong commitment to the business of publishing as an apprentice with local bookseller and publisher Henry Ivison of Henry Ivison & Co. from 1833-1837; he then worked for The Honorable Ulysses F. Doubleday of U.F. Doubleday from 1837-1838, before returning to the employ of Henry Ivison from 1838-1840 as managing clerk; and

WHEREAS, In 1840, Henry Ivison presented James C. Derby a partnership to open his first bookstore and in July of 1840, J.C. Derby & Co. opened as a stationer and bookseller in Auburn; and

WHEREAS, J.C. Derby & Co. forayed into publishing its first original authored work in 1844, establishing J.C. as a major publisher in Cayuga County; and

WHEREAS, Norman C. Miller entered the publishing business in about 1846 as a store clerk with J.C. Derby & Co.; and

WHEREAS, In March of 1848, James C. Derby and Norman C. Miller became partners and the firm known as J.C. Derby & Co. became Derby, Miller & Co., which is often referred to as Derby & Miller; it was located at 107 Genesee Street in Auburn; and

WHEREAS, From 1848-1850, Derby & Miller's partners included James C.

Derby and Norman C. Miller as general partners and James B. Thomson as special partner until he retired about 1850; and

WHEREAS, The limited partnership of Derby & Miller reorganized and expanded its business in May of 1850 to include new general partner Elliot G. Storke, with James C. Derby and Norman C. Miller, of Auburn continuing as general partners and welcoming Edward Munson of Sennett, New York, as special partner to the firm; and

WHEREAS, In January 1853, Derby & Miller's partnership reorganized once again and general partners James C. Derby and Norman C. Miller welcomed Charles F. Coffin of Auburn, joining Elliot G. Storke and Edward Munson as special partners in the firm; and

WHEREAS, On January 21, 1853, Solomon Northup, a citizen of New York was rescued from enslavement in Louisiana and returned to Glens Falls, New York, where he wrote about his personal account of life as a slave on the cotton plantations of the American South with the assistance of lawyer David Wilson of Whitehall, New York; and

WHEREAS, On Friday, July 15, 1853, Derby & Miller's first slave narrative, *Twelve Years a Slave* was published in Auburn, meeting sales demands of more than 10,000 copies in its first printing; and

WHEREAS, After James C. Derby left the firm in December of 1853, Derby & Miller ended its limited partnership, and its successor firm Miller, Orton & Mulligan managed the business from 1854-1857; and

WHEREAS, Between 1848-1853, Derby & Miller thrived on 107 Genesee Street; the storefront and counting house employed approximately 100 people who bound, embossed, stitched and sewed, pressed, marbled paper operations and held stock within its confines with a printery across the

street; and

WHEREAS, In 1879, Elliot Storke, a former partner of Derby & Miller, remarked in his writings of The History of Cayuga County that "...of the book publishers of the County, James C. Derby and Norman C. Miller were the most conspicuous" and Mr. Derby "...was really the originator of regular book publishing here"; and

WHEREAS, James C. Derby, having devoted 50 years to the business of publishing and local and federal government, married his wife Lavanchie W. Fitch in 1841, and together, they raised eight children; he died in September of 1892, and is interred at Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, NY; and

WHEREAS, Norman C. Miller, also having devoted nearly 50 years to publishing and other endeavors, married his wife Jennie Adams in 1850 and raised two children; he and his family moved to New Jersey where he passed away in February of 1893; he is interred at Fairview Cemetery in Wantage, New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, 170 years ago in March 1848, the mid-19th century publisher Derby & Miller was established by two great men, James C. Derby and Norman C. Miller at 107 Genesee Street, in Auburn, New York, in Cayuga County; the noted firm published more than 100 works; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to celebrate 19th Century Publisher Derby & Miller upon the occasion of the 165th Anniversary of the firm's publication of Twelve Years a Slave in Auburn, New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the descendants of Solomon Northup; Irene M. Northup-Zahos, great-great-granddaughter; and Melissa L. Howell, great-great-great-granddaughter and Founding Director of The Solomon Northup Legacy.