



Office of the Chicago City
Clerk



R2012-487

Office of the City Clerk

City Council Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	5/9/2012
Sponsor(s):	Burke, Edward M. (14) Balcer, James (11) Burnett, Walter (27)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Recognition of August 15, 2012 as 200th anniversary of Battle of Fort Dearborn and proclamation as "Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation"
Committee(s) Assignment:	Joint Committee on Finance and Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, August 15th, 2012, will mark the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Fort Dearborn; and

WHEREAS, 2012 also commemorates the anniversary of the United States of America's War of 1812 against Great Britain; and

WHEREAS, The Chicago City Council has been made aware of this by 14th Ward Alderman Edward M. Burke; and

WHEREAS, As part of the 1795 Treaty of Greenville, the United States acquired a strategically important parcel of land "six miles square at the mouth of the Chicago River, emptying into the south west end of Lake Michigan, where a fort formerly stood" from the Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, The log garrison, built two hundred yards west of Lake Michigan by Captain John Whistler in 1803 and named for Secretary of War Henry Dearborn, the man who commissioned it, became the extreme western outpost of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The fort stood at what is today the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive, at the time just west of where the river turned sharply to the south before it flowed into Lake Michigan, offering protection to the fort from the east, north, and partially from the west; and

WHEREAS, On June 18, 1812, President James Madison signed a declaration of war against Great Britain, marking the beginning of the War of 1812; and

WHEREAS, Fort Mackinac was captured by the British in the first land engagement of the War of 1812 in July of that year, leaving Brigadier General William Hull unable to provide Fort Dearborn with necessary protection, stores, or provisions; and

WHEREAS, On August 9, 1812, Fort Commander Nathan Heald received a message from General Hull, ordering him to evacuate Fort Dearborn due to "want of provisions" and to march his command to Fort Wayne, Indiana. All surplus arms and ammunition were to be destroyed, but stores and supplies that could not be carried were to be distributed among the neighboring Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, Captain Heald, acting against the advice of local trader John Kinzie, decided to go forth with the evacuation despite rising tensions with the Potawatomi; and

WHEREAS, At 9 a.m. on August 15, 1812, 54 regular soldiers and 12 local militiamen, as well as 10 women and 19 children in wagons slowly moved out from the fort marching south along the lake shore with Captain William Wells and 30 Miami as an advance guard; and

WHEREAS, Minutes into their slow retreat, the party from Fort Dearborn noticed 500 Potawatomi warriors moving parallel with their column several hundred yards to the west, eventually falling out of view behind a line of low sand dunes a mile and a half from the fort; and

WHEREAS, Two miles south of the fort, at what today would be 18th Street and Prairie Avenue, the Potawatomi surrounded the evacuees and began an attack; and

WHEREAS, Captain Heald ordered his men to return fire and charge up the hill towards the Indian threat, but after 15 minutes of battle he was forced to surrender after sustaining heavy casualties; and

WHEREAS, As a result of the battle, thirty-five soldiers, twelve militiamen, two women, and twelve children were killed; and

WHEREAS, As many as 15 Native Americans were slain; and

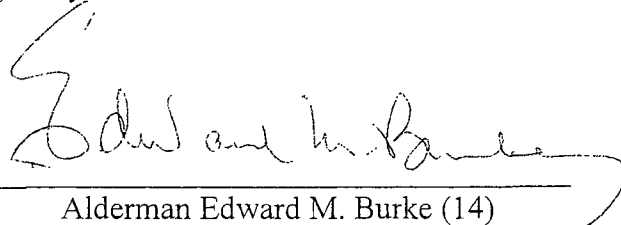
WHEREAS, Among the Americans killed was Ensign George Ronan – the first graduate of West Point to sacrifice his life on the battlefield; and

WHEREAS, William Wells, the Army Captain, warrior, and onetime Indian Agent who had been kidnapped and raised by the Miami since the age of twelve, the man for whom Wells street is now named, was also killed; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this 9th day May, 2012, do hereby recognize August 15th, 2012 as the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Fort Dearborn and do hereby proclaim it as a Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an invitation be extended to the descendants of the occupants of Fort Dearborn, as well as to descendants of the Native American peoples who were a part of the battle that day to gather in Chicago for a ceremony of observance, sympathy, and reconciliation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the participating relatives as a token of the honor and understanding of the people of Chicago and the Chicago City Council.



Alderman Edward M. Burke (14)

James A. Balcer 11

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Alderman Edward M. Burke (14)

James A. Balcer II
Walter [Signature]