



Proclamation

WHEREAS, by 1776 nearly 300,000 Irish nationals had emigrated to the American colonies and played a crucial role in America's War for Independence; and

WHEREAS, five signers of the Declaration of Independence were of Irish descent and three signers were Irish born; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans helped to fashion a system of government for our young Nation; and

WHEREAS, twenty-two Presidents have proudly proclaimed their Irish American heritage; and

WHEREAS, in 1792 Irish born James Hoban provided the architectural plans for the White House and served as one of the supervising architects for the construction of the Capitol; and

WHEREAS, Irish born Commodore John Barry was recognized by the United States Congress in September of 2002 as the "First Flag Officer of the United States Navy"; and

WHEREAS, Commodore John Barry fought the last sea battle of the American Revolution off the coast of Florida; and

WHEREAS, in 1813, Captain Oliver Perry, An Irish American, achieved a major naval victory in the Battle of Lake Erie; and

WHEREAS, in 1942, the 5 Sullivan brothers made the ultimate sacrifice for democracy and freedom during the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal and later had the Destroyer USS Sullivan commissioned in their memory; and

WHEREAS, the Irish first came to Spanish "*La Florida*" in the 1500s - first as missionaries and mercenary soldiers and then as planters, traders, businessmen, doctors and administrators; and

WHEREAS, three of the Spanish Governors of "*La Florida*" were actually Irish military officers; and

WHEREAS, Father Richard Arthur, an Irish-born priest from Limerick who was appointed parish priest for St. Augustine in 1597 and ecclesiastical judge of "*La Florida*," established the first public school in America and opened it to both boys and girls of all races; and

WHEREAS, Andrew Jackson, whose family came from County Antrim, served as Florida's military governor following its acquisition by the United States; and

WHEREAS, Irish Americans, since America's inception, have provided and continue to provide leadership and service to this nation's political, business and religious establishments; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper to celebrate the rich cultural heritage and the many valuable contributions of Irish Americans.


POLK CITY
Joe LaCascia, Mayor

ATTEST:


Patricia R. Jackson, City Manager/Clerk