

Assembly Resolution No. 563

BY: M. of A. Lawler

HONORING Piermont Firefighter Thomas Pomplin
posthumously upon the occasion of being the first
African-American Line of Duty Death in Rockland
County

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to convey its grateful appreciation and heartfelt regret in recognition of the loss of a courageous and hardworking firefighter who dedicated his purposeful life and career in faithful service to the residents of New York State; and

WHEREAS, It is with profound sadness and deep regret that this Legislative Body records the tragic and untimely passing of Firefighter Thomas Pomplin, who made the ultimate sacrifice as a member of Empire Hose Company No. 1 in 1854; and

WHEREAS, Born in 1826 to Mary Pomplin, Thomas Pomplin lived on South Piermont Avenue in the Village of Piermont, New York; and

WHEREAS, In 1850, a sulfur match factory located on the lower shoreline of Nyack, New York, was converted into Storm's Cedar Tub and Pail Factory by the Storms brothers, Arthur and Henry; on Saturday, July 29, 1854, the Storms brothers decided to close the factory a bit early; at approximately 7pm smoke and flames were discovered coming from the south side of the main building; and

WHEREAS, The call for fire was heard and soon members from Orangetown and Mazzeppa Fire Companies responded; as the Nyack firefighters set up their hand drawn engines to fight the massive blaze, it was determined that much of the entire building was enveloped in flames; with soaring summer heat and the dry condition of the building and its contents, the fire advanced with incredible speed; and

WHEREAS, During this time, as Nyack firefighters directed their efforts toward saving the brick building opposite the main Storms structure, a man upon a horse was dispatched to Piermont for mutual aid; while the blaze was at its height, the Empire Hose Company and Protection Engine Company arrived from Piermont to assist in the firefighting efforts; and

WHEREAS, In the 1800s, Piermont firefighters pulled and pushed their engines with manpower, covering the three-mile distance to the scene of the fire in just 50 minutes; their equipment and manpower helped prevent the further spread of fire to other buildings; and

WHEREAS, On that warm July summer evening, 28-year-old Thomas Pomplin, a member of the Empire Hose Company No. 1 of the Piermont Fire Department, responded to the Storm's Cedar and Pail Factory to fight this major building fire side by side with his brother firemen; and

WHEREAS, On August 5, 1854, a few days after the devastating blaze, Firefighter Thomas Pomplin succumb to the effects of overheating and exhaustion after selflessly and heroically putting his life on the line for the residents of his beloved community; and

WHEREAS, Firefighter Thomas Pomplin gave his life in service to others, but more importantly, he lived his life in service to others; his infinite selflessness and strength will forever stand as a paradigm and inspiration for others; and

WHEREAS, Armed with a humanistic spirit and imbued with a sense of compassion, Firefighter Thomas Pomplin leaves behind a legacy which will long endure the passage of time and will remain as a comforting memory to all who were privileged to have known and loved such an amazing man; he truly merits the grateful tribute of this Legislative Body; and

WHEREAS, On August 5, 2022, a coalition of residents, community leaders, and the local fire service will unveil a monument in honor of Thomas Pomplin and recognize him as the first African-American line of duty death in Rockland County; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to honor Piermont Firefighter Thomas Pomplin posthumously upon the occasion of being the first African-American Line of Duty Death in Rockland County; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of Firefighter Thomas Pomplin.