

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2001

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 771

Sponsors: Representatives Edwards; and Barefoot.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

March 26, 2001

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND MEMORY OF EDMUND
2 HARDING AND COMMEMORATING THE TERCENTENARY OF THE
3 FOUNDING OF BATH, FIRST TOWN IN THE COLONY OF NORTH
4 CAROLINA.

5 Whereas, Native Americans resided in the vicinity of today's Town of Bath
6 for more than a century before Europeans arrived; and

7 Whereas, by the 1690s, European settlers began moving into northeastern
8 Carolina, in large part from the colony of Virginia; and

9 Whereas, the Lords Proprietors of Carolina authorized Governor John
10 Archdale to dispose of land to settlers and investors at reasonable prices but not less
11 than one-half cent per acre; and

12 Whereas, in 1696, Governor Archdale, acting for the Lords Proprietors,
13 proclaimed and established the entire region from the Albemarle to the Cape Fear as
14 Bath County, in honor of the Proprietor John Granville, Earl of Bath; and

15 Whereas, in 1701, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign
16 Parts sent a library from Britain to St. Thomas Parish in Bath County, and that library
17 became the first public library in the colony of North Carolina; and

18 Whereas, about 1704, John Lawson, who would become surveyor-general of
19 the colony and author of the first book outlining the area's history, laid out on a small
20 bluff overlooking the north shore of the Pamlico River a town site with lots for sale; and

21 Whereas, on March 8, 1705, the Colonial Assembly incorporated that site as
22 the Town of Bath, the first town in northern Carolina; and

23 Whereas, in 1715, the Colonial Assembly established Port Bath as the first
24 official port of entry in the province to include the town as well as the Pamlico Sound
25 and the Neuse and Pamlico Rivers running into it; and

26 Whereas, in 1718, the Town of Bath played a significant role in the golden
27 age of piracy in North Carolina, whereby Governor Charles Eden pardoned pirates
28 Edward Teach (Blackbeard) and Stede Bonnet; and

1 Whereas, by the 1730s, the Town of Bath was on the main post road of the
2 British colonies, which ran from Maine to Georgia; and

3 Whereas, in 1734, construction began on St. Thomas Church, which today is
4 the oldest existing church in North Carolina and which was pastored for many years by
5 Alexander Stewart, who also served as church superintendent of schools for
6 African-Americans and Native Americans; and

7 Whereas, in 1743, 1744, and 1752, the Colonial Assembly of North Carolina
8 met in the Town of Bath; and

9 Whereas, in 1746, the Town of Bath might have become the permanent
10 capital of the colony but for a single vote by the Upper House of the Colonial
11 Assembly; and

12 Whereas, early residents of the Town of Bath included at various times four
13 governors of Carolina and the first chief justice of the colony; and

14 Whereas, Edmund Harding, the Reverend A.C.D. Noe, and others in the
15 mid-twentieth century gave generously of their time, imagination, and resources to
16 ensure the preservation and restoration of Bath; and

17 Whereas, Edmund Harding in particular traveled throughout the country and
18 abroad to promote the history of North Carolina and its first town, earning him the title
19 "North Carolina's Ambassador of Goodwill"; Now, therefore,

20 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

21 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Edmund
22 Harding in preserving and restoring the Town of Bath and recognizes the tercentenary
23 of the Town of Bath, the first of numerous towns incorporated in North Carolina. The
24 General Assembly calls upon all North Carolinians to observe, celebrate, and participate
25 in events and programs commemorating the tercentenary of the Town of Bath and its
26 importance in the history of the State.

27 **SECTION 2.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
28 resolution to the Mayor of the Town of Bath.

29 **SECTION 3.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.