

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2005**

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 497**

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Sponsors: Representatives Williams; Alexander, McGee, and Wainwright.

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Referred to: Placed on Calendar for March 8, 2005.

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March 7, 2005

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE EARLY RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN  
2 OF BATH ON THE TOWN'S THREE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY.

3 Whereas, the Town of Bath, located between Bath Creek and Back Creek in  
4 Beaufort County, was settled by Europeans and their slaves in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century; and

5 Whereas, during the Colonial era, Bath was originally located in Bath  
6 County, which later became Beaufort, Hyde, and Craven Counties; and

7 Whereas, by 1704, local residents had made plans to establish a town in Bath  
8 County that would serve as an important commercial and political center for the colony;  
9 and

10 Whereas, Bath was incorporated by the General Assembly on March 8, 1705,  
11 becoming the State's first town; and

12 Whereas, the Town was laid out by John Lawson, who served as one of the  
13 Town's first commissioners and later served as surveyor-general for the Lords  
14 Proprietors; and

15 Whereas, in 1709, John Lawson published a book entitled, "A New Voyage  
16 to Carolina," which described his journey through the colony; and

17 Whereas, on September 27, 1706, the first lots for the Town were sold and by  
18 the end of October of that year, a total of 25 people had purchased lots, including  
19 Nathaniel Wyersdale, Richard Odeon, Jr., Maurice Luellyn, Thomas Cary, Christopher  
20 Gale, George Birkenhead, Thomas Peterson, John Porter, John Worsley, John Lawson,  
21 David Perkins, Henry Robinson, Simond Worsley, Nicholas Daw, James Beard, Daniel  
22 Mathews, Otho Russel, Giles Shute, Lyonell Reading, Thomas Sparrow, Thomas  
23 Worsley, James Walsh, Edmund Pearces, and Joel Martin; and

24 Whereas, in 1708, Bath had 50 residents and 12 houses; and

25 Whereas, Bath's proximity to the Pamlico River and the Atlantic Ocean led to  
26 the Town becoming the State's first port of entry and the site of the State's first shipyard;  
27 and

28 Whereas, during Bath's early years, a number of merchants set up small stores  
29 and several residents established taverns and inns for travelers; and

1           Whereas, in 1707, John Lawson, Christopher Gale, and Dr. Maurice Luellyn  
2 established the Town's first horse-driven grist mill; and

3           Whereas, Bath's early families, including the Marsh, Van Der Veer, and  
4 Bonner families, contributed to the Town's early economy as merchants and owners of  
5 such businesses as a turpentine distillery and steam sawmill; and

6           Whereas, some of Bath's other notable citizens were Christopher Gale, the  
7 State's first chief justice, and several of the State's governors, including Robert Daniel,  
8 Thomas Cary, Edward Hyde, Charles Eden, and Matthew Rowan; and

9           Whereas, Edward Teach, the infamous pirate known as Blackbeard, spent  
10 several months in Bath and married Mary Ormond, a young resident of the Town; and

11           Whereas, despite a pardon from Governor Charles Eden, Blackbeard  
12 continued his pirating activities before being killed by Lt. Robert Maynard of the Royal  
13 Navy near Ocracoke on November 22, 1718; and

14           Whereas, in its early history, the citizens of Bath withstood conflicts over  
15 religion and politics, a yellow fever epidemic, a severe drought, and numerous conflicts  
16 with Native Americans; and

17           Whereas, Bath holds the distinction of serving as the location of the State's  
18 first public library, which was established in 1701 with 1,000 books sent from England  
19 to the St. Thomas Parish by the Reverend Doctor Thomas Bray, the Anglican founder of  
20 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; and

21           Whereas, the General Assembly enacted several laws designed to protect and  
22 preserve the library, and in 1715, created a commission to oversee the library, which  
23 included Charles Eden, Christopher Gale, Tobias Knight, Edward Moseley, Daniel  
24 Richardson, Fred Jones, John Porter, Joel Martin, John Drinkwater, John Clark, Patrick  
25 Maule, Thomas Worsley, Lionel Reading, James Lee, and Thomas Harding; and

26           Whereas, Gilbert Towerson's "Application of the Church Catechism" is the  
27 only known volume of that library to exist today; and

28           Whereas, the St. Thomas Parish set up a school for Native Americans and  
29 blacks and established the colony's only glebe, a 300-acre farm for the Parish's ministers  
30 located on the edge of Town; and

31           Whereas, St. Thomas Church, the State's oldest existing church, was  
32 established in Bath in 1734; and

33           Whereas, Bath served as the county seat from 1696 to 1785 and the site of  
34 Beaufort County's first courthouse, which was built in 1723; and

35           Whereas, in 1722, the General Assembly enacted legislation allowing Bath to  
36 elect a representative to the General Assembly; and

37           Whereas, Bath hosted the General Assembly in 1744 and 1752, and was once  
38 considered a location for the capital of the colony; and

39           Whereas, the Bath Historic District, the Palmer-Marsh House (ca. 1751), the  
40 Bonner House (ca. 1830), and the St. Thomas Church are listed on the National Register  
41 of Historic Places; and

42           Whereas, through its long history, Bath has remained a small village that has  
43 held onto its historic roots; and

44           Whereas, the year 2005 marks Bath's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary; and

1           Whereas, the citizens of the Town have been actively preparing a celebration  
2 to honor this historic occasion, including tours of historic landmarks and a marker  
3 dedication ceremony at Bonner Point in honor of John Lawson; and

4           Whereas, in observance of Bath's tricentennial, the General Assembly has  
5 been invited to meet in Bath on March 8, 2005; Now, therefore,

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

7           **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of the early  
8 residents of the Town of Bath for their contributions to their community and the State of  
9 North Carolina.

10          **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly extends sincere good wishes to the  
11 citizens of the Town of Bath on the occasion of the town's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary on March  
12 8, 2005, and encourages the citizens of this State to join Bath in demonstrating respect  
13 for our history and heritage.

14          **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this  
15 resolution to the Mayor of the Town of Bath.

16          **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.