

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005
RATIFIED BILL

RESOLUTION 2005-16
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 497

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Whereas, the year 2005 marks Bath's 300th anniversary; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 4. This resolution is effective upon ratification.
In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 9th day of
March, 2005.

Marc Basnight
President Pro Tempore of the Senate

James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives