

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005**

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 774

Sponsors: Representative Owens.

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

March 17, 2005

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE
2 CONSTRUCTION OF THE DISMAL SWAMP CANAL ON THE TWO
3 HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THIS HISTORIC LANDMARK.

4 Whereas, the Dismal Swamp Canal is a 22-mile waterway that serves as part
5 of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway; and

6 Whereas, the Dismal Swamp Canal is the oldest man-made continuously
7 operating waterway in the country, opening to boating traffic in 1805; and

8 Whereas, Colonel William Byrd II proposed the Dismal Swamp Canal in
9 1728 after surveying the boundary between North Carolina and Virginia; and

10 Whereas, in 1793, slaves and other laborers began the arduous task of digging
11 the canal by hand, completing the work approximately 12 years later; and

12 Whereas, the Dismal Swamp Canal is a living monument to the sacrifices of
13 the men who built it; and

14 Whereas, one of those men was Moses Grandy, born into slavery in Camden
15 County around 1786, who after many years of working on the canal was able to
16 purchase his freedom with a portion of his earnings and whose life story was recorded
17 in the 1843 narrative, "The Life of Moses Grandy; Late a Slave in the United States of
18 America;" and

19 Whereas, today, the Dismal Swamp Canal attracts approximately 2,000
20 pleasure boats annually; and

21 Whereas, the Dismal Swamp Canal is listed on the National Register of
22 Historic Places, designated as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark and
23 recognized as part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program;
24 and

25 Whereas, partners in a year-long celebration of the Dismal Swamp Canal's
26 200th Anniversary are the Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center, Dismal Swamp State
27 Park and Natural Area, Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia Canals
28 and Navigations Society, City of Chesapeake, and Elizabeth City State University; and

29 Whereas, future plans for the Dismal Swamp Canal include the Dismal
30 Swamp State Park, which will be made possible due to the efforts of the late Dr. Joseph

1 Armstrong Gill, a conservationist and avid outdoorsman, who was instrumental in
2 persuading the State to purchase land in the Great Dismal Swamp for use as a park;
3 Now, therefore,

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

5 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Moses Grandy
6 and the many other laborers who constructed the Dismal Swamp Canal.

7 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly honors the memory of Dr. Joseph
8 Armstrong Gill for his role in helping the creation of the future Dismal Swamp State
9 Park.

10 **SECTION 3.** The General Assembly encourages the citizens of this State to
11 take part in activities commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Dismal Swamp
12 Canal.

13 **SECTION 4.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this
14 resolution to the Dismal Swamp Canal Welcome Center.

15 **SECTION 5.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.