

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1989

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1304

Sponsors: Senator Martin of Pitt.

Referred to: Rules and Operation of the Senate.

May 15, 1989

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE FOUNDERS OF THE TOWN OF
2 PRINCEVILLE AND ACKNOWLEDGING PRINCEVILLE AS THE OLDEST
3 INCORPORATED BLACK MUNICIPALITY ON THE NORTH AMERICAN
4 CONTINENT.

5 Whereas, at the end of the Civil War when many blacks migrated to the
6 midwest for better opportunities, several freedmen decided to remain in Edgecombe
7 County to settle an area they called Freedom Hill; and

8 Whereas, Freedom Hill was sometimes called Liberty Hill and was named for
9 the hill from which Federal soldiers informed the freedmen of their emancipation; and

10 Whereas, in the middle of an agricultural area, many of Freedom Hill's
11 citizens were artisans and skilled workers who held such occupations as brick masons,
12 carpenters, laundresses, and day laborers; and

13 Whereas, some of Freedom Hill's most influential citizens included Robert
14 Taylor, a school teacher who served as county justice of peace, a two-term State
15 Senator, and editor of the Edgecombe Watchman and William Mason, a teacher and
16 minister who was elected to the State House of Representatives and the Senate and was
17 a member to the Constitutional Convention of 1875; and

18 Whereas, the citizens of Freedom Hill recognized the advantages of
19 incorporating their town and with the help of other citizens in Edgecombe County,
20 petitioned the legislature in 1885; and

21 Whereas, Freedom Hill was incorporated as Princeville on February 20, 1885;
22 and

1 Whereas, Princeville was named for Turner Prince, who had been born a
2 slave in North Carolina in 1843 and was one of Freedom Hill's earliest residents; and

3 Whereas, Princeville's first officers included Milton Pittman, the first mayor,
4 Turner Prince, a commissioner, and Orren James, a commissioner and grocer; and

5 Whereas, Princeville holds the distinction of being the oldest incorporated
6 black municipality on the North American continent; and

7 Whereas, despite economic, political, and other hardships, the citizens of
8 Princeville remained loyal to their town and this loyalty enabled the citizens to be proud
9 of the town's heritage which has allowed it to grow and prosper;

10 Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Senate, the House of Representatives concurring:

11 Section 1. The General Assembly wishes to honor the lives and memory of
12 the founders and early residents of Princeville for their contributions to North Carolina
13 and wishes to acknowledge Princeville as the oldest incorporated black municipality on
14 the North American continent.

15 Sec. 2. The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution
16 to the Town Clerk of the Town of Princeville.

17 Sec. 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.