

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1991

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SENATE BILL 939

Short Title: Thomas Day Home/Workshop Funds.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Daniel.

Referred to: Appropriations.

May 13, 1991

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION
2 FOUNDATION OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC., FOR THE STABILIZATION
3 AND RESTORATION OF THE THOMAS DAY HOME AND WORKSHOP IN
4 MILTON, NORTH CAROLINA.

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6 Whereas, Thomas Day, regarded by many as North Carolina's most famous
7 nineteenth century cabinet maker, was perhaps the most prominent free black in North
8 Carolina during the antebellum period; and

9 Whereas, according to the 1850 census, Thomas Day operated North
10 Carolina's largest production volume of furniture and listed the State's greatest number
11 of apprentices on site, and in addition, Day also worked extensively on the interior trim
12 of prominent houses and other buildings (including the University of North Carolina at
13 Chapel Hill) throughout the State; and

14 Whereas, Thomas Day had many prominent clients, such as Governors David
15 Reid and David Swain, and was so admired by the citizenry of Milton that they
16 successfully presented a petition to the General Assembly, attesting to Day's value to
17 the town and the State, in order to exempt Day's wife, a Virginian, from laws which
18 prohibited the immigration of free blacks into North Carolina; and

19 Whereas, at a time when many are trying, in vain, to find "new blood" to
20 research and revitalize, Thomas Day stands as an outstanding figure for all of our State,
21 black and white, to take pride in; and

22 Whereas, as Thomas Day becomes an even more significant figure nationally
23 for his artistic legacy, African-Americans throughout the United States, and especially

1 in North Carolina are beginning to search more and more for their own proud and
2 distinctive heritage; and

3 Whereas, the home and workshop of Thomas Day in Milton is one of three
4 National Historic Landmarks in North Carolina with black associations, it suffered
5 severe damage by accidental fire in late 1989, and it has been bought for preservation by
6 The Historic Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., in order to avert its
7 demolition; and

8 Whereas, the restoration of the home and workshop of Thomas Day will
9 ensure a tangible reminder of the extraordinary work of this man and will also add to the
10 growing interest in the restoration of Milton, one of North Carolina's most prominent
11 antebellum towns; Now, therefore,
12 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

13 Section 1. There is appropriated from the General Fund to The Historic
14 Preservation Foundation of North Carolina, Inc., the sum of \$100,000 for the 1991-92
15 fiscal year to stabilize and preserve the home and workshop of Thomas Day.

16 Sec. 2. This act becomes effective July 1, 1991.