

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

H

1

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1860

Sponsors: Representative Culpepper.

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

June 6, 2000

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 160TH BIRTHDAY OF THE
2 NORTH CAROLINA STATE CAPITOL AND HONORING THE MEMORY OF
3 DECEASED FORMER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHO
4 SERVED THERE.

5 Whereas, the North Carolina State Capitol, completed in 1840, is one of the
6 finest and best preserved examples of a major civic building in the Greek Revival style of
7 architecture; and

8 Whereas, the Capitol is the second such building on its site. A simple, two-
9 story brick State House was built on Union Square between 1792 and 1796; and

10 Whereas, the State House was enlarged between 1820 and 1824 by State
11 architect William Nichols, and burned in 1831; and

12 Whereas, the General Assembly of 1832-1833 ordered that a new Capitol be
13 built as an enlarged version of the old State House, a cross-shaped building with a
14 central, domed rotunda; and

15 Whereas, the Commissioners for Rebuilding the Capitol first employed
16 William Nichols, Jr. to help them prepare plans for the building, and in August of 1833
17 Nichols was replaced by the distinguished New York architectural firm of Ithiel Town
18 and Alexander Jackson Davis who modified and greatly improved the earlier design,
19 giving the Capitol essentially its present appearance and plan; and

20 Whereas, David Paton (1801-1882), an Edinburgh-born architect who had
21 worked for noted English architect John Sloan, was hired in September 1834 to

1 superintend construction of the Capitol, and the Capitol was built under Paton's
2 supervision; and

3 Whereas, most of the architectural details, columns, mouldings, ornamental
4 plasterwork, and the honeysuckle crown atop the dome were carefully patterned after
5 features of particular ancient Greek temples. The exterior columns are Doric in style and
6 modeled after those of the Parthenon. The House of Representatives chamber follows the
7 semicircular plan of a Greek theater and its architectural ornament is in the Corinthian
8 style of the Tower of Winds. The Senate chamber is decorated in the Ionic style of the
9 Erectheum. The only nonclassical parts of the building are two rooms on the third floor
10 which were finished in the Gothic style; and

11 Whereas, the Capitol is 160 feet from north to south, 140 feet from east to west
12 (including the porticoes), and stands 97½ feet from the base of the rotunda to the crown
13 atop the dome, with exterior walls built of gneiss (a form of granite), quarried in
14 southeastern Raleigh and hauled to the site on the horse-drawn Experimental Railroad,
15 the first railway in North Carolina; and

16 Whereas, the Capitol was completed in 1840 at a total cost of \$532,682.34, or
17 more than three times the yearly general income of the State at that time; and

18 Whereas, the Capitol housed all of North Carolina's State government until the
19 1880s, when the Supreme Court and State Library moved to a new building; and

20 Whereas, the General Assembly moved to the State Legislative Building in
21 1963, and the General Assembly wishes to commemorate the memory of deceased
22 former members who served there; and

23 Whereas, the office of the Governor is still in the State Capitol; Now,
24 therefore,

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

26 Section 1. The General Assembly commemorates the 160th birthday of the
27 North Carolina State Capitol and honors the memory of all deceased former members of
28 the General Assembly who served there.

29 Section 2. This resolution is effective upon ratification.