

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1989 SESSION
RATIFIED BILL

RESOLUTION 26
SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1304

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sec. 3. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 23rd day of June, 1989.

James C. Gardner
President of the Senate

J. L. Mavretic
Speaker of the House of Representatives