

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**

**SESSION 1989**

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1140**

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Sponsors: Representative Jeralds.

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Referred to: Rules.

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April 7, 1989

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING HENRY EVANS.

2       Whereas, Henry Evans, 1760-1810, a free black shoemaker and licensed  
3 Methodist preacher of Virginia, traveled through the little village of Fayetteville in the  
4 late eighteenth century and recognized a place where the field was ripe unto harvest;  
5 and

6       Whereas, Henry Evans settled in Fayetteville, built a small church sanctuary  
7 long known as "the slab Chapel", the first structure in the town erected specifically for  
8 worship, and soon became, to quote a denominational observer, "the best preacher of his  
9 time in that quarter"; and

10       Whereas, Henry Evans was so remarkable a preacher that Bishop Francis  
11 Asbury, who visited the slab Chapel several times, was told that "distinguished visitors  
12 hardly felt that they might pass a Sunday in Fayetteville without hearing him preach";  
13 and

14       Whereas, Henry Evans advanced a message of Biblical authority so appealing  
15 to his black listeners that slave owners at times drove him into the sandhills, where he  
16 continued to deliver clandestine sermons, and forced him to swim the icy Cape Fear  
17 River in order to reach his flock; and

18       Whereas, Henry Evans grew to become a respected and widely acclaimed  
19 preacher and townsman with a wide following among free and slave; and

20       Whereas, upon his death, Henry Evans deeded the lot and church to the  
21 Methodist Church, and was buried under the chancel of a later chapel built on the site;  
22 and

1           Whereas, the church which Henry Evans founded was the mother church of  
2 Methodism in Cumberland County, and after the Civil War of much of the African  
3 Methodist Episcopal Church in North Carolina; and

4           Whereas, the example of the life of Henry Evans raised a standard of conduct  
5 and courage for black people in Fayetteville in the times of slavery and afterwards; and

6           Whereas, the church which he founded has since become a sanctuary of  
7 spiritual growth and a birthplace of community leadership for several generations,  
8 enhancing the religious, educational, political, and social life of North Carolina; and

9           Whereas, that in welcoming the North Carolina General Assembly to  
10 Fayetteville, the community offers the life and service of Henry Evans as an example of  
11 the best of its sons and daughters through the more than 230 years since its beginning;  
12 Now, therefore, be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

13           Section 1. That the spirit and character of Henry Evans, free black preacher  
14 and staunch apostle of hope, be commended to the people of North Carolina as a beacon  
15 light embodying the true meaning of the freedoms and guarantees contained in the  
16 Constitution and Bill of Rights of the United States of America.

17           Sec. 2. This resolution is effective upon ratification.