

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 17

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to recognize and commemorate the placement of Centennial Park in Nashville on the National and Tennessee Registers of Historic Places.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those notable sites of significant historical interest within the great State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Centennial Park, a central gathering place in Nashville for more than one hundred years, is one such site which recently gained recognition for its historical importance to the City of Nashville and the State of Tennessee by its inclusion onto the National and Tennessee Registers of Historic Places by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior on July 15, 2008; and

WHEREAS, ninety-one acres of the park's one-hundred-thirty-two-acre expanse, on which sit a number of notable buildings and monuments, were included on the registries; and

WHEREAS, located on land originally owned by John Cockrill, an early settler of Nashville, the park's land was used as the State's fairgrounds and horse racing grounds, known first as West Side Park, during the 1870s and 1880s; and

WHEREAS, in 1897, Centennial Park hosted the Tennessee Centennial Exposition celebrating the hundredth anniversary of Tennessee's statehood, during which time the first replica of the Parthenon, the Rose Arbor, and Lake Watauga were constructed; and

WHEREAS, Percy Warner purchased and donated to the City of Nashville seventy-two acres of the original exposition land, an expanse which was then opened as the one of the city's first public parks and which contained several of the landmarks currently in existence at Centennial Park; and

WHEREAS, throughout its long and storied history, Centennial Park has been the home of a number of notable monuments and structures, including the Confederate Private Monument, sculpted by George Zolnay, erected in 1904, and dedicated to the heroism of the Confederate soldier; the Woman's Monument, which originally marked the site of the Woman's Building of the Centennial Exposition; the Thomas Monument, sculpted by Enid Yandell, erected in 1907, and honoring John W. Thomas, a native of Nashville, president of the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway, and president of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition Company; the concrete bridge, constructed in 1910 by Wilbur Creighton, Sr.; the concrete reproduction of the prow and figurehead of the gunboat Tennessee, placed in 1910 by designer E. C. Lewis; the Shell Spring, also designed and constructed by E. C. Lewis and completed in 1912; the Gold Star Monument, sculpted by George Zolnay, completed in 1922, and dedicated to the members of Davidson County's armed forces who lost their lives in World War I; the Centennial Art Center, originally built as a bathhouse and swimming pool in 1932 and converted in 1972; and Locomotive 576, placed in the park in 1956 and commemorating the bygone days of the steam locomotive; and

WHEREAS, the replica of the Parthenon was originally constructed for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897 to house the Fine Arts Department of the Exposition. The first replica deteriorated over time, but Nashvillians loved this symbol of the city, and in 1920 the City of Nashville hired architect Russell Hart and William Bell Dinsmoor to re-construct Nashville's Parthenon. Sculptors George Zolnay, Leopold Scholz, and Nashville native Belle Kinney Scholz created the sculptures in the pediment. Nashville sculptor Alan LeQuire created the monumental sculpture of Athena in the 1980s. The Parthenon was individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972; and

WHEREAS, the park is also the home of seven other historic buildings, built between 1920 and 1931; the Croquet Clubhouse, constructed in 1963; the Centennial Art Center; the Picnic Pavilion, built in 1942 and 1957; the East Restroom, completed in 1955, the Croquet/Events Pavilion, constructed in 1958; the Centennial Park Arts Activity Center, completed in 1963; and the Band Shell, also completed in 1963; and

WHEREAS, Centennial Park contains, in total, more than twenty historical markers and monuments and represents both the past and the present of the City of Nashville, while creating an inviting environment that all Nashvillians are able to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, Centennial Park has stood as one of the most enjoyable, readily accessible, and easily recognizable public spaces in Nashville for more than a century, serving as a fine and unsurpassable host for innumerable cultural events, festivals, and events, while offering to all a cultivated haven within this bustling city, and it is fitting that it be recognized with placement on the registers of historic places; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby applaud the inclusion of Centennial Park in Nashville on the National and Tennessee Registers of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.