

**No. R-85. House concurrent resolution commemorating the bicentennial anniversary of the Old Round Church in Richmond and the 40th anniversary of the Richmond Historical Society.**

(H.C.R.53)

Offered by: Representative O'Brien of Richmond

Whereas, William Rhodes of Richmond was a blacksmith and carpenter whose architectural talents were exhibited magnificently in the design and construction of his town's most famous building, the Old Round Church, and

Whereas, the Old Round Church is a 16-sided polygon constructed of wood during the years 1812–1814, and it was built as a multidenominational house of worship and to serve as the Richmond Town Meeting Hall, and

Whereas, five different Protestant denominations—Baptists, Christians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Universalists—worshipped at the Old Round Church, and each denomination contributed to the cost of building this impressive structure, and

Whereas, several possible reasons have been offered for the choice of the 16-sided design including: the concept of keeping the devil out of or the enemy from hiding behind the building's corners; the theory that one side of the building was assigned to each available construction worker, except that the 17th worker built the belfry; or perhaps that William Rhodes was copying the octagonal design of the church in Claremont, New Hampshire, where his parents resided, and

Whereas, in 1880, with each denomination having departed, ownership of the Old Round Church reverted exclusively to the Town of Richmond, and

Whereas, Richmond Town Meeting continued to be convened in this revered building until 1973 when the building was closed, and

Whereas, in 1973, the Richmond Historical Society (RHS) was established with a special mission to save and preserve the Old Round Church, and

Whereas, in 1976, the town of Richmond deeded the building to the RHS for a period of 40 years, and

Whereas, in the late 1970s and the 1980s, the RHS completed restoration work, including the reconstruction of the belfry, and since 2005 further restoration work has occurred and is continuing, and

Whereas, the building was reopened to the public in 1981 and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1996, and

Whereas, throughout 2013, the Town of Richmond is celebrating the bicentennial of the Old Round Church, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly commemorates the bicentennial anniversary of the Old Round Church in Richmond and the 40th anniversary of the Richmond Historical Society, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Richmond Historical Society.