

No. R-272. House concurrent resolution congratulating Pownal on the 250th anniversary of its municipal charter.

(H.C.R.181)

Offered by: Representative Botzow of Pownal

Offered by: Senators Hartwell and Sears

Whereas, approximately 8,000 years ago, the geographic location of the town of Pownal was home to an ice dam that created the mighty Lake Bascom which extended across Massachusetts and into Connecticut, and

Whereas, roughly 4,000 years later, after the lake and dam had receded into geologic history, the local area became the site of some of Vermont's earliest human settlements, and

Whereas, until the first half of the 18th century, the Mahican people cultivated corn, fished the adjacent Hoosic River, and established local winter hunting camps, and

Whereas, in the 1720s and 1730s, the first Europeans, from a number of Northern European countries, arrived, and some descendants of those families still reside in Pownal to this day, and

Whereas, these early European settlers constructed barns and residential dwellings that are documented as among the earliest wooden structures built in Vermont, and

Whereas, a great example of these 18th-century wooden structures is the Moore-Wright-Devoet house that is now being restored to reflect its original architectural style and look, and

Whereas, Ethan Allen and Thomas Chittenden passed through the Hoosic Valley on their way north to establish homesteads in the future state of Vermont, and

Whereas, on the eighth of January 1760, the province of New Hampshire, through its governor, Benning Wentworth, issued a royal charter for the town of Pownal, describing the new municipality's geographic boundaries as a tract of land equaling 23,000 acres, or "six mile square" in size, and containing the area of the then province of New Hampshire "South on the Massachusetts Line West on New York Line North on Bennington & East on Stamford by the Name of Pownal" and further providing that "the Inhabitants ... are hereby declared to be Enfranchised with & Entitled to all & every the Previdedges & Immunities that other Towns within Our said Province by Law exercise & Enjoy," and

Whereas, the charter was officially recorded, with the New Hampshire provincial seal imprinted on the document, on the 28th of January of that same year, and

Whereas, as young men, future U.S. Presidents Chester A. Arthur and James Garfield were schoolteachers in North Pownal, and

Whereas, among other notable personalities with ties to Pownal are author Grace Greylock Niles; George Westinghouse Sr., father of the famous inventor; Addie Card, the young girl who worked in a North Pownal mill and whose image appeared on a U.S. postage stamp commemorating child labor

reform; tycoon James Fisk Jr.; and U.S Army General Merritt Barber, whose distinguished military career spanned from 1862, when he enlisted in Company E, Tenth Vermont Infantry, until his retirement in 1901, and

Whereas, Pownal Center was pictured on the September 30, 1946 United Nations Bulletin that was labeled “a picture of peace,” and

Whereas, Pownal is the home of Green Mountain Park, the only horse and greyhound racing track, not associated with a fairground, ever to exist in Vermont, and

Whereas, on January 8, 2010, the kickoff celebration of Pownal’s 250th anniversary will occur at the Pownal Elementary School, and it will be the first of many events, as well as commemorative publications, that will follow throughout the year, now therefore be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives:

That the General Assembly congratulates Pownal on the 250th anniversary of the issuance of its town charter, and be it further

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the Pownal Town Clerk, the Pownal Historical Society, the Pownal Elementary School, and the Solomon Wright Public Library.