



HR0245

LRB103 32106 ECR 61115 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate the City of Salem on the
4 occasion of its bicentennial as the county seat of Marion
5 County; and

6 WHEREAS, The largest series of earthquakes in the history
7 of the new American republic brought the first settlers to
8 Salem; the New Madrid, Missouri earthquakes of 1811 to 1812,
9 which caused the Mississippi River to flow backward and church
10 bells to ring as far away as Boston, sent Captain Samuel Young
11 searching for a more hospitable home; after finding abundant
12 game and tranquility when he reached the land of present-day
13 Salem, he made camp on what is now the courthouse square; and

14 WHEREAS, In the 1820s, a severe drought hit northern and
15 central Illinois, which contributed to wagonloads of people
16 traveling to southern Illinois to obtain food and grain for
17 themselves and their livestock; this migration was compared to
18 the Biblical story of Israel going to Egypt to purchase grain;
19 thus, southern Illinois became known as "Egypt" or "Little
20 Egypt", with Salem being referred to as the "Gateway of Little
21 Egypt"; and

22 WHEREAS, Salem is situated halfway between the Indiana and

1 Missouri borders on what was originally the Vincennes-St.
2 Louis Road, known today as U.S. Highway 50 that goes from
3 Washington, D.C. to San Francisco, evolving the city into a
4 stagecoach stop along the Vincennes Trail; although most of
5 the Conestoga wagons rolled through the city, enough stopped
6 to deposit their cargoes that Salem was eventually
7 incorporated as a village in 1855; and

8 WHEREAS, Marion County was created on January 24, 1823;
9 the legislation, sponsored by State Representative Zadoc Casey
10 of Mount Vernon, stated that for the purpose of fixing the
11 permanent seat of justice for the county, or the "county
12 seat", a selection would be recommended by three appointed
13 commissioners, who were Andrew Bankson, William Hicks, and
14 John G. Fitch; and

15 WHEREAS, The commissioners, after viewing the situation of
16 the county and examining the different donations offered,
17 decided to fix the permanent seat of justice of Marion County
18 on 30 acres of land offered by James Roberts, making their
19 decision on May 13, 1823; and

20 WHEREAS, At the first meeting of the Marion County
21 Commissioners on June 2, 1823, the location of the seat of
22 justice was accepted, and the commissioners' court ordered
23 that this seat be known and designated by the name Salem; and

1 WHEREAS, Local history indicates that the town of Salem
2 was first known as Decatur; however, when the founding fathers
3 went to register the town at the then state capitol of
4 Vandalia, they learned the name Decatur had already been
5 selected for another community in Illinois; due to the
6 religious influence of the town fathers, they selected the
7 name "Salem" as the town's permanent name, which is featured
8 in the Old Testament and derives from the Hebrew word meaning
9 "Jerusalem"; and

10 WHEREAS, Salem's next 200 years have included a rich
11 history influenced by and involving agriculture, railroads,
12 the discovery of oil and coal, the development and expansion
13 of commerce and industry, and the influence of local leaders
14 on local, state, and federal public policy; and

15 WHEREAS, William Jennings Bryan, known as "The
16 Silver-Tongued Orator", is one of Salem's most famous
17 citizens; he was the presidential nominee for the Democratic
18 Party three times, represented Nebraska in the U.S. House of
19 Representatives, and served as the Secretary of State under
20 President Woodrow Wilson; and

21 WHEREAS, Salem is also home of John Thomas Scopes, a 1919
22 graduate of Salem High School whose commencement speaker was

1 William Jennings Bryan; at 24 years old, Scopes was indicted
2 for teaching evolution at a high school in Dayton, Tennessee;
3 William Jennings Bryan served as a prosecutor at the
4 subsequent trial, notably referred to as the Scopes Monkey
5 Trial or The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes; and

6 WHEREAS, Salem is rich in local lore and legends,
7 including being the birthplace of the condiment Miracle Whip;
8 the restaurateur behind Max Crossett's Café, an eatery located
9 at 100 North Washington, claimed that the Kraft Company bought
10 the café's recipe of Max's X-tra Fine Salad Dressing for \$300
11 in 1931, which was then renamed Kraft's Miracle Whip; and

12 WHEREAS, Another Salem legend surrounds the Halfway
13 Tavern, located on U.S. 50 just east of Salem and halfway
14 between St. Louis, Missouri and Vincennes, Indiana; originally
15 constructed in 1815, the establishment was used as both an inn
16 and livery stable; there has been speculation that one of the
17 customers was a young attorney named Abraham Lincoln during a
18 time when he and other lawyers "rode the circuit" from
19 courthouse to courthouse to try cases; some years ago, the
20 State of Illinois took over the property, making it a historic
21 site; and

22 WHEREAS, In the 1930s, Salem transformed from a
23 quiet-paced small town, doing its best to recover from the

1 Great Depression, to a city hit with another severe jolt in its
2 economy due to the oil boom; the city was noted for having the
3 second highest amount of oil production in any one area when 93
4 million barrels of oil were pumped from area farmland in 1939;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Salem is known as the "Birthplace of the G.I.
7 Bill of Rights", otherwise known as the Servicemen's
8 Readjustment Act of 1944; this Act was forged from the
9 knowledge of Salem's own Luther B. Easley American Legion Post
10 128 on November 4, 1943, and it was drafted by Omar J. McMackin
11 and Earl W. Merritt, both of Salem, former Governor John
12 Stelle of McLeansboro, Dr. Leonard W. Esper of Springfield,
13 George H. Bauer of Effingham, William R. McCauley of Olney,
14 James P. Ringley of Lemont, and A. L. Starshak of Chicago;
15 former Governor Stelle was with President Franklin D.
16 Roosevelt when he signed it into law in Washington, D.C. on
17 June 22, 1944; therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
19 HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
20 we congratulate the City of Salem on its bicentennial
21 anniversary as the county seat of Marion County, and we honor
22 the achievements of its citizens and its role in Illinois and
23 U.S. history; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That we wish the City of Salem another 200 years
2 of success; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
4 presented to City of Salem as an expression of our esteem and
5 respect.