

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 96

By Holt

A RESOLUTION to recognize the City of McKenzie on the occasion of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is the privilege of this General Assembly to recognize those venerable Tennessee communities as they celebrate milestones in their histories; and

WHEREAS, one such community is the City of McKenzie, which this year celebrates the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its incorporation, marking it as one of Tennessee's finest cities; and

WHEREAS, the land that now comprises McKenzie was once inhabited by the Nation of the Chickasaw; the land was replete with buffalo, wolves, bear, elk, panthers, deer, and turkey, which David Crockett and Daniel Boone both hunted when they visited the area. The land also boasted deep, loose soil conducive for growing crops, which is precisely why many settlers following the Natchez Trail in the early nineteenth century established farms there; and

WHEREAS, among the first settlers were the families of Stephen Pate, John M. Gilbert, R.S. Cole, Albert Gallatin Harris, the Garland Sneads, and Colonel John D. McKenzie, who settled in the area that would later bear his name in 1828; and

WHEREAS, in 1853, the Memphis and Ohio Railroad Company was organized, and on May 4, 1860, the first train traveled from Memphis to Paris, coming through the town known as McKenzie Station; the railroad proved consequential for the area, as it was raided and destroyed by Confederate soldiers in 1862 in order to slow down or prevent imminent invasion of federal troops, and in 1867, the completed tracks of the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad Company brought the town of McKenzie into existence; and

WHEREAS, McKenzie, so named because James Monroe McKenzie, son of Colonel John D. McKenzie, gave the land on which one of the railroads was built, was incorporated on January 22, 1869, as noted in chapter twenty-five of the Public Acts of Tennessee, 1868-1869;

Captain W.H. Hawkins, brother of former Governor Alvin Hawkins, was the first mayor of the town, which, at the time of incorporation, numbered 500 citizens; and

WHEREAS, on February 2, 1872, McKenzie deeded four acres to Bethel College after it was decided that the college would move from McLemoresville to McKenzie because of the latter's railroad access; Bethel College's first academic year in McKenzie was 1872-1873; and

WHEREAS, the early years of the town saw unpaved streets and sidewalks, sidewalks made of warped planks turned up on both ends, a proliferation of saloons, and horses, hogs, and cattle at large; as McKenzie began to advance, however, saloons were outlawed on May 1, 1889, increasing property values by fifty percent and allowing businesses to flourish; in April 1905, the mayor and aldermen passed a law denying cattle the privilege of roaming the streets; and a city park was erected; and

WHEREAS, improvements in the city were steady but piecemeal; in 1899, gasoline street lamps were purchased, later replaced by kerosene lamps, and that same year, the only public water works was a pump in the city park; and

WHEREAS, the history of McKenzie is not without its tragedies; the city had two great fires in the downtown area—the first destroyed many buildings along the railroad, including the McKenzie Hotel, and the second, in 1887, destroyed the row of frame houses facing east on Broadway and several facing the railroad. The city also survived the trials of a Yellow Fever epidemic and the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, between 1940 and 1950, the population of McKenzie grew more than any city in Tennessee, with the exception of Oak Ridge, increasing by 86.9 percent largely due to an annexation in 1947 that added approximately 1,300 individuals to the city's population; the population now stands at 5,310, with upwards of 10,000 outside of the corporate city limits; and

WHEREAS, as McKenzie has grown, it has also prospered; multiple industries and new businesses continue to succeed and provide jobs, and schools have expanded, including the addition of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology and the transition of Bethel College to Bethel University, the fastest-growing private university in the State; and

WHEREAS, McKenzie is a thriving community and integral part of the West Tennessee region, and it is fitting that the city be recognized during its sesquicentennial year; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby join with the City of McKenzie in celebrating the occasion of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, extending our sincere best wishes for the success, prosperity, and happiness of the citizens of McKenzie and the continuation of McKenzie's legacy as a successful Tennessee community.

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