

RESOLUTION TO COMMEMORATE THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE  
UNDERGROUND RAILROAD IN GUILFORD COUNTY

WHEREAS, the first known instance in North Carolina of a “conductor” and a “passenger” took place in 1819 on what would become known as the Underground Railroad;

WHEREAS, Guilford County became known as a sanctuary for fugitives from slavery;

WHEREAS, John Dimery (also spelled Dimrey), a free black living in the New Garden Quaker community was kidnapped by the sons of his former owner with the intent to return Dimery to slavery;

WHEREAS, Vestal Coffin, a New Garden Quaker known for his abolitionist work had been involved with freeing Benjamin Benson, another free black, and helped form the North Carolina Manumission Society, intercepted the kidnappers allowing Dimery to escape;

WHEREAS, in an effort to provide safety from the slave culture of the South by escaping to free states, Coffin met with Dimery to map out a route that Quakers had utilized to Richmond, Indiana, a town founded by three Randolph County Quakers;

WHEREAS, Coffin remained active in aiding enslaved persons to freedom until his death in 1826;

WHEREAS, the collaboration of Coffin and Dimery was the beginning of what has been called the largest interracial civil disobedience action for human rights in America until the Civil Rights era of the 1950’s and 1960’s including the 1960 Sit-In at the Woolworths lunch counter in Greensboro;

WHEREAS, in observance of the bicentennial celebration, events will be held throughout 2019 to include lectures by nationally known historians on the Underground Railroad, book readings, historical tours, and a march from John Dimrey Drive to the grave of Vestal Coffin;

WHEREAS, the City Council on behalf of the citizens of Greensboro wishes to support the recognition of the Bicentennial Celebration of the first known activity of the Underground Railroad in Guilford County.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GREENSBORO:

That it hereby recognizes 2019 to commemorate the Bicentennial Celebration of the Underground Railroad in Guilford County.