

2023 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 499

Offered February 23, 2023

Commending Batestown.

Patrons—Mundon King, Guzman, Lopez and Rasoul

WHEREAS, Batestown, a former settlement in Prince William County, was one of the largest autonomous African American communities in Northern Virginia; and

WHEREAS, Batestown traces its roots to the late 18th century and early 19th century, when several African American landowners in Prince William County began dividing large tracts of property into smaller lots for their children to settle, resulting in the formation of a small community; and

WHEREAS, Batestown was named for Sally Bates, a freed slave who was an early settler in the area; and

WHEREAS, for many years, the residents of Batestown practiced subsistence agriculture, but in 1889, the Cabin Branch Pyrite Mine opened in the area and transformed the local economy; the mine was a major employer in the area until it closed in 1920; and

WHEREAS, after the Civil War, Batestown rapidly expanded as many freed slaves relocated to the area; the residents of Batestown established and maintained their own church and school and cultivated a strong sense of community; and

WHEREAS, in the 1930s, the Resettlement Administration purchased or condemned most of the lots in Batestown and forcibly removed community residents; and

WHEREAS, the site of Batestown was used as a training ground for the Office of Strategic Services during World War II and is now part of Prince William Forest Park; two historical markers about Batestown are located at the nearby Little Union Baptist Church; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That Batestown hereby be commended for its unique role in the history of Prince William County; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Little Union Baptist Church as an expression of the House of Delegates' appreciation for the historical significance of the Batestown community.

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