

**RESOLUTION OF THE FAYETTEVILLE FAITH TASK FORCE
TO REPLACE & REPURPOSE THE
MARKET HOUSE OF DOWNTOWN FAYETTEVILLE, NC**

Submitted on June 22, 2020

In May of 1832, it was published and noted that a “Market House surmounted by a Town Hall” had just been completed. The revealing of such monument was deemed a “beautiful ornament to the town” and was praised by a certain populace of the community and city. However, since its inception, this landmark has been a point of contention and a horrific reminder for the African American population. Yes, the location of this *Market House* has been at the center of our city; but ironically, it has also been at the center of constant conflict. And while some refuse to see the reality and the truth, history has made it very clear – with pliable documentation – that this “ornament” has not beautified the city at all. Because it was this ornament that was the location for Slave Auctions. Records reflect “Valuable Negroes” and a “Family of Negroes,” amongst many other headlines, being sold as property and for whatever use the buyer deemed fit. From men to women, boys to girls, even children as young as 18-months-old, there were frequent auctions over a lengthy span of time. This landmark was respected as the meeting place to make purchases; unfortunately, those purchases were not just for groceries and household items. And noise was spread abroad about the activity at this location. So much so that on Monday, March 5, 1934 – a surprise visit from (former) First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt was made *just* so that she could see the “slave market.” Her trip was literally long enough to “stretch her legs in a walk down Hay Street to the Methodist church corner and back.” Of all the things that could have peaked her interest, she wanted to see where slaves were sold. And while she never made it all the way to the Market House, her 12-minute visit did afford her peaked interest to be satiated. If you fast forward through the 1960s, 70s, and beyond, you will also see that this proclaimed cenotaph has been a point of controversy in the fight for Civil Rights and has affected the Human Relations Advisory Commission. In 1989, event planners wanted a grand celebration with the Market House as the focal point. But the insensitivity of such permeated the community. A 5 to 4 vote in 1990 amongst the City Council approved the wording for a plaque outside of the building. Yet, this wasn’t a solution to the issue at hand. This history and the arguments surrounding this building are still alive today.

Knowing all of these facts, many have asked and debated why this building must come down. The validity of emotions and reasons are prevalent, but this is about more than just getting rid of something that upsets the community. Our desire is not to rewrite history, neither is it to cause division and hatred. But it is to highlight and denote the reality that there are some historical symbols that are a source of pain, suffering, and inequality. This Market House is proof that human beings were once, and often still are, demeaned and devalued. And because we are Bible Believers, we’re of the notion that God absolutely created us ALL in His image, in His likeness, and as equals. But this Market House says otherwise. It is a symbol of cruelty, racism, dishonor, and disrespect to our Black brothers and sisters. Even in the Bible, God would instruct kings to remove any symbol that represented malevolence, epitomized idolatry, and celebrated elements contrary to His Word. Romans 12:9-10 instructs us clearly to “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” Therefore, as representatives of

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God, we have the distinct responsibility to be change agents and to implement love, respect, hope, and equality into our history. The generations to come need to see that the people of Fayetteville care enough to create and promote a healthier environment for all – one that not only embodies diversity and change, but genuinely accepts and embraces it.

In essence, we submit this statement in hopes of replacing and repurposing the Market House of downtown Fayetteville, NC. And again, let it be known emphatically, that our desire is not to take away the significance of this landmark. The truth is that the land will still be an integral part of Fayetteville. We simply want to remove the *slave stigma* from it. If you do your research, you will see that it was in 1825 where Lafayette spoke – on those very grounds – where state delegates ratified the U.S. Constitution and even chartered the University of North Carolina in 1789. Fayetteville, at that time, was within one vote of becoming the permanent state capital of North Carolina. This simply proves that the land itself is rich and vital in history, without the necessity of the slave stigma and the painful memories of children and adults being sold within this locale. And while it has been many things to many people, the four-sided clock is nothing more than a clock-faced mirror into a demeaning and horrific past. This clock-faced mirror shows the tears of children being stripped from parents and couples being snatched away from destiny. And anything of this caliber that brings pride to some and pain to others *must* be looked at for what it really is – a eye sore. Furthermore, if Fayetteville is to live with the name of the “ALL AMERICAN CITY,” it must accept and honor and love and appreciate ALL Americans. It must be a catalyst for diversity, deference, and decency – amongst ALL people. Therefore, again, we request the replacing and repurposing of the Market House. This monument is more like a tombstone to humanity. And knowing what we know about this building, it must be detached from the heart of this city. It must be disconnected from the pulse of the people. It must be disassociated from our ALL-AMERICAN design.

WHEREAS, the Fayetteville Faith Task Force of the City of Fayetteville has acknowledged the history of the Market House and the land upon which it sits, and;

WHEREAS, we understand that respect and honor must be represented within the confines of our community, from and through all people, and;

WHEREAS, the significance of our request has been provided with historical facts and genuine intent;

WE SUBMIT a resolve for the replacing and repurposing of the Market House to be taken into consideration.

SUBMITTED this day, the 22nd of June, in the year of 2020.