

BY: M. of A. Simpson

COMMEMORATING the 200th Anniversary of the Town of
Wilmington, New York

WHEREAS, It is the intent of this Legislative Body to honor and commemorate the distinguished histories of the communities which comprise the noble body of this great Empire State; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Town of Wilmington, Essex County, New York; and

WHEREAS, Currently, a town of approximately 1,300 people, Wilmington was created by the State Legislature on March 22, 1822, and was established as a separate entity from the Town of Jay that same year; while having been taken off from the Town of Jay in the prior year as Danville, it was renamed, and held its first official town board meeting as Wilmington in April of 1822; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington lies between the towns of St. Armand on the west and Jay on the east, on the northern border of Essex County in the High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Mountains with the west branch of the AuSable River flowing in a northeasterly direction nearly through the center of Wilmington; and

WHEREAS, The topographical aspect of Wilmington is seen to be rough, elevated, and mountainous, with long slopes descending to the AuSable River and its tributaries which presents a varied and picturesque scenery with the majestic Whiteface Mountain overlooking the region at a height of 4,867 feet above tide and from whose summit can be one of the finest views in Northern New York; and

WHEREAS, The west branch of the AuSable River has historically provided mechanical power, log transportation, world class fishing and tourism opportunities including the spectacular High Falls Gorge; and

WHEREAS, Pioneer families began settling in the Wilmington area in about 1800, the earliest settlers being Reuben Sanford, Cyrus Wilson, Isaac Peck, Allen Peck, Reuben and Daniel Hamblin, Daniel Ray, John Blanchard, Z. Gray, and Nathaniel Warner; and

WHEREAS, When the War of 1812 was declared, Wilmington (then part of Jay) provided militia for the war effort; and

WHEREAS, In 1814, Major Reuben Sanford lead four companies of militia from the Towns of Jay, Keene and current Wilmington at the Battle of Plattsburgh, becoming a war hero in that battle when he kept the British from crossing a Plattsburgh bridge by cutting the stringers of the bridge while under heavy fire; one of the volleys actually struck the axe he was using to chop the bridge timbers; and

WHEREAS, After the War, Reuben Sanford represented the district in the New York State Assembly from 1814-1817; furthermore, he was a delegate to the New York State Constitutional Convention of 1821, and a member of the New York State Senate for four years being elected in 1828; and

WHEREAS, Reuben Sanford was instrumental in establishing the Town of Wilmington as a separate entity from the Town of Jay in 1822; he became its first postmaster, served as Town Supervisor for two terms, contributed to the construction of the Methodist Church of Wilmington which still stands today, and erected the first store, which made him the mightiest pioneer in the Town of Wilmington and one of the most prominent men in Northern New York; and

WHEREAS, Primarily a tourist-centered community today, Wilmington was once a farming, iron mining, lumbering and industrial community with a potash and starch factories, sawmills, gristmills, and whiskey distilleries; and

WHEREAS, Throughout its history, residents of Wilmington have responded to serve the nation during times of conflict, including the Civil War, Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, and the Vietnam War, as well as the Gulf Wars and the War on Terror; and

WHEREAS, Notable citizen, Henry Harrison Markham, born in Wilmington, Essex County, New York, November 16, 1840, attended the common schools of his hometown, served in the Civil War, studied law, and was admitted to the bar in 1867; he served in the Forty-ninth Congress (March 4, 1885-March 3, 1887) and became Governor of California, serving from 1891-1895; and

WHEREAS, Notable citizen, Reuben L. Partridge, born in Wilmington, Essex County, New York, in 1823, attended the common schools of his hometown, moved to Marysville, Ohio, in 1836, learned the carpentry trade, and received a patent for his truss design of self-supporting covered bridges, having built over 125 in his lifetime; and

WHEREAS, Early hotels such as the Whiteface Mountain House and Hotel Olney established recreational opportunities for developing tourism leading to today's wide range of outdoor activities and attractions including: Whiteface Mountain, Whiteface Mountain Ski Center, Whiteface Veterans Memorial Highway, Santa's Workshop, High Falls Gorge, and world-class fly fishing; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington and the Whiteface region activities include scientific research, fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, paddling and biking all within proximity of millions of people; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington was the venue for the 1980 Winter Olympic Alpine Events and continues to host National and World Class Ski competitions; and

WHEREAS, Wilmington has evolved from its rural roots into an outdoor

recreation, science, and education destination featuring its natural attributes and the unique blend of natural resources, a touch of wilderness, entrepreneurship, and personal enterprise which has created a small rural town of national and international acclaim; and

WHEREAS, Remaining fruitful over the ebb and flow of decades of growth and change, the Town of Wilmington continues its commitment to enhancing the quality of life of its citizens, ensuring a positive business, institutional and educational climate, and providing all essential services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Town of Wilmington, Essex County, New York, recognizing the significance of the role it continues to play in the life of the communities of the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to Roy Holzer, Supervisor, Town of Wilmington, New York; and the Wilmington Historical Society.