



# Proclamation



## LIBBA COTTEN DAY

**WHEREAS**, Libba Cotten was born to George and Louisa Nevill on January 5, 1893 in Orange County, North Carolina in an area that would eventually become the Town of Carrboro; and

**WHEREAS**, Libba Cotten was raised in a family surrounded by music and resided near the railroad tracks along what is now known as Lloyd Street; and

**WHEREAS**, by 1904, at the age of 11, she was inspired to compose her first song *Freight Train* and it would go on to become one of her signature ballads; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1958, Libba Cotten released her first album, entitled *Folksongs and Instrumentals with Guitar* (also known as *Negro Folk Songs and Tunes*); and

**WHEREAS**, by the early 1960s, she began performing publicly and became a key figure in the American folk revival, performing at national folk festivals, such as the Philadelphia Folk Festival, the Newport Folk Festival, and the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklore; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1972, Libba Cotten was presented with the Burl Ives Award by the National Folk Festival Association for her contributions to folk music; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1984, Libba Cotten was made a National Heritage Fellow by the National Endowment for the Arts; and

**WHEREAS**, also in 1984, Libba Cotten won the Grammy Award for Best Ethnic or Traditional Recording for the album *Elizabeth Cotten Live*; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1989, Libba Cotten was included as one of 75 influential African-American women in Brian Lanker's photo documentary *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America*; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2015, the Town of Carrboro's Recreation & Parks Department has partnered with the Music Maker Relief Foundation to offer the Freight Train Blues Concert Series to honor Libba Cotten and her contributions to blues music; and

**WHEREAS**, from 2017-2019, the Town of Carrboro has partnered with Dr. Cecelia Conway and Appalachian State University, through their Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, to celebrate Libba Cotten through traditional concerts that honor black and global banjo and roots music.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that I, Lydia E. Lavelle, Mayor of the Town of Carrboro, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim January 5, 2019 as "LIBBA COTTEN DAY" in the Town of Carrboro, and urge all citizens to continue to celebrate the life and legacy of Elizabeth "Libba" Cotten and her important contributions to folk, blues, and our collective Americana.

This the 4<sup>th</sup> day of January 2019.



Lydia E. Lavelle, Mayor