

City Resolution _____
County Resolution _____

A joint resolution of the City Council for the City of Missoula and the Missoula Board of County Commissioners recognizing Missoula's historic Chinese community and providing for its commemoration

WHEREAS, Montana once had a robust Chinese population across the state, peaking at more than 10% of the territory's early population; and

WHEREAS, Montana's Chinese population was vital to the creation of the state's cities, railroads, and communities; and

WHEREAS, Missoula had a bustling Chinese community with laundries, restaurants, grocery stores, and gardens frequented by most Missoulians, including those of white European descent; and

WHEREAS, Missoula's Chinese community maintained a graveyard in the lower Rattlesnake neighborhood and held large funeral processions, bringing out crowds of Missoulians including residents of white European descent, and unmarked graves in this graveyard now sit beneath residential units; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Missoula have not recognized its historical Chinese community and the intrapersonal and systemic animosity enacted against it, which ultimately led to its decline and near erasure from the historical memory of not only Missoula, but all of Montana; and

WHEREAS, in 1892 Missoula's Chinese community peaked in population but rapidly declined after the murder of four Chinese men by white laborers; and

WHEREAS, the current racial composition of Montana did not emerge naturally, but rather because of deliberate efforts to reduce Montana's nonwhite population; and

WHEREAS, these efforts consisted of explicit legal exclusion and targeted racial violence against Montana's Chinese population; and

WHEREAS, Montana's Chinese were driven out by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Geary Act, and other laws and local ordinances that sought to control and repress the freedom of movement, the ability to work, and, ultimately, the livelihoods of Chinese in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Missoula, through JEDI Resolution 8533 and JEDI Resolution 2021-087 respectively, have made a formal commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to confront the current and historical systemic inequalities resulting in disparate outcomes for marginalized people; and

WHEREAS, people in positions of power continue to practice discrimination and exclusion against Chinese Americans, which violates the commitment to values set forth in the City and County JEDI Resolution; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Missoula stand against discrimination and hate, and strive to actively create a community where persons of any background feel a sense of acceptance and belonging;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City and County of Missoula commit to supporting local community efforts to honor and commemorate the history of Missoula's Chinese community, including establishing and funding a historical marker in memorialization of this community's cemetery.

Passed and adopted this ____ day of ____.

Page Break

City of Missoula

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Martha L. Rehbein
Legislative Services Director/City Clerk

Jordan Hess
Mayor

(SEAL)

Missoula County Board of County Commissioners

APPROVED:

Juanita Vero
Missoula County Commissioner

Dave Strohmaier
Missoula County Commissioner

Josh Slotnick
Missoula County Commissioner

ATTEST:

Tyler Gernant
Clerk and Recorder