

Draft dated: 7/10/2023
City Resolution _____
County Resolution _____

A joint resolution of the City Council for the city of Missoula and the Missoula County 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 over 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 those of white European descent residents, and in this graveyard currently sits unmarked graves beneath residential units; 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 racial composition of Montana did not emerge naturally, but rather as a result 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 which 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, Montana politicians across the political spectrum continue to fearmonger and scapegoat Asians and Asian Americans; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Missoula has made a formal commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, in order to confront the structural and systemic inequalities resulting in disparate outcomes for marginalized people; and

WHEREAS, Missoula's historical Chinese community has not been recognized by the City and County of Missoula; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the City and County of Missoula commit to supporting local community efforts to recognize and reckon with 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 ____.

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