

RESOLUTION NO. 2021/**

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ANTIOCH
APOLOGIZING TO EARLY CHINESE IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR DESCENDANTS
FOR ACTS OF FUNDAMENTIAL INJUSTICE, SEEKING FORGIVENESS AND
COMMITTING TO RECTIFICATION OF PAST MISDEEDS**

WHEREAS, on January 24, 1848, gold was discovered in Alta California, Mex and by 1849, people were coming to the region from all over the world to look for gold;

WHEREAS, the Gold Rush caused a huge increase in the population by migrants from the eastern United States and other parts of the world including China;

WHEREAS, between 1849 and 1853 about 24,000 young Chinese men immigrated to Alta California, Mex (which in 1850 became the United States, State of California) and by 1870 there were an estimated 63,000 Chinese in the United States, 77% of whom resided in California;

WHEREAS, many Chinese immigrants were met with racism, scapegoating and anti-Chinese sentiment also known as Xenophobia, which was at its highest between 1850 and 1870;

WHEREAS, Antioch in its early years was not exempt from Xenophobia;

WHEREAS, this period in Antioch's history, like in most of America, is now known as the "The Driving Out" with forced removals of Chinese immigrants;

WHEREAS, during "The Driving Out" period, Antioch officially became a "Sundown Town" when it banned Chinese residents from walking city streets after sunset;

WHEREAS, in order to get from their jobs to their homes each evening, these Chinese residents built a series of tunnels connecting the business district to where I Street met the waterfront;

WHEREAS, in 1876 Chinese residents were told by white mobs that they had until 3 p.m. to leave Antioch— no exceptions;

WHEREAS, after Chinese residents were forced out, Chinatown was burned to the ground and Antioch made headline news: "The Caucasian torch," wrote the Sacramento Bee, "lighted the way of the heathen out of the wilderness," and "The

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actions of the citizens of this place will, without doubt, meet with the hearty approval of every man, woman and child on the Pacific coast" wrote the San Francisco Chronicle;

WHEREAS, Antioch's early period helped negatively contribute to the Nation's xenophobic discourse, which led to legal discrimination in public policy with the establishment of the Chinese Exclusion Act;

WHEREAS, the system of "The Driving Out" and the visceral racism against persons of Chinese descent upon which it depended became entrenched in the City's, the State's and the Nation's social fabric;

WHEREAS, the story of Chinese immigrants and the dehumanizing atrocities committed against them should not be purged from or minimized in the telling of Antioch's history;

WHEREAS, the City of Antioch must acknowledge that the legacy of early Chinese immigrants and Xenophobia are part of our collective consciousness that helps contribute to the current anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander hate;

WHEREAS, a genuine apology and seeking forgiveness are an important and necessary first step in the process of racial reconciliation;

WHEREAS, an apology for dehumanization and injustices cannot erase the past, but admission of the wrongs committed can speed racial healing and reconciliation and help confront the ghosts of the City's past;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Antioch:

- 1) Apologizes to all early Chinese immigrants and their descendants who came to Antioch and were unwelcome;
- 2) Seeks forgiveness for acts of fundamental injustice, terror, cruelty, and brutality; and

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- 3) Expresses its commitment to rectify the lingering consequences of the misdeeds committed against early Chinese immigrant under, before and during “The Driving Out.”

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Antioch at a special meeting thereof, held on the 18th day of May, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

**ELIZABETH HOUSEHOLDER
CITY CLERK OF THE CITY OF ANTIOCH**

**LAMAR A. THORPE
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF ANTIOCH**