

Whereas

Whereas, established in 1901, the Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma was later a flourishing community called “Black Wall Street”; and

Whereas, despite segregation and Jim Crow Laws, Black Wall Street had a thriving middle class built on the success of Black Businesses; and

Whereas, since modern day history, African Americans have always been an integral part to success in Oklahoma, having worked as cowboys, cattle punchers, farmers, railroad builders, and helped to build cities; and

Whereas, once Oklahoma became a state, the first bill passed segregated the state, forcing most African Americans to move to Tulsa; but

Whereas, when oil was discovered in Tulsa it began to thrive in population and wealth; trickling down to the African American population; Tulsa was deemed “the magic city,” leading the nation in oil; and

Whereas, in 1905, Black entrepreneurs created a business district in the Greenwood District of Tulsa, Oklahoma, opening its first business (a grocery store); and

Whereas, Greenwood grew in size and prosperity, becoming home to 11,000 Black residents and contained 108 Black businesses in 36 square blocks; Greenwood was home to a thriving Black commercial district whose many red brick buildings belonged to African Americans and housed thriving businesses, including grocery stores, banks, libraries, and much more; one of the most affluent African-American communities in the country, Greenwood became known as “Black Wall Street”; and

Whereas, the Tulsa Tribune, which published an accusation of an assault by Dick Rowland, a Black teenager, on a White woman, inflaming tensions and endangering the life of Rowland by threat of lynching; and

Whereas

Whereas, the events of the accusation, the concern of the lynching, and the support of Rowland by Black residents led to Tulsa deputizing White residents and arresting a large portion of the African American population, leaving them defenseless to what became later known as the largest race riot and race massacre in the Nation; and

Whereas, most of this has been omitted from history, it is stated that between 75-300 were murdered, 6,000 Black Tulsans were imprisoned, 1,256 houses were burned, 215 others were looted, more than 8,000 people were made homeless, two newspapers, a school, a library, a hospital, churches, hotels, stores and many other Black-owned businesses were among the buildings destroyed or damaged by fire over those 18 hours in 1921.

Now, therefore, I, Ted Wheeler, Mayor of the City of Portland, Oregon, the “City of Roses,” do hereby proclaim June 1, 2021 to be

Black Wall Street Day

In Portland, in observance of the worst race massacre in the history of the United States and encourage all residents to observe this day.

396-1

Proclaim June 1, 2021 to be Black Wall Street Day
(Proclamation introduced by Mayor Wheeler and Commissioner Hardesty)

May 26, 2021
Placed on file

Filed May 24, 2021

MARY HULL CABALLERO
Auditor of the City of Portland

By Megan Lehman
Deputy

Commissioners voted as follows (Yea or Nay)

Rubio -
Ryan -
Hardesty -
Mapps -
Wheeler -