

PROCLAMATION



City and County of Denver

Proclamation No. 18-1294

A proclamation proclaiming November 16, 2018 as a day to remember and condemn the lynching, by burning, of sixteen-year-old, African American, Preston "John" Porter, Jr. on November 16, 1900 and to acknowledge the city of Denver's complicity in his torturous death

WHEREAS, The City of County of Denver recognizes that Preston Porter, Jr.'s, short life was ended by racial terrorism and a miscarriage of justice involving brutal violence at the hands of a white mob and a criminal justice system that failed him. Acknowledging his lynching calls for a process of truth and reconciliation and the continued struggle for justice; and

WHEREAS, Preston Porter, Jr., a railroad worker from Lawrence, Kansas, was arrested on suspicion and accused of the rape and murder of Louise Frost, near Limon, Colorado. Preston was held in Denver City Jail along with his father and brother for four days, during which time he was tortured in order to coerce a confession. No trial took place, furthering the miscarriage of justice; and

WHEREAS, It was widely known that Preston would be lynched, if he were returned to Limon. The Topeka [Kansas] Daily Capital, on Tuesday, November 13, 1900, three days prior to the lynching, reported, "The Sheriff declares his intention to take Porter back to Lincoln County, although it is certain that he will be lynched, probably burned, on his arrival there."; and

WHEREAS, Preston Porter, Jr. was sent by train from Denver to Hugo, Colorado, the county seat of Lincoln County, for trial, although he would never arrive there. He was forcibly taken from the train just outside of Limon at Lake Station by an angry mob from the Limon area as well as people from Denver, and Colorado Springs, who had traveled to Limon to watch the lynching; and

WHEREAS, Preston Porter, Jr. was lynched by being chained to a steel rail and then burned to death, with the first match being struck by the father of Louise Frost; and

WHEREAS, The City and County of Denver designates November 16, 2018 as the day which the injustice done to Preston Porter, Jr. can be fully acknowledged, and his death be mourned; and

WHEREAS, It can be acknowledged that an injustice was also done to Louise Frost because, in the absence of due process of law and honest police work, her murderer was not confirmed and found guilty of the crimes against her; and

WHEREAS, This proclamation represents an important step in the journey towards reconciliation, where wrongs can be admitted and the painful absence of justice can be acknowledged. Reconciliation requires complete truths, and Preston Porter, Jr.'s death reveals the bitter truth that Denver had an active role in facilitating racial violence and injustice, and, prior to now, has done little to acknowledge its complicity.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That the Council of the City and County of Denver proclaims November 16, 2018 as a day to remember and condemn the lynching, by burning, of sixteen-year-old, African American, Preston "John" Porter, Jr. on November 16, 1900 and to acknowledge the city of Denver's complicity in his torturous death.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama and to representatives of Preston Porter, Jr.'s family.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL November 5, 2018

PRESIDENT