

## June 19<sup>th</sup> Fact Sheet

### **Juneteenth**

The 19<sup>th</sup> of June, known as Juneteenth, honors the effective end of slavery when federal troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, to take control of the state and ensure the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. Juneteenth will be an official state holiday in Oregon next year. The unveiling of the Alonzo Tucker historical marker is part of the Coos History Museum's inaugural Juneteenth celebration.

### **About Alonzo Tucker:**

Alonzo Tucker was a 28-year-old African American boxer from California, who owned a gym in Coos Bay. After being accused of sexually assaulting a white woman, Tucker was arrested, and a mob formed with the intent to lynch him. While being transported away from the mob, Tucker escaped and hid in the mudflats of the local docks. The mob stationed guards across town and kept watch throughout the night. Tucker was found the next morning, repeatedly shot, and a noose was placed around his neck. Tucker died from the gunshot wounds, but the mob strung up Tucker's body from a light pole on the Marshfield Bridge, in front of a crowd of 300. Despite this all occurring in broad daylight without a masked man in the crowd, no one was ever held accountable for Tucker's lynching. Following this event, African Americans fled the Coos Bay area over fears of future violence.

### **Local news set the record straight:**

In 1974, a Coos Bay *World* reporter interviewed three men who were boys at the time of the 1902 lynching and provided eyewitness accounts. All three men said they believed Tucker was lynched over a consensual relationship with the woman who accused him of assault.

### **National reckoning:**

The Equal Justice Initiative was founded in Montgomery, Alabama in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson. Stevenson is a public interest lawyer and bestselling author of *Just Mercy*, a story of justice, mercy, and redemption, which was turned into a 2019 film of the same name.

In April 2018, the Equal Justice Initiative opened two museums in Montgomery. The Legacy Museum chronicles the link between slavery, Jim Crow laws and mass incarceration, with the belief that slavery didn't end in 1865, it just evolved. The second is the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a dedication to the thousands of African-American victims of lynchings.

The Equal Justice Initiative has documented nearly 6,500 African-American victims of lynching from 1865-1950. At least one occurred in Oregon.

### **About the Oregon Remembrance Project:**

The Oregon Remembrance Project was founded to help communities in Oregon confront and repair instances of historical injustice. The project works to link historical racism to present-day inequities in Oregon.

**Community reckoning:**

Since 2018, the Oregon Remembrance Project, the Coos History Museum, and the city of Coos Bay have partnered with the Equal Justice Initiative to memorialize Alonzo Tucker and complete a Community Remembrance Project. The projects aim to work in communities where lynchings of African Americans took place, to find healing and reconciliation through a sober reflection on history.

In the first phase completed in February 2020, two jars of soil were collected at the site where Alonzo Tucker was killed. One jar was sent back to Montgomery to be displayed at the Legacy Museum. The second was turned into an exhibit at the Coos History Museum.

In the second phase on Juneteenth, a historical marker will be installed in Coos Bay. One side tells the story of lynching in America and the other side tells the story of Alonzo Tucker.

**About Taylor Stewart:**

Taylor Stewart, 25, lives in Portland. He earned a degree in Communication from the University of Portland and recently completed work for an MSW from Portland State University. He founded the Oregon Remembrance Project in 2018 after visiting the Equal Justice Initiative's National Memorial for Peace and Justice.

**More quotes from Taylor Stewart**

"We can't change the past, but we can always change our relationship to the past."

"Our collective memory and our collective consciousness hold power."

"We have the power to rewrite the ending to history's stories."

"We have a responsibility to the history that has created our present."

**Tune in:** 10 a.m. Saturday, June 19, 2021 via the [Oregon Remembrance Project's Facebook](#).

**How to support this effort:**

Follow the Oregon Remembrance Project on social media, tune into the June 19 ceremony, and donate to the Coos History Museum's Juneteenth celebration.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oregonremembranceproject/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/oregonremembranceproject/?hl=en>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/oregonremembra1?lang=en>

Online event: <https://fb.me/e/2O6tgLLgh>

Coos History Museum: <https://cooshistory.org/juneteenth-celebration/>