



Text File

Introduced: 8/30/2021

Bill No: 2021-1813, Version: 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

**WHEREAS**, Thursday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 PM marks the kickoff to the Pittsburgh Soul Food Festival where there will be a brief history presentation of the wealthy Black Business Entrepreneurs and Abolitionist Leaders who conducted business enterprises on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue in Downtown Pittsburgh known as the Black Wall Street; and,

**WHEREAS**, in 1787, **Benjamin Richards** became known as one of the Black Founding Fathers of Allegheny County when he and four other black men signed a petition to form Allegheny County. Mr. Richards was also known as the wealthiest man in Pittsburgh, estimated to be worth over \$7,000,000 in present-day dollars. He acquired his wealth by operating a butchery on 3rd Avenue, currently PPG Place, and selling cattle and meal to the military; and,

**WHEREAS**, **Charles Richards**, son of Benjamin, who also signed the Petition to create Allegheny County, owned and operated the first Black Tavern & Restaurant in 1795 on 3rd Avenue and Ferry Street, currently Stanwix Street, that was called "*The Negro*"; and,

**WHEREAS**, **John B. Vashon**, was a veteran of the 1812 War who moved to Pittsburgh, and opened Pittsburgh's first Bathhouse for Whites in 1830, and operated a barbershop and safe-house on 3rd Avenue. He became a land owner in Downtown Pittsburgh and organized abolitionist movements. Vashon hosted the first Anti-Slavery Society Meeting in his facilities; and,

**WHEREAS**, **Rev. John C. Peck** opened the Original Oyster House on 3rd Avenue and Wood Streets in 1838. He also operated an ice-cream parlor, a clothing store, a barbershop and was a wig-maker. Rev. Peck started the AME Church on Wylie Avenue; and,

**WHEREAS**, **Rev. Lewis Woodson**, abolitionist and Father of Black Nationalism, operated seven barbershops in Downtown Pittsburgh Hotels with his sons, and became the Trustee and co-founder of Wilberforce College. Rev. Woodson also lead the AME Church; and,

**WHEREAS**, **Martin R. Delany**, abolitionist, owner and operator of a Print Office on 3rd Avenue, published several books. He was also a doctor, who saved Pittsburgh residents in 1833 and 1854 during Cholera epidemics when many doctors and residents fled Pittsburgh out of fear of contamination. In 1865, Dr. Delany was appointed the first African American U.S. Army Field Major by President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War; and,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby recognize these African American Businessmen and Pioneers with a designation of 3rd Avenue as Pittsburgh's "Black Wall Street"; and,

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby declare, September 2nd-5th, 2021 to be “*Pittsburgh Soul Food Festival Days*” in the City of Pittsburgh.