

**IN REMEMBRANCE: LYNCHING IN AMERICA
THE EJI SOIL COLLECTION PROJECT
MISSOURI**

LYNCHING IN AMERICA

Between the end of the Civil War and the end of World War II, thousands of African Americans were lynched in the United States in violent and public acts of torture that traumatized Black communities locally and throughout the country. These racial terror lynchings, largely tolerated by state and federal officials, peaked between 1880 and 1940 and represented some of the most brutal violence, terrorism, humiliation, and barbarity in American history. This era of racial terrorism profoundly impacted race relations in the United States and shaped the geographic, social, and economic conditions of African Americans in ways that are still evident today. Lynching and racial violence fueled the forced exodus of millions of Black people from the South into urban ghettos in the North and West during the first half of the twentieth century and created a social environment where racial subordination and segregation was maintained with limited resistance for decades. The Black refugees and exiles who fled the American South lived in marginalizing and disadvantaged circumstances in the urban North, West and Midwest. Black people who remained in the South faced continued threat, terror and humiliation rigidly maintained by legalized racial segregation. The violence and terror of lynching created a legacy of racial inequality that has never been adequately addressed in America, and continues to sustain racial injustice and bias.

In February 2015, the Equal Justice Initiative issued a new report on *Lynching in America* documenting over 4,000 lynchings that took place in the 12 states that had the highest rates of lynching in America. With the release of the third edition of EJI's report, 300 additional racial terror lynchings have been documented that took place in the remaining states during this era. For the first time, EJI researchers characterized and catalogued lynchings and studied the locations of lynching so community members could discover their local history. Most recently, EJI released its newest report on *Reconstruction in America*, documenting nearly 2,000 more confirmed racial terror lynchings of Black people by white mobs in America than previously detailed. The report examines the 12 years following the Civil War when lawlessness and violence perpetrated by white leaders created an American future of racial hierarchy, white supremacy, and Jim Crow laws—an era from which our nation has yet to recover.

Our report on *Lynching in America* has now been read by thousands of people who have expressed a desire to engage more thoughtfully on what the legacy of lynching represents in America. We believe that understanding the era of racial terror is critical if we are to confront the challenges that we currently face

from mass incarceration, excessive punishment, unjustified police violence, and the presumption of guilt and dangerousness that burdens many people of color.

THE EJI MARKER AND MEMORIAL PROJECT

To create greater awareness and understanding about racial terror lynchings, EJI intends to mark many of the spaces where lynchings took place with memorials and historical markers. Most communities have said or done nothing to acknowledge their local history of lynching. The victims of racial terror and the trauma these horrific acts of violence created has been largely ignored. The silence surrounding these atrocities had added to the sense of injury and anguish in many communities of color and contributed to less thoughtful and serious discussion around issues of race. EJI believes that by publicly marking the sites of lynchings, a necessary conversation can begin that advances truth and reconciliation.

EJI has also built a national memorial in Montgomery, Alabama - The National Memorial for Peace and Justice - that calls on the nation to reflect more seriously and thoughtfully about this error of racial terrorism and its legacy. Memorials have the power to remind us of who we once were and challenge us to confront issues of injustice and inequality we currently face with more care and with greater dedication to protecting basic human rights.

THE SOIL COLLECTION PROJECT

We have joined with community groups and individuals to travel to communities across the nation to collect soil from every lynching site as an act of remembrance and commitment to honoring the victims of this horrific era of terror. EJI's soil collection project is intended to provide opportunities for community members to get closer to the legacy of lynching and to contribute to the effort to build a lasting and more visible memory of our history of racial injustice. These jars of collected soil are on exhibit in the new Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration, as well as in other exhibit spaces, to reflect the history of lynching and our generation's resolve to confront the continuing challenges that racial inequality creates.

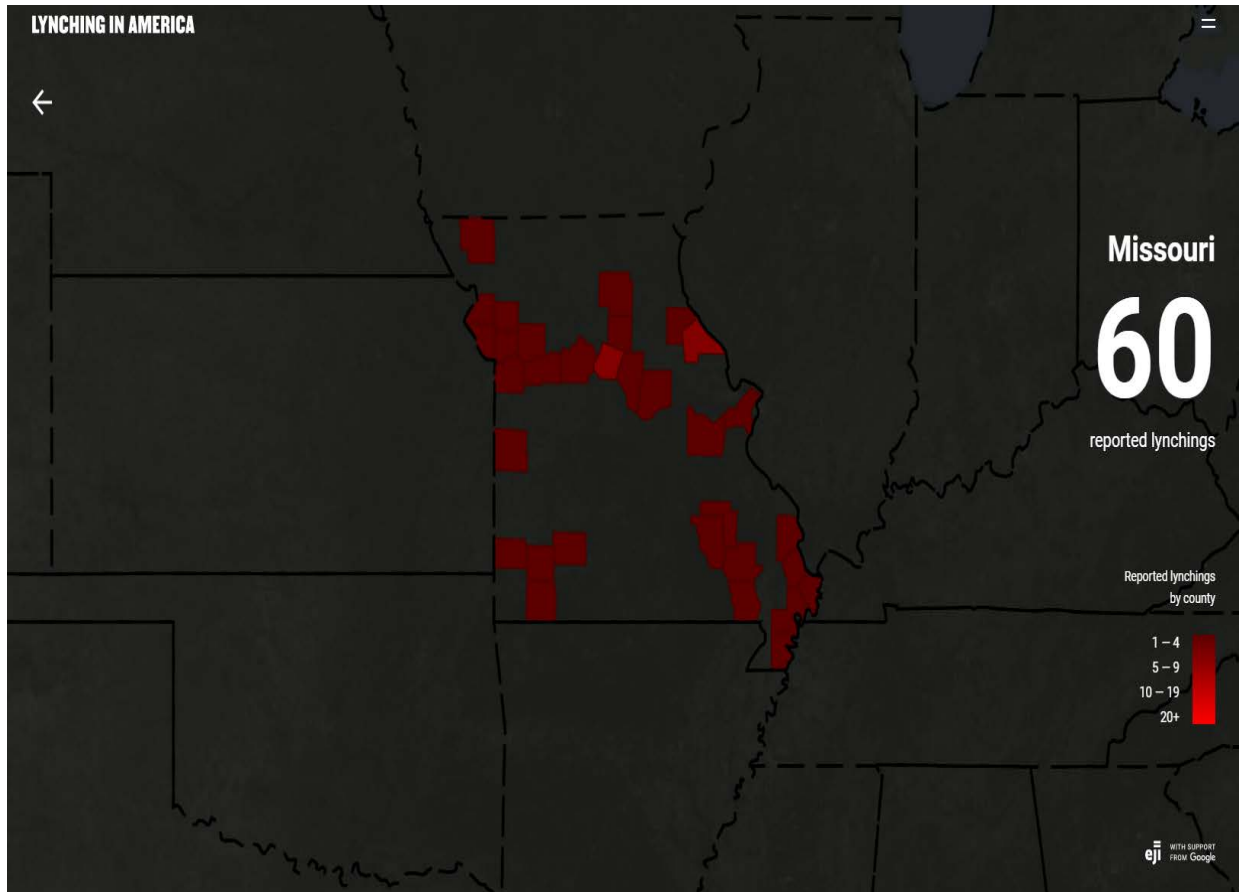
While collecting soil from the site of a lynching is a simple gesture, we believe it is an important act of remembrance that can begin a process of recovery and reconciliation to our history of lynching and terror. The named containers with collected soil that we create become important pieces of our broken and terrifying past. We believe these jars represent the hope of community members who seek racial justice and a greater commitment to the rule of law and human rights.

MISSOURI

EJI has documented 60 African American victims of racial terror lynching killed in Missouri. The racial terror and acts of barbaric violence that took place in Missouri are among the worst in America. Racial terror lynchings took place in over 20 states, in

both rural and more urban settlements. State officials did very little to curb the white mob violence that menaced so many African Americans, and sometimes officials were even complicit and actively involved in committing acts of racial terror.

Your participation in this project helps us begin a process of recovery and we are very grateful for your involvement.



In Remembrance: Lynching in America
The Soil Collection Project
Equal Justice Initiative

Lloyd Warner
St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri, November 28, 1933

On the night of November 28, 1933, a white mob of between 5,000 and 10,000 people including men, women, and children, largely led by white youth, lynched a Black teenager named Lloyd Warner. Lloyd was only 18 years old. After the county sheriff handed Lloyd over to the violent mob, he was beaten, stabbed, hanged, and burned to death just one block from the jail and less than a block from the courthouse. Nobody was ever held accountable for lynching Lloyd Warner.

On Sunday, November 26, a young white woman reported that she had just been sexually assaulted after being grabbed from behind while walking home. By the morning of Monday, November 27, the police had taken into custody a Black 18-year-old named Lloyd Warner, the son of a domestic worker and farm laborer. It is unclear how Lloyd became a suspect in the alleged assault, as newspaper articles reporting on the alleged crime did not indicate that there was an investigation or describe the circumstances under which the police gained custody of Lloyd. During this era, race-based suspicion was often directed at Black men after the report of a crime, especially if the report was of sexual assault of a white woman. Many white communities all over the United States harbored deep-seated racial hostilities and mythologies of Black criminality that burdened Black people with a presumption of guilt after crimes were reported. Merely being targeted for suspicion was enough for many white people to presume that a Black person was guilty. Indeed, news of Lloyd's arrest soon devolved into a presumption of guilt that put Lloyd in danger.

Although Lloyd was arrested on Monday, the court delayed his preliminary hearing until at least the morning of Wednesday, November 29 so that appointed counsel could be obtained. By 7:00 pm on Tuesday, November 28, a lynch mob had already begun to form, determined to deny Lloyd access to the county's functioning court system. The mob of at least 1,000 white men, boys, and women congregated outside the Buchanan County Jail and began demanding access to Lloyd. Over the next three and a half hours, the mob grew to between 5,000 to 10,000 white men, women and children who violently attacked the jail intent on lynching Lloyd. Just before 8:00 pm, Lloyd's appointed attorney, who carried a note to deliver to Lloyd from his mother, was denied entry into the jail.

Officers attempted to mislead the mob by claiming that Lloyd had been transported to Kansas City and allowed a few mob leaders to enter the jail and search for Lloyd after they removed him from his cell and hid him by the plumbing between the tiers of the building. The remainder of the mob of thousands refused to relent and began forceful attempts to break into the jail. According to news reports, the members of the mob were "mostly of an age that would hardly entitle them to be called adults." They used acetylene torches, battering rams, iron pipes, and heavy timbers to try to break down the doors at both the jail office entrance and the courthouse entrance to the jail and threw bricks to break the windows of the building.

Shortly after 9:00 pm, approximately 20 additional law enforcement officers arrived at the jail from the central police station

and the sheriff contacted Governor Guy B. Park to request the militia. Newspaper articles reported that two six-ton tanks were sent to the jail but that after the mob injured the tank operators by throwing bricks and stones, no further attempts to use the tanks were made. Newspaper articles also reported that tear gas was used in an attempt to discourage the mob, but that mob participants took turns attacking the jail amidst the fumes. Undeterred, the mob continued their attack and broke into the sheriff's residence at the jail. At some point after 10:30 pm, the mob chained a truck to the steel doors and accelerated the vehicle in order to gain access to the jail. Once inside the jail office, the mob continued their pursuit of Lloyd by attempting to gain access to the cells, destroying county jail records along the way. Young mob participants reportedly also took souvenirs such as trophies from the sheriff's residence and a telephone from the office of the jail.

After holding a brief meeting with law enforcement officials, the sheriff decided to hand Lloyd over to the mob to be lynched. Abdicating his responsibility to protect Lloyd from further mob violence and to enforce Lloyd's constitutional right to stand trial in a court of law, the sheriff notified the mob just after 11:30 pm that he would release Lloyd to them. Police officers subsequently removed Lloyd from where they had been hiding him within the jail and prepared to hand him over to the bloodthirsty mob. Unmoved by the terror Lloyd faced while being escorted by the officers to the lynch mob, reporters attempted to have Lloyd confess to the assault of the white woman. However, Lloyd again declared his innocence and that he had never confessed to the alleged assault as had been reported by local white newspapers.

Abandoned by the sheriff and other law enforcement, the mob seized teenaged Lloyd Warner and immediately began attacking him, punching his teeth out and choking him. The mob continued to torture Lloyd while marching him a block south of the jail to his death. They slashed him in the abdomen with a knife and struck him multiple times with an icepick while transporting him to a nearby tree, refusing to let him speak when he announced that he wanted to make a statement. Two white youths from the mob climbed a tree and fastened a one-inch rope to the branches while the mob put the noose around Lloyd's neck and hanged him. One of the young men in the tree used their feet to break Lloyd's neck as the mob cheered. Members of the mob began cutting off pieces of Lloyd's trousers and belt to take as souvenirs. Unsatisfied, the mob then doused Lloyd's body with gasoline and set him on fire. When the fire died down, they lit another fire underneath him. After one of the lynchers cut the rope on which Lloyd's body was hanged, his body collapsed into the fire, and his charred remains were left on display at the top of the fire pit as thousands of white men, women, and children viewed it for approximately two hours. The crowd and press took pictures with members of the lynch mob posing next to Lloyd's remains. The sheriff shook hands with and nodded towards people who demonstrated approval of his decision to turn Lloyd over to be lynched. When asked how she felt about the lynching of Lloyd Warner, the young white woman who had reported the assault indicated that she was unsure of whether Lloyd was the one who committed the assault.

Lucille Mitchell, who had at least four other children in addition to Lloyd, was forced to bury her son with no funeral – "no mourners, no ministers, and no flowers," in the words of a Black undertaker. On January 15, 1934, she filed a lawsuit for \$10,000 against the United States Fidelity and Guaranty Company and the local sheriff for permitting the mob to take possession of Lloyd and lynch him. However, there is no evidence to suggest that her suit was successful.

After an investigation into the lynching, a grand jury found on

January 18, 1934 that law enforcement had failed in their duty to protect Lloyd Warner from the white mob violence. Still, only seven or eight men who participated in the lynching were charged for the murder, and only one out of these men was ever tried. The one man who was tried for the lynching was ultimately acquitted, after which the charges for the remaining men were dismissed. The Attorney General stated that "only useless expense to the county and state would result from an attempt to secure conviction of others indicted."

Several newspapers reported that Lloyd maintained his innocence until his death. Others published articles stating that, after a day in police custody without access to legal representation, Lloyd had allegedly confessed as part of a plea deal. During this era, Black people accused of crimes were regularly subjected to beatings, torture, and threats of lynching during police interrogations. In many infamous cases, these tactics resulted in false confessions from innocent men, women, and children. Without fair investigation or trial, these false confessions were more reliable evidence of terror and fear than culpability. Rather than ensuring their reports were accurate and reliable, white news media eagerly reported these unreliable confessions as truthful, and worse, as justifications for the brutal lynchings that followed. Those reports could even be repeated in official documentation. Although Lloyd denied that he ever confessed to the alleged crime, the Bureau of Vital Statistics included "confessed to assault" on Lloyd's death certificate as a "contributory cause of importance" in his death.

Despite photographic evidence of the thousands of unmasked white people who participated in the jail attack, the torture and the murder of Lloyd Warner, no one was ever held accountable for his lynching.

Lloyd Warner is one of at least 60 documented African American victims of racial terror lynching killed in the State of Missouri between 1877 and 1950.

Sources

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Location of Soil Collection

According to available sources, on the night of November 28, 1933, a white mob of up to 10,000 people, largely led by white youth, lynched a Black teenager named Lloyd Warner by beating him, stabbing and cutting him, hanging him, and burning him. Although mob participants were unmasked and photographs of the lynching revealed multiple perpetrators, no one was ever held accountable for lynching Lloyd Warner.

Newspaper reports indicate that after the white mob spent three and a half hours attempting to break into the Buchanan County Jail, the sheriff handed Lloyd over to the mob, who marched him down Fifth Street and hanged him on a tree on the corner of Jule Street and Fifth Street, one block south of the jail, before burning him. Today, the jail where law enforcement released Lloyd to the lynch mob still stands. Please navigate to the Buchanan County Jail at **501 Faraon Street, St Joseph, Missouri 64501** and walk south on North 5th Street to the corner of **Jule Street and North 5th Street** to retrace the path of terror the mob took while torturing Lloyd before hanging and burning him to death. Please collect soil from a safe and appropriate location near this intersection to memorialize the lynching of 18-year-old Lloyd Warner.