

# In Annapolis, remembering the horrors, victims of lynching

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Memorial first in Md.,  
possibly the country

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By AMANDA J. CRAWFORD  
SUN STAFF

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The mob pronounced Henry Davis guilty, the man the papers called the "ravisher of Mrs. Reid."

They broke into the jail a few blocks from the State House and kidnapped him, paraded him through the black community before

lynching him from a chestnut tree on Brickyard Hill and riddling his body with bullets.

Hundreds of people, black and white, came to the bluff overlooking College Creek to see the body of the last man lynched in Annapolis. A photographer took pictures of the battered corpse, which he turned into postcards that sold two for 25 cents.

Ninety-five years later, African-American leaders are asking Annapolitans to remember Davis' long forgotten, [See Memorial, 9B]

# Recalling the horrors and victims of lynching

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gruesome death Dec. 21, 1906, five days after he was arrested on suspicion of assaulting a white woman, Annie Reid. Though his remains are lost in an unmarked grave in Brewer Hill Cemetery, his name is inscribed in a plaque there that reads: "May those who visit this site be reminded that mob rule must never become the law of the land."

The plaque is the first memorial to lynching victims in the state, and organizers say it might be the only one in the country.

"It is our hope that you never forget Henry Davis and you make it your purpose to speak out about discrimination so that this will never happen again," Gerald Stansbury, president of the Anne Arundel County chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, told the crowd at the graveyard ceremony yesterday.

Mayor Ellen O. Moyer read a proclamation declaring the anniversary of Davis' death "A Day of Justice and Remembrance" in the city and asked residents "to redouble their appreciation for the rule of law and spirit of tolerance as a guidepost for generations yet unborn."

## Racial violence in Maryland

About 46 people were lynched



AMY DAVIS: SUN STAFF

in Maryland from 1861 through 1933, according to C. Christopher Brown, an attorney with the Baltimore firm Brown, Goldstein & Levy who is writing a book about African-Americans in Maryland during that period and was the speaker at yesterday's event.

Davis and the nine other men lynched between 1891 and 1906 are listed on the plaque at Brewer Hill Cemetery. All but one was black. The last lynching in the state occurred in Princess Anne in 1933, Brown said.

"The attitude and the aura of white supremacy was everywhere," Brown said about Maryland in those first years of the 20th century.

## Case rediscovered

The story of Henry Davis might have gone untold this century, had it not been rediscovered by those researching the execution of John Snowden, a black man who was

the last person publicly executed on the gallows in Anne Arundel County in 1919. The committee, headed by former Annapolis city council member Carl O. Snowden (no relation), successfully petitioned for a posthumous pardon, which was granted by Gov. Parris N. Glendening in June.

While there was much doubt about John Snowden's guilt, Davis is a much more unlikely historical hero. He had several aliases, was convicted of a previous assault and, the papers said, confessed to brutalizing Annie Reid.

But those who want the horror of Davis' death remembered, say the issue is not guilt or innocence, but justice that was denied Davis by the hands of a racist mob. "Henry Davis was lynched and shot 100 times by an enraged mob that was racially motivated," Carl Snowden said. "That must never happen again. No one believes that is justice."

## Tribute:

Carl O. Snowden (front left), a former Annapolis city councilman, and the Rev. Mamie A. Williams were among those who helped dedicate a monument to lynching victims at Brewer Hill Cemetery. Yesterday's ceremony marked the 95th anniversary of the killing of Henry Davis, the last man lynched in Annapolis.