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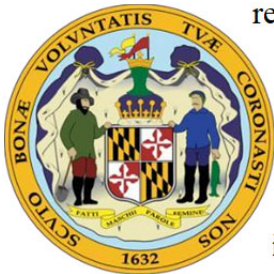
Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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PROMOTIONAL RELEASE

Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Hold Public Hearing in Anne Arundel County on October 8, 2022

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly enacted, and Governor Larry Hogan signed into law, legislation establishing the [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (MLTRC) as the first Commission dedicated to investigating racial terror lynchings in the United States. Sponsored by Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk, [House Bill 307](#) tasks the Commission with



researching cases of lynching, holding public hearings in communities where racial terror lynchings took place and developing recommendations for addressing the legacy of lynching that are rooted in restorative justice.

The MLTRC's hearing process will allow members of the public, including the descendants of victims, witnesses, and perpetrators, the opportunity to offer testimony about how these murders have impacted their lives and their communities in addition to allowing them the opportunity to make recommendations for achieving racial healing. The hearings will also provide an opportunity to identify and bring to light possible cases of racial terror lynching that are remembered in families and communities but for which there is little or no documentation.

The October 8th hearing will focus on the tragic lynchings of John Simms (death, 1875); George Briscoe (death, 1884); Wright Smith (death, 1898); Henry Davis (death, 1906); and King Johnson (death, 1911). Participants may include descendants of the lynching victims, expert witnesses, community members, archivists, and scholars of the community.

The hearings will also explore the involvement of State, county, and local government entities and news media in cases of racially motivated lynching. In 1898, for example, the Maryland General Assembly failed to pass proposed anti-lynching legislation. It is also well documented that county sheriffs and jailers allowed mobs to take men from jail with impunity, county state's

attorneys refused to identify and bring charges against members of lynch mobs, county coroners routinely claimed that the victims of lynching died “at the hands of parties unknown,” and newspaper coverage of these events helped to perpetuate a culture that condoned and encouraged racial terror lynchings.

This event would not be possible without collaboration from our local planning partners Anne Arundel County Connecting The Dots Coalition of the Maryland Lynching Memorial Project.

HEARING DETAILS

When: Saturday, October 8, 2022

Time (in person and streaming): 9 am to 1 pm; with a 10-minute break

Where: City of Annapolis Council Chambers, 160 Duke of Gloucester Street, Annapolis, MD 21401. There is a side door entrance available for those with handicap/accessibility needs.

Parking near Annapolis City Hall is very limited. Visitors can park at Park Place and take the free downtown shuttle. Get off at the stop, "City Hall." For more information on accessing downtown Annapolis, visit www.AccessAnnapolis.com/visiting-downtown/

How You Can Attend:

IN PERSON: [Pre-registration is required.](#) We must limit the number of people who can register due to space capacity. Please let us know if you must cancel so that we may honor those on the waiting list. You will pass through security. At this time there are no mask requirements but you will be asked to adhere to any other safety protocols that are required.

STREAMING: A link to stream the hearing will be posted on MLTRC’s [website](#) one day before the hearing.

How You Can Share Your Story:

Members of the public are encouraged to submit written testimony concerning how the lynching of the victims (or other unidentified County victims) has impacted their lives and their communities or making recommendations to address the legacy of lynching in Maryland and promote racial healing. Submit your testimony to mltrc@maryland.gov or bring your written testimony if you attend in-person and it will be collected.

The Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission can be reached at <https://msa.maryland.gov/lynching-truth-reconciliation/> or via email at mltrc@maryland.gov.

Connecting The Dots Anne Arundel County can be reached at <https://mdlynchingmemorial.wixsite.com/aaco> or via email at ctdaaco@gmail.com.