

# HISTORY OF LYNCHING IN VIRGINIA

The History of Lynching in Virginia Work Group, formed in 2018, is a work group of the Virginia Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission. Its purpose is to shed light on the long and painful history of lynching in the Commonwealth of Virginia by compiling and documenting the names and stories of victims of lynching in Virginia, creating programmatic outreach that will bring awareness of this history to communities across the Commonwealth, and assisting communities in their efforts to memorialize victims of lynching.

In 2019, the Virginia General Assembly passed SJ 297 (McClellan) and HJ 655 (McQuinn), acknowledging with profound regret the existence and acceptance of lynching within the Commonwealth. Virginia is the first state to pass such a resolution. The resolution, drafted and put forth by the Commission and the Work Group, charges the Commission with:

- Making as complete a record as possible of each documented lynching that occurred in the Commonwealth;
- Developing programming to bring awareness and recognition of the history of lynching to communities across the state; and
- Coordinating with the Department of Historic Resources to identify sites for historic markers to recognize documented lynchings and assisting the Equal Justice Initiative in its Community Remembrance Project in the Commonwealth.

The Work Group will carry out this work with and on behalf of the Commission.

**For updates, resources, and information on programming, visit:**

**[MLKCOMMISSION.DLS.VIRGINIA.GOV/LYNCHINGINVIRGINIA.HTML](http://MLKCOMMISSION.DLS.VIRGINIA.GOV/LYNCHINGINVIRGINIA.HTML)**

---

## RELATED RESOURCES:

**Racial Terror: Lynching in Virginia, 1877-1927** is a research project at James Madison University that catalogs and documents every known lynching in Virginia between 1877 and 1927.

[SITES.JMU.EDU/VALYNCHINGS](http://SITES.JMU.EDU/VALYNCHINGS)

The **Virginia Department of Historic Resources** dedicated its first historic marker documenting the site of a lynching on April 7, 2019, in Charles City County. The Department accepts and evaluates applications for new markers quarterly.

[WWW.DHR.VIRGINIA.GOV/HIGHWAY-MARKERS](http://WWW.DHR.VIRGINIA.GOV/HIGHWAY-MARKERS)

The **Equal Justice Initiative** works with communities through its Community Remembrance Project to memorialize victims of lynching in localities where lynchings occurred.

[EJI.ORG/COMMUNITY-REMEMBRANCE-PROJECT](http://EJI.ORG/COMMUNITY-REMEMBRANCE-PROJECT)

**An Outrage** is a documentary by Virginia-based filmmakers Hannah Ayers and Lance Warren that documents the history of lynching in the American South and its continuing impact on communities and families.

[WWW.AN-OUTRAGE.COM](http://WWW.AN-OUTRAGE.COM)

The **VIRGINIA DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL COMMISSION**, a statutory and bipartisan agency of the Virginia General Assembly, was created in 1992 by the General Assembly to honor the legacy of Dr. King through educational, historical and cultural programs, public policy analysis, and public discourse on contemporary issues. For more on the Commission's work and its other projects, visit:

**[MLKCOMMISSION.DLS.VIRGINIA.GOV](http://MLKCOMMISSION.DLS.VIRGINIA.GOV)**

