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**From:** Ho Co Lynching Truth & Reconciliation <admin@hocoltr.org>

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## Summer Newsletter

September 5, 2020

Hello all, and hoping this message finds you well and in good spirits! We wanted to send out an update on the progress of the [Howard County Lynching Truth and Reconciliation \(HCLTR\) Coalition](#) for those of you who have expressed interest and support.

Obviously, COVID-19 has shuttered all of our in-person community activities. Our group's founders have been using this time to organize in anticipation of life one day returning to some sense of what "normal" was in the past. A key focus of our efforts to date has been to identify HCLTR's core values (*Truth, Reconciliation, and Integrity*) and develop a coalition structure to operationalize these values. We've also been taking inventory of the work being done by other local groups in order to determine options that may prove to be useful for Howard County, given the unique situations that our historical circumstances create.

We were excited to launch our [website](#) on Juneteenth! If you haven't yet taken a look, please do so. Since the launch, we have added a page under our history tab that contains the 1867 list of Howard County enslavers who indicated their desire to be compensated for the loss of those they had enslaved due to slavery having been outlawed. (*Provided courtesy of the Maryland State Archives*) You will also see a spreadsheet that contains the largest 24 enslavers of Howard County, along with preliminary information about who they were. We look forward to continuing to develop the site and content and adding updates as our work unfolds.

An important resource to learn about Maryland's history of lynchings is [On the Courthouse Lawn: Confronting the Legacy of Lynching in the Twenty-First Century](#), by Sherrilyn A. Ifill. To increase access to this book across Howard County, we have been

working with the Howard County Library System to advocate for copies to be purchased. We are happy to report that the library has recently purchased the e-book and audiobook and indicated their willingness to accept donations of hard copies. Our founders group has agreed to purchase 12 copies, to be distributed throughout the library system branches. If you'd like a copy of your own, the publisher, Beacon Press, has offered a discount of 30% off of the list price. Enter the code hocoltr30 in the coupon/promotional code box in the shopping cart. (Click the title above.) The code is good through December.

### **Our Mission**

HCTLR's mission is to compile, and truthfully document and memorialize, the history of lynchings and near-lynching activities that happened in Howard County. Knowing this history of sanctioned violence and terror (*Truth*) is an essential first step to understanding and healing from the ways in which it continues to impact many of us today (*Reconciliation*). Advancing *Truth and Reconciliation* compels an inclusive and transparent process that is firmly rooted in moral Integrity in all and for all. The truth isn't always pleasant, but it can be handled with compassion and mercy. To do this work, we must identify the ways in which power has driven – and continues to drive – the prevailing narratives.

### **The Work Ahead**

1) **Community-driven** research to expand our collective knowledge and understanding of lynchings and near-lynching activities that happened in Howard County and of the white supremacy culture and systems of power that sanctioned and

incited these activities as a means to enforce racial subordination. (*Truth*)

2) Community remembrance activities in alignment with the Equal Justice Initiative's Community Remembrance Project. This includes the eventual installation of a commemorative marker regarding lynching activities in Howard County. (*Reconciliation*)

3) Assisting the Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission with its work related to lynchings that happened in Howard County. This includes the mandated public hearings that the Commission has tentatively planned for early 2022 for Howard County. Commissioner Maya Davis (assigned to Howard County) has been kept apprised of our progress and looks forward to working with us. We're fortunate to have her expertise and commitment!

### **Next Steps**

We are in Phase 1 of our work (*Truth*): **community-driven research** to expand our collective knowledge and understanding of lynchings and near-lynching activities that happened in Howard County and of the white supremacy culture and systems of power that sanctioned and incited these activities as a means to enforce racial subordination.

**The first 3 research projects of Phase 1 are:**

**Howard County's historical context** - As documented by the Equal Justice Initiative, thousands of African Americans were lynched during the time period between the Civil War and World

War II. Two lynchings and one near-lynching are known to have happened within the geographic borders of Howard County during the second half of the 19th century.

Three graduate students from the class led by Dr. Denise Meringolo, Director of Public History at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), will be researching the historical context in which lynchings took place in Howard County in order to further expand upon the history writeup found on our website. We look forward to sharing what they uncover later this year.

**Rev. Hezekiah Brown** - The founders group is utilizing primary documents relevant to the life of Rev. Hezekiah Brown and is working together to compose the story describing the context for and events surrounding his near-lynching in 1884. Here is one document of interest to help introduce him:





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Record for Hezekiah Brown

Date and No. of Application, Jan. 25-1868

Name of Master, Studies at Lincoln

Name of Mistress, University Oxford Pa

Plantation,

Height and Complexion, 29 yrs. White!

Father or Mother? Married? Not

Name of Children,

Regiment and Company,

Place of Birth, Baltimore Md

Residence, Margaret St. Rev. U. L. House

Occupation, Teacher

REMARKS, Father died 22 or 23  
 years. Mother died a year later  
 Brother John F. Phila. Henry J. in  
 Baltimore, Charles Boston Mass  
 No sister

Signature, Hezekiah Brown

\* July 23/74 Married Mch 23/68 to Marion  
 J. Talbot children Saeira, Abella, Artemas  
 Sonnet 2 1/2. Sidney Percival, 3 mos.

can also be viewed on our website by clicking:

[HERE](#)

**Nicholas Snowden** - Nicholas Snowden was lynched in Ellicott City in 1885. It is important that we learn about who he was and the events and circumstances surrounding his lynching.

Phase 2 (which will come later) will include a community research project about the circumstances surrounding Jacob Henson Jr.'s trial and the events that led to his death. We will be working closely

with his descendants and following their lead so as to ensure that we do this with sensitivity. We contemplate activities with this beginning in 2021, though research acquisition is already under way.

### **Call to Action!**

We are looking for history buffs, amateur researchers, and anyone interested in contributing to what we collectively know about lynching activities in Howard County and the white supremacy culture that sanctioned and incited these activities. We want to engage a cross-section of community members who are interested in participating in one or more of the below research projects!

1) Howard County's historical context - As we noted above, UMBC graduate students will be conducting this research, and we look forward to sharing their learnings. We also know that many community members have access to documents, family history, and other information to help advance our collective understanding of the culture in Howard County during the time period of 1865-1900. What was life like for newly freed people? What was life like for Black people who were already free? In what ways did cultural norms perpetuate the lie of white supremacy? Who locally had power and resources, and how were they used?

2) Nicholas Snowden was lynched in 1885 after being abducted from the Ellicott City jail by a mob. Who was he? What was his life like? What was his ancestry? What events and circumstances surrounded Mr. Snowden's lynching? In what ways did his lynching impact daily life conditions for Black people in the community?

We are seeking individuals who are interested in research and

willing to commit to help to shape this process. Please consider joining us in this effort. We can be reached by email at: [volunteer@HoCoLTR.org](mailto:volunteer@HoCoLTR.org).

We look forward to continuing this work in partnership with members of the Howard County community! Please follow us on Facebook where we will be posting information of interest as well as the periodic progress of the researchers and community working with us on these tasks.

#### Founders:

Marlena Jareaux (facilitator)

Lynn Mumma

Gina Richardson

Annora Bailey

Joy Owens (Descendant of Jacob Henson, Jr, and Consulting Member)

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