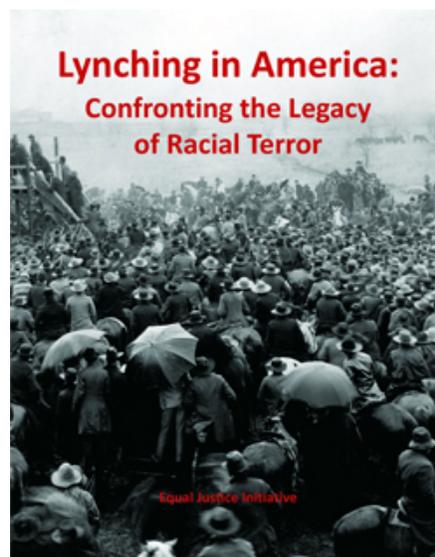


## The Equal Justice Initiative: Memorial and Museum

The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), was founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, a public interest lawyer and bestselling author of *Just Mercy*, EJI is a private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons. Thus, EJI is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. And also, the organization challenges the death penalty and excessive punishment and provides re-entry assistance to formerly incarcerated people. And moreover, EJI plans to build a national memorial to victims of lynching and open a museum that explores African American history from enslavement to mass incarceration. Both the museum and memorial will be located in Montgomery, Alabama.

### The Memorial to Peace and Justice

The Memorial to Peace and Justice will sit on six acres of land in Montgomery and become the nation's first national memorial to victims of lynching. The massive structure will contain the names of over 4000 lynching victims engraved on concrete columns representing each county in the United States where racial terror lynchings took place. Counties across the country will be invited to retrieve duplicate columns with the names of each county's lynching victims to be placed in every county.



## **Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror**

In February 2015, EJI released *Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror*, a ground-breaking report that documents more than 4000 lynchings of people of African descent (Black people) in the United States between 1877 and 1950. EJI identified several hundred more lynchings than had previously been recognized. (for a copy of the full report, please contact EJI (<http://eji.org/>, 334-269-1803). After the release of *Lynching in America*, EJI initiated several cultural projects designed to deepen understanding about racial terror in America. EJI is placing markers at lynching sites across the country in an effort to change the landscape of the American South, which is saturated with iconography and memorials romanticizing the Confederacy and the effort to preserve slavery. Historically, racial terrorism forced millions of Black people to flee the South during the first half of the 20th century and played a major role in shaping the demographic geography of America by creating large Black populations in urban communities in the North and West.

This multi-year investigation looked into lynching in twelve Southern states during the period between Reconstruction and World War II and verified 3959 racial terror lynchings of African Americans in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia between 1877 and 1950 -- at least 700 more lynchings of Black people in these states than previously reported in the most comprehensive work done on lynching to date.

### **National Memorial to Lynching Victims**

The EJI national memorial to lynching victims will be one of the nation's most ambitious projects relating to the history of racial terror lynchings. EJI has purchased six acres of land atop a rise that overlooks the City of Montgomery and out to the American South, where terror lynchings were most prevalent. The memorial is constructed of hundreds of floating columns on which the names of lynching victims from over 800 counties across the United States will be inscribed. The classical structure will be surrounded by a park, where duplicate columns engraved with the names of lynching victims in each county will be placed until they are claimed by each county and permanently installed in the places where racial terror lynchings took place. The memorial will be dynamic, and seeks to inspire local efforts to make the history of racial terror in America more visible and tangible. Thus, EJI also launched a project to collect soil at lynching sites and create an exhibit that tells the stories of lynching victims. Hundreds of people have begun to actively engage in community remembrance projects around the era of lynching.



Jars of soil from sites where people of African heritage were lynched. The names of lynching victims are printed on the jars.

## **From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration Museum**

The From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration museum is expected to open in April. It is housed on the site of a former warehouse for the enslaved in Montgomery, Alabama, located midway between the former enslavement auction block and the main river dock and train station where tens of thousands of enslaved people were trafficked during the height of domestic enslavement business community.

The museum will showcase interactive displays about America's history of racial inequality and present dynamic information and content, including virtual reality films about the domestic enslavement business, lynching, segregation and mass incarceration. The museum will house the nation's most comprehensive collection of data on lynching, and will be situated within 150 yards of one of the South's most prominent enslavement auction sites and the Alabama River dock and rail station where tens of thousands of enslaved Black people were trafficked. The museum will contain high-tech exhibits, artifacts, recordings, and films, as well as comprehensive data and information on lynching and racial segregation. The museum will connect the history of racial inequality with contemporary issues of mass incarceration, excessive punishment, and police violence.

To connect this history with contemporary issues of mass incarceration, the museum will employ narratives that reveal the racially biased administration of criminal justice, police violence, and wrongful convictions. The museum will feature new art pieces by contemporary African American artists, including Sanford Biggers and Hank Willis Thomas.



The Burning corpse of William Brown, September 18, 1919 in Omaha, Nebraska.