

HISTORICAL MARKER PROJECT OVERVIEW

"THE PUBLIC NARRATIVE A NATION CREATES ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS REFLECTED IN MEMORIALS AND MONUMENTS. WHO IS HONORED, WHAT IS REMEMBERED, WHAT IS MEMORIALIZED TELL A STORY ABOUT A SOCIETY THAT CAN'T BE REFLECTED IN OTHER WAYS." - BRYAN STEVENSON, EJI DIRECTOR

The **Equal Justice Initiative** (EJI) is dedicated to supporting communities across our nation in confronting historical trauma and advancing truth-telling at the local level. Historical markers are a compelling tool that can help create a permanent record of racial terror violence and expose an entire community to our shared history of racial injustice.

Through EJI's **Community Remembrance Project (CRP)**, EJI sponsors historical marker projects, with each marker valued at about \$3000 each including fabrication and shipment. EJI works with local Community Remembrance Coalitions made up of diverse members of their community to facilitate these projects. In addition to the historical marker, EJI provides additional resources and support through other CRP opportunities, including, but not limited to, at least \$5000 in scholarships to local public high school students through a **Racial Justice Essay Contest**, **Community Soil Collection Projects**, and a host of other resources available for community education.

Please refer to the basic FAQ and additional resources included to learn more about EJI sponsored historical markers and their installation in the community.

BASIC HISTORICAL MARKER DESIGN & LOGISTICAL FAQ

HOW BIG ARE EJI HISTORICAL MARKERS?

EJI sponsored marker panels are rectangular in shape, about 42 inches wide by 38.5 inches high. The polls (or mounting posts) are non-break-away 7-foot tall octagonal aluminum posts. The marker, including its 7 ft post, weighs about 100 lbs.

WHAT ARE THE HISTORICAL MARKER DESIGN FEATURES?

EJI markers generally use a blue plate color; gold lettering; and the Community Remembrance Project emblem at the top of the marker, customized for each community's state and county.

WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF THE TEXT ON THE HISTORICAL MARKER?

EJI markers consist of two sides of text that have different but connected narrative emphases:

Side One details the narrative of the victim(s) being memorialized.

Side Two provides contextual information about the trauma and legacy of racial terror lynching in America.

The narrative content of each marker is based on documented research that EJI and Community Remembrance coalition partners have contributed. Each marker attempts to convey the individual stories of the victim(s), while providing broader historical context that helps audiences understand the scope and legacy of harm created by racial terror lynchings targeting African Americans. This historical context and specificity around language is further explained in EJI's *Lynching in America* report, available at <https://lynchinginamerica.eji.org/report/>

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR THE MARKER TO BE FABRICATED AND SHIPPED? HOW MUCH TIME IS NEEDED FOR INSTALLATION?

Marker fabrication and shipment generally takes **between eight to ten weeks total**. EJI advises installing historical markers at least three days before a scheduled unveiling event and dedication ceremony, to ensure that the marker has time to set. Local weather conditions should be considered and discussed with local installers in advance.

SAMPLE MARKER TEXT FROM EJI HISTORICAL MARKER



LYNCHING OF LEVI HARRINGTON (SIDE 1)

Levi Harrington was a well-respected African American man who lived with his wife and five children near Kansas City. One of Mr. Harrington's former employers described him as a "faithful...honest man," who "was sober and industrious, saved his money, and cared for his family." On April 3, 1882, a police officer was fatally shot in Kansas City, and suspicion was immediately directed towards black residents. During this era, deep racial hostility burdened black people with presumptions of guilt, often resulting in accusations that were unfounded and unreliable. As Mr. Harrington made his way through Kansas City that day, he was stopped by police and arrested. Despite the lack of evidence to indicate his involvement in the shooting, an angry white mob quickly formed and grew to several hundred people intent on lynching Mr. Harrington. The mob forcefully seized Mr. Harrington from police custody and lynched him by hanging him from a beam on the Bluff Street Bridge and shooting him. Although newspapers reported that Mr. Harrington was innocent of the accusations against him, no one was held accountable for the lynching of Levi Harrington.

LYNCHING IN AMERICA (SIDE 2)

Thousands of black people were the victims of racial terror lynching in the United States between 1877 and 1950. The lynching of African Americans during this era was a form of racial terrorism intended to intimidate black people and enforce racial hierarchy and segregation. After the Civil War, violent resistance to equal rights for African Americans led to fatal violence against black women, men, and children accused of violating social customs, engaging in interracial relationships, or committing crimes, even when no evidence tied the accused to the alleged offenses. Many black people were pulled out of jails or given over to mobs by law enforcement officials who were legally required to protect them. Racial terror lynchings often included burnings and mutilation, sometimes in front of crowds numbering in the thousands. Many names of those whose lives were claimed by these acts of racially motivated violence were not recorded and will never be known, but at least 60 racial terror lynchings have been documented in Missouri.

SITE AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENTATION

Site authorization documentation refers to written permission granted by a site owner(s) or local approving body to install a EJI sponsored historical marker at the Community Remembrance Coalition's preferred site of interest.

Documentation that a Community Remembrance Coalition has permission to install the historical marker on their site of preference can either come as a formal, signed letter or as a direct email confirmation from the permission grantor. Site authorization documentation should be able to explain that:

- The document is serving as **official confirmation** that the site has been approved by the necessary approving body and/or site owner(s) to have the historical marker installed there,
- There is a **direct point of contact** to refer back to if any questions emerge in the future,
- The site is **officially recognized by specific location details** included, e.g. address, any other relevant description, and
- Any other important information for future reference should be noted, as well (e.g. maintenance requirements, etc.)

Both letters and email documentation should be understood as an official agreement for the site approval. Therefore, site owners or approving bodies should follow their normal processes for official documentation. Generally, EJI encourages pursuing a more formal documentation process, such as submitting a letter on official letterhead.

MARKER INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS

The single 7' post historical markers are manufactured to sit down on top of an octagonal extruded aluminum post that has been provided. The marker is secured to the post by eight (8) set screws that are provided with the marker.

The post is designed for 36" insertion in the ground. This leaves approximately 4' of post above ground.

Using a post hole digger, dig a hole 10"- 12" in diameter and 36" deep. Place the post in the hole with one of the flat faces on the post facing the direction that the marker is to face. Place the post in the hole then plumb and brace it.

Fill top of hole with concrete (sacrete works fine). You might cut the bottom out of a 5 gallon plastic bucket to use as a form. Slip the bucket down over the post so it is resting on the ground at the top of the hole. When you fill the top of the hole with concrete, bring the concrete up about 4 - 6" above the ground. When hardened, cut the plastic form away and you have a nice curb around the post which will deter mowers and trimmers from damaging the post.

Before trying to place the marker on the post, use an Allen wrench to back the set screws part way out of their holes. They have been screwed on for shipment and unless they are backed out part way the marker will not sit down on the post.

Place the marker on the post. Check it for alignment looking straight at the marker and then moving 90 degrees to view the edge of the marker. Secure the marker by tightening the set screws. Adjustments in alignment can be made using the set screws.

The marker can be made **theft proof** by drilling the flats off the set screws after the marker is secured to the post. Simply take a 1/4" drill bit and drill down into the center of the set-screws going only to the bottom of the hole this will prevent removal of the set screws. To remove the marker, the set screws will have to be drilled out.

Installation takes less than an hour; allow 24 hours before removing the bracing.



**EJI GREATLY APPRECIATES
EACH COALITION'S
COMMITMENT TO THE
WORK OF RESTORATIVE
TRUTH-TELLING TO HELP
US WORK TOWARDS
REPAIR, JUSTICE, AND
RECONCILIATION IN OUR
NATION.**