Miami-Dade

TEAR

Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation Initiative

100th Anniversary J.B. Harris Lynching

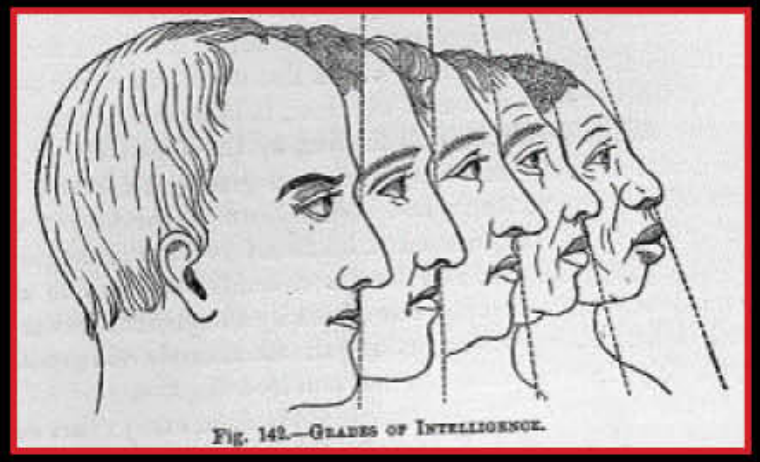
NOVEMBER 29, 2020
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

Welcome & Introductions

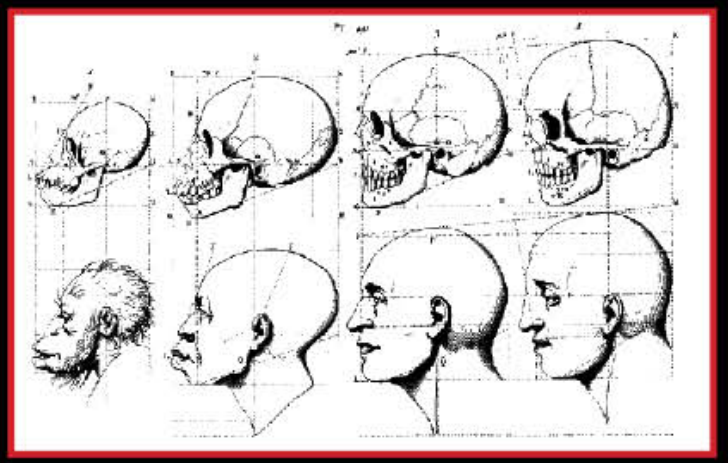
Some History

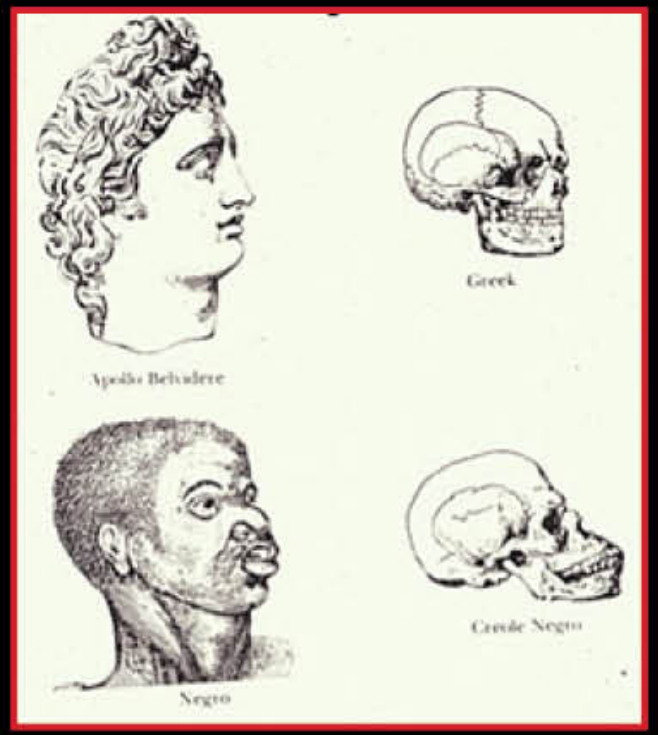
Miami-Dade
TEAR
Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation
Initiative

BAD PRINCE
BLACK HUNG BY
'NECKTIE PARTY'
Short Shrift For J. B. Harris, 19, Who Attempted to Commit Usual Crime.
ADMITS HIS GUILT
Captured Near Blocker's Sawmill At 12:30 and Swings From Limb At 2:15.
A negro's body swinging from a tree near Princeton yesterday afternoon told a mute but
MEMBERS OF MOB CAN'T BE FOUND AFTER LYNCHING
Sheriff Visits Scene of Lynching Monday Afternoon But Secures No Trace of Men Who Took Law in Own Hands.
NEGRO ATTEMPTED ASSAULT
Black Point Negro Hanged to Sapling Only Few Hours After Entering Home of Woman in the
VOL. 13; No. 203
SPECIAL FLORIDA NEWS SERVI
NEGRO LYNCHED NEAR HOMESTEAD; KILLED MARSHAL
Charles R. Bryant Was Murdered With His Own Revolver In a Struggle With Negro; Cause of Encounter is Not Known.
SLAYER FLED IN TRUCK; CAPTURED AND RIDDLED
June 15, 1923
SECOND NEGRO LYNCHED IN HOMESTEAD MURDER
Body Found South of Florida City; Marshal Bryant to Be Buried Today.
THE bullet-ridden body of Robert Gilmer, negro, said to have been an accomplice of Willie (Grey Eye) Simmons, negro, in the killing Friday of Marshal Charles R. Bryant, of Homestead, was discovered about 9 o'clock yesterday morning in the woods between Florida City and Royal Palm State park. The body was some distance from the road, and apparently a ratio of bullets had been fired into the body.
The negro had apparently been dead for many hours. It is said that the negro was killed Friday night by a crowd of men who had scoured the woods hunting him.
The finding of the body was reported by Deputy Sheriff Frazier, who in turn notified Sheriff Louis A. Allen in Miami, the sheriff receiving the news about 10 a. m. He immediately left for Homestead and spent the remainder of
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S THREE RECORDED LYNCHINGS
Nov. 29, 1920

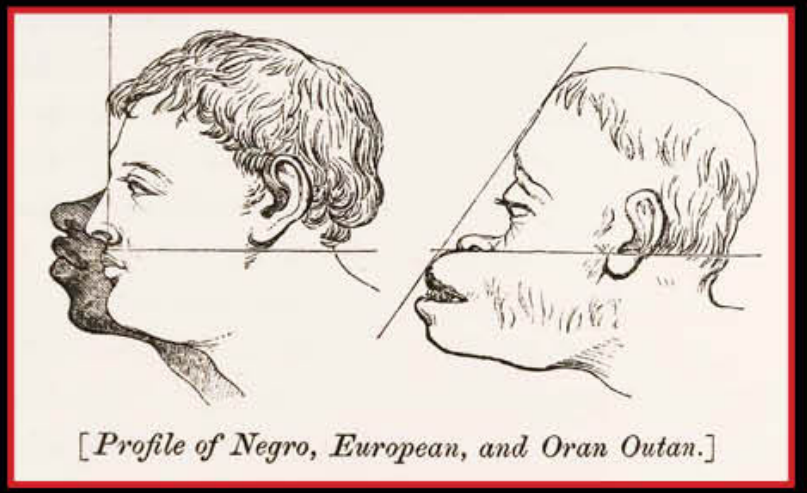


PREFACE:
THE MYTH OF "RACE"





- There is only one HUMAN race. We are *98.2%* identical and *1.8%* different.
- Nobody in Europe was "White" before the invasion of America.
- "Race" is NOT a scientific concept.
- "Race" is psychological warfare.
- "Race" is a lie, invented by the wealthiest few to sucessfully divide and control the majority of the population.


[*Profile of Negro, European, and Oran Outan.*]

PREFACE:

THE MYTH OF "RACE" WAS USED TO JUSTIFY:

- ***Invasion, Colonization, Settlement, and Theft of foreign lands and resources;***
- ***"Indian Removal" and other forms of Genocide;***
- ***Slavery and Subsequent Discrimination.***

PREFACE:

'RACIAL' TERROR GRIPS THE SOUTH, AND SPREADS

1865 The South's defeat in Civil War ends 246 years of legal slavery in the U.S

Southern racists launch new cowardly war of terror against Negro freedom, equality, justice, competent leadership, and Voting Rights.

1896 Racists claim victory with US Supreme Court Decision legalizing segregation and White Supremacy.

African Americans respond with the New Negro Movement, building institutions and independence, demanding equality.

1900s Lynchings, "race riots," and terrorism become primary ways for racists to attempt suppression of social justice.

PREFACE:

THE LANGUAGE OF LYNCHING

Although nearly 5,000 known lynchings were carried out in the U.S, each one unique and different, they are remarkably similar in a standard language that describes an extraordinary number of incidents:

- *The victim was no saint, and deserved his/her fate.*
- *The victim makes a full confession of his/her guilt.*
- *The victim often changes clothes prior to capture, which explains why a randomly captured individual does not match the description of the actual person being sought.*
- *Victims are often killed in one place and hanged or displayed at another (as was "Grey Eye"Simmons, and possibly J.B Harris).*
- *The primary excuse for lynchings is to prevent int4ended, attempted, imagined , or actual "assault on a White woman." (Thus, many assaults by White men could go unpunished by sacrificing a lynch victim.)*
- *The actions of the lunch mob are often described as being calm, orderly, and responsible.*
- *Law enforcement is powerless to protect the victim from the mob.*
- *Perpetrators of lynchings are never identifies, even if there were hundreds or thousands of spectator witnesses.*

PRELUDE

'Racial' Violence in the Nation, Florida, and Miami

BEFORE 1920

1911 A color line was drawn along certain streets throughout Miami.

1917 East St. Louis "Race Riot"

Racists bomb Odd Fellows Hall, largest structure in Miami's Black community.

1919 The "Red Summer" of at least 39 "race riots " around the nation

1920-1923

1920 Election Day Ocoee massacre, Orange County, Florida

1921 KKK parade to honor their arrival in Miami

Tulsa massacre, Oklahoma

KKK kidnaps Black minister in Coconut Grove, forces his exile to Bahamas

KKK tars and feathers White Archdeacon Philip Irwin and Black Bahamian blacksmith George Doty in downtown Miami, for advocating social quality.

1923 Rosewood massacre, Levy County, Florida

Whites throw bombs into several unoccupied Black Miami homes.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S THREE RECORDED LYNCHINGS

Two of the lynchings, 30 months apart, took place at or near the same location, on Silver Palm Drive (SW 232nd Avenue).

J.B. Harris

November 29, 1920

William "Grey Eye" Simmons

June 15, 1923

Roy Gaines

June 15, 1923

Two of the lynchings, only hours apart. took place on the same day, at two different locations in South Dade.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S THREE RECORDED LYNCHINGS

More Connections

• *Homestead Town Marshal Charles R. Bryant* is the officer who arrested J.B. Harris in 1920.

In 1923, Marshal Bryant would die from gunshots in a fight with William "Grey Eye" Simmons, who would be lynched for the killing along with Roy Gaines.

• *Charles R. Graham*, who repoprtedly owned the property on which Simmons was lynched in 1923, was a member of the coroner's jury that investigated the J.B. Harris lynching on the same street 30 months earlier.

1920

THE LYNCHING OF J.B. HARRIS: WHAT HAPPENED 100 YEARS AGO?

2020

November 29, 1920, the Monday after Thanksgiving

10:15 a.m.

- A Negro intruder reportedly enters the home of a White woman in Princeton, South Dade, who awakens and cries out in alarm.
- The intruder flees on a bicycle.

12:30 p.m.

- J.B. Oliver, 19, now known by his remarried mother's surname Harris, is captured at a sawmill in Naranja, accused of attempted assault.
- He is taken to the home of the woman, who allegedly identifies him; he allegedly confesses.

2: 15 p.m.

- His corpse hangs from a tree a quarter mile away.

3:00 p.m.

- Homestead Town Marshal Bryant notifies Dade County Sheriff Moran, who leaves Miami immediately with two others to investigate the crime.

1920

THE LYNCHING OF J.B. HARRIS: WAS JUSTICE SERVED?

2020

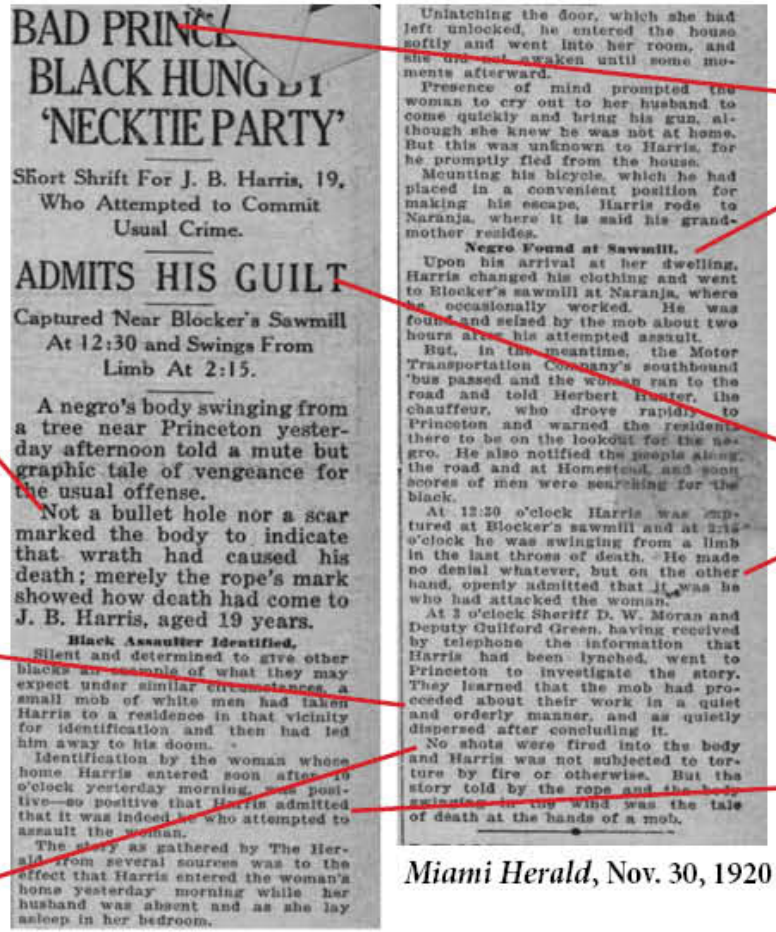
THE STORY

ORDERLINESS OF THE MOB

Not a bullet nor a scar marked the body to indicate that wrath had caused his death...

...the mob had proceeded about their work in a quiet and orderly manner, and as quietly disappeared after concluding it.

No shots were fired into the body and Harris was not subjected to torture by fire or otherwise.



BAD PRINCE[illegible]
BLACK HUNG BY
'NECKTIE PARTY'

Short Shrift For J. B. Harris, 19, Who Attempted to Commit Usual Crime.

ADMITS HIS GUILT

Captured Near Blocker's Sawmill At 12:30 and Swings From Limb At 2:15.

A negro's body swinging from a tree near Princeton yesterday afternoon told a mute but graphic tale of vengeance for the usual offense.

Not a bullet hole nor a scar marked the body to indicate that wrath had caused his death; merely the rope's mark showed how death had come to J. B. Harris, aged 19 years.

Black Assaulter Identified.

Silent and determined to give other blacks an example of what they may expect under similar circumstances, a small mob of white men had taken Harris to a residence in that vicinity for identification and then had led him away to his doom.

Identification by the woman whose home Harris entered soon after 10 o'clock yesterday morning was positive—so positive that Harris admitted that it was indeed he who attempted to assault the woman.

The story as gathered by The Herald from several sources was to the effect that Harris entered the woman's home yesterday morning while her husband was absent and as she lay asleep in her bedroom.

Unlatching the door, which she had left unlocked, he entered the house softly and went into her room, and she did not awaken until some moments afterward.

Presence of mind prompted the woman to cry out to her husband to come quickly and bring his gun, although she knew he was not at home. But this was unknown to Harris, for he promptly fled from the house.

Mounting his bicycle, which he had placed in a convenient position for making his escape, Harris rode to Naranja, where it is said his grandmother resides.

Negro Found at Sawmill.

Upon his arrival at her dwelling, Harris changed his clothing and went to Blocker's sawmill at Naranja, where he occasionally worked. He was found and seized by the mob about two hours after his attempted assault.

But, in the meantime, the Motor Transportation Company's southbound bus passed and the woman ran to the road and told Herbert Hunter, the chauffeur, who drove rapidly to Princeton and warned the residents there to be on the lookout for the negro. He also notified the people along the road and at Homestead, and soon scores of men were searching for the black.

At 12:30 o'clock Harris was captured at Blocker's sawmill and at 2:15 o'clock he was swinging from a limb in the last throes of death. He made no denial whatever, but on the other hand, openly admitted that it was he who had attacked the woman.

At 3 o'clock Sheriff D. W. Moran and Deputy Guilford Green, having received by telephone the information that Harris had been lynched, went to Princeton to investigate the story. They learned that the mob had proceeded about their work in a quiet and orderly manner, and as quietly dispersed after concluding it.

No shots were fired into the body and Harris was not subjected to torture by fire or otherwise. But the story told by the rope and the body swinging in the wind was the tale of death at the hands of a mob.

Miami Herald, Nov. 30, 1920

BAD CHARACTER OF THE VICTIM

BAD PRINCETON BLACK...

Upon his arrival at [his grandmother's] dwelling, Harris exchanged his clothing...

The negro, who was a bad character...

The negro,.. was known among the members of his race as incorrigible...

GUILT OF THE VICTIM

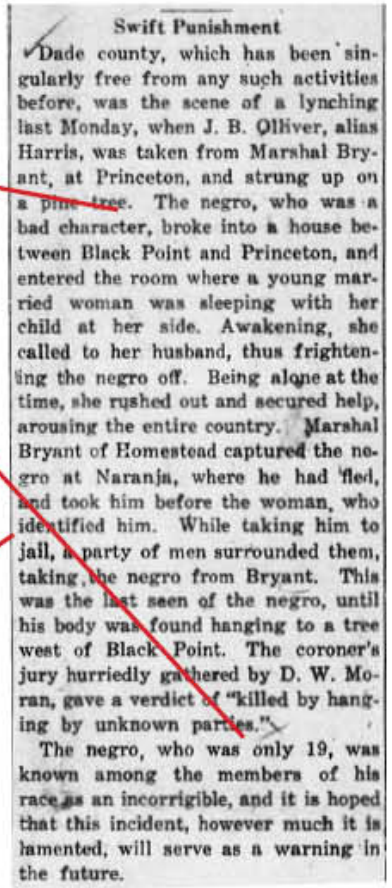
ADMITS HIS GUILT

He made no denial whatsoever, but on the other hand, openly admitted that it was he who attacked the woman.

Harris admitted that it was indeed he who attempted to assault the woman.

Marshal Bryant of Homestead captured the negro at Naranja... and brought him before the woman, who identified him.

J.B. HARRIS IS "CONVICTED IN THE PRESS."



Swift Punishment

Dade county, which has been singularly free from any such activities before, was the scene of a lynching last Monday, when J. B. Olliver, alias Harris, was taken from Marshal Bryant, at Princeton, and strung up on a pine tree. The negro, who was a bad character, broke into a house between Black Point and Princeton, and entered the room where a young married woman was sleeping with her child at her side. Awakening, she called to her husband, thus frightening the negro off. Being alone at the time, she rushed out and secured help, arousing the entire country. Marshal Bryant of Homestead captured the negro at Naranja, where he had fled, and took him before the woman, who identified him. While taking him to jail, a party of men surrounded them, taking the negro from Bryant. This was the last seen of the negro, until his body was found hanging to a tree west of Black Point. The coroner's jury hurriedly gathered by D. W. Moran, gave a verdict of "killed by hanging by unknown parties."

The negro, who was only 19, was known among the members of his race as an incorrigible, and it is hoped that this incident, however much it is lamented, will serve as a warning in the future.

Homestead Enterprise
Dec. 2, 1920

1920

THE LYNCHING OF J.B. HARRIS:

WAS JUSTICE SERVED? QUESTIONS AND DOUBTS

2020

News Coverage by the *Miami Metropolis* Presents a very Different Picture

1.

The sheriff's party learned that Oliver had been born and raised in the vicinity of the tragedy and was known to all of the people of the community.

Did Not Identify Negro

When questioned by the sheriff the alleged intended victim said she knew the young negro, but made no statement as to identifying him.

A Moment of Silence

Miami-Dade
TEAR
Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation
Initiative

Are you able to name what you are feeling right now?

Miami-Dade
TEAR
Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation
Initiative

How do we turn these emotions into impactful action?

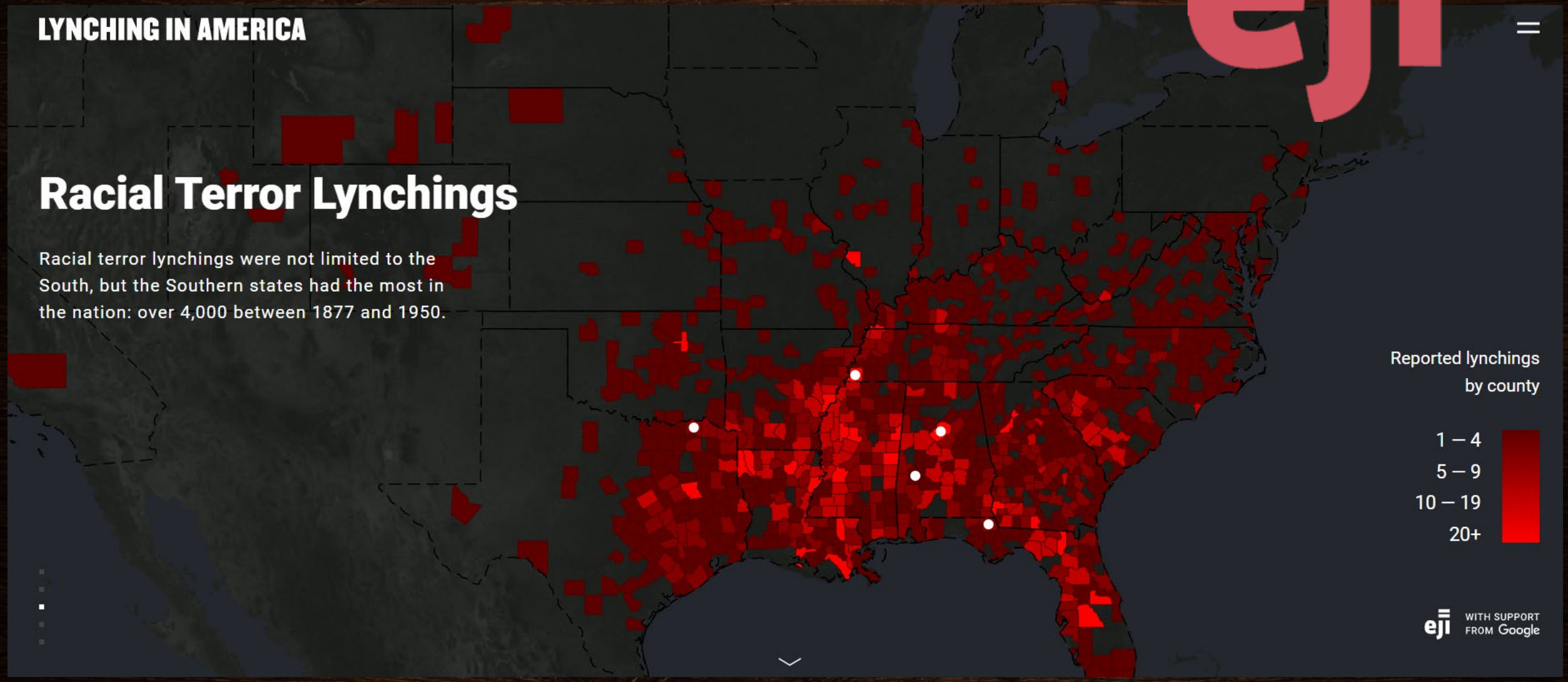
Miami-Dade
TEAR
Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation
Initiative

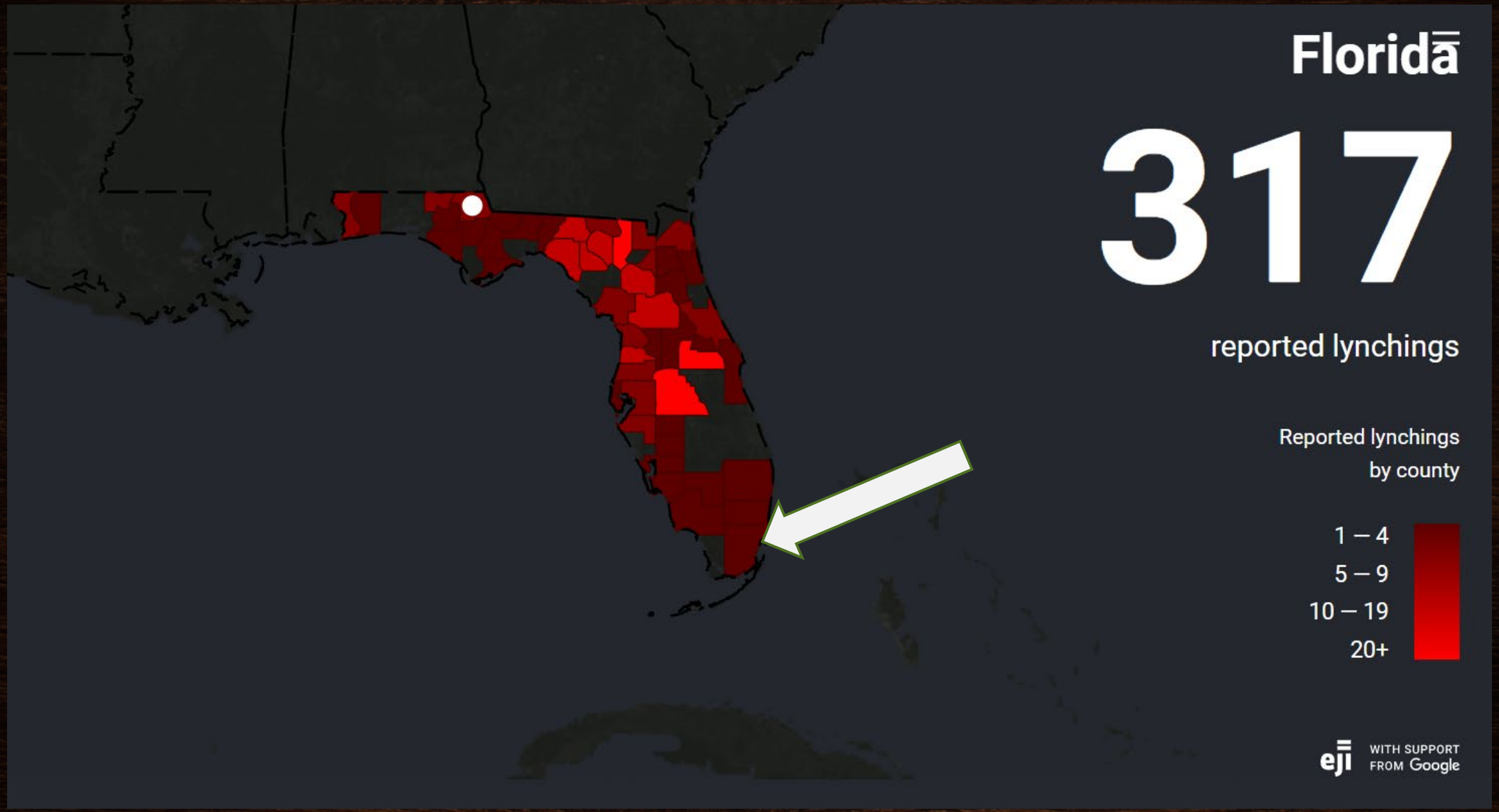
Miami-Dade
Truth, Education and Reconciliation (TEAR)

- Mission & Purpose
- Our Work
- History of Racial Terror in South Florida
- Truth and Reconciliation
- Collaboration with Equal Justice Initiative
- Our Coalition & Key Partners
- Goals and Accomplishments
- www.mdtear.com

Miami-Dade
TEAR
Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation
Initiative

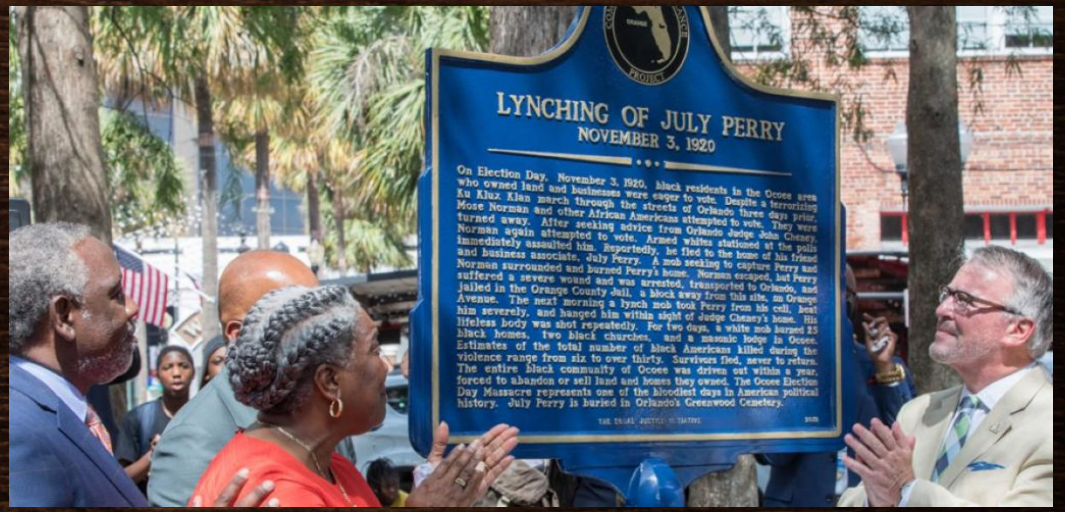
Equal Justice Initiative




Florida
317
reported lynchings
Reported lynchings
by county
1 — 4
5 — 9
10 — 19
20+
eji
WITH SUPPORT
FROM Google

Equal Justice Initiative
Community Remembrance Project

- Community Soil Collection Project
- Historical Marker Project



The National Memorial for Peace and Justice Monument Placement Initiative

J.B. Harris Soil Collection

Miami-Dade

TEAR

Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation

Initiative

Why is facing the truth of our nation's past racial terror important to this community's future?

Miami-Dade

TEAR

Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation

Initiative

Upcoming TEAR Events & Opportunities

- McDuffie Center for Racial Justice presents an inaugural exhibit at Barry University: *Rosewood*, February, 2021
- TEAR Member Quarterly Meeting: February, 2021 (TBA)
- Soil Collection: William “Grey Eye” Simmons (TBA)
- EJI Historical Marker Placement at Three Sites (TBA)
- Miami-Dade Monument Placement

Miami-Dade
TEAR
Truth - Education - and - Reconciliation
Initiative