



OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairwoman Liz Seman and Roads, Infrastructure and Public Works Committee Members

FROM: Joseph Kernell, County Administrator

DATE: February 10, 2023

RE: Request to Place the George Green Historical Marker at the East Greenville Summary Court

The Community Remembrance Project of Greenville County, SC, in partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative, has requested permission from Greenville County Council to place a historical marker memorializing the 1933 lynching of George Green on the front lawn of the East Greenville Summary Court located at 320 W. Main Street in Taylors.

The Community Remembrance Project submitted a written request to the Greenville County Roads, Infrastructure and Public Works Committee detailing background and goals of the project, pictures of the proposed location, size and language of the George Green Historical Marker. According to County policy, the County Administrator reviews the request and advises the Committee of any problems it may create. The Committee may then consider the request and make its recommendation to County Council.

Upon review of the request, I recommend that County Council may approve placing George Green Lynching Historical Marker on the grounds of the East Greenville Summary Court.



November 9, 2022

To: Greenville County Council Public Works and Infrastructure Committee

From: The Community Remembrance Project of Greenville County, SC (CRP)

Subj: Request for Placement of Historical Marker in Taylors, SC

The Community Remembrance Project of Greenville County, SC (CRP), in partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative, would like to place an historical marker honoring George Green (the victim of racial terror lynching in Taylors, SC on November 16, 1933) in front of the East Greenville Summary Court located at 320 W. Main Street in Taylors.

Our goals are to place the marker in a location that best meets these criteria:

- close proximity to the actual historical event (behind present day Taylors First Baptist Church, ¼ mile away)
- maximum exposure to foot traffic (opportunities to engage the public in the history)
- available parking
- security for the marker

In addition, we believe the proximity to the Summary Court offers additional meaning because of the weight of judicial complicity in lynchings. And the entrance to the Summary Court parking is adjacent to the Taylors Library Burdette Branch which will open opportunities to engage library patrons in viewing the marker.

Additional pages below provide pictures of the proposed location and next steps, pictures and language for the George Green Historical Marker, and background and goals of the Community Remembrance Project.

We are happy to answer any questions that you may have and/or meet with your committee to discuss our project. Thank you in advance for your consideration and action on this request.

Sincerely,

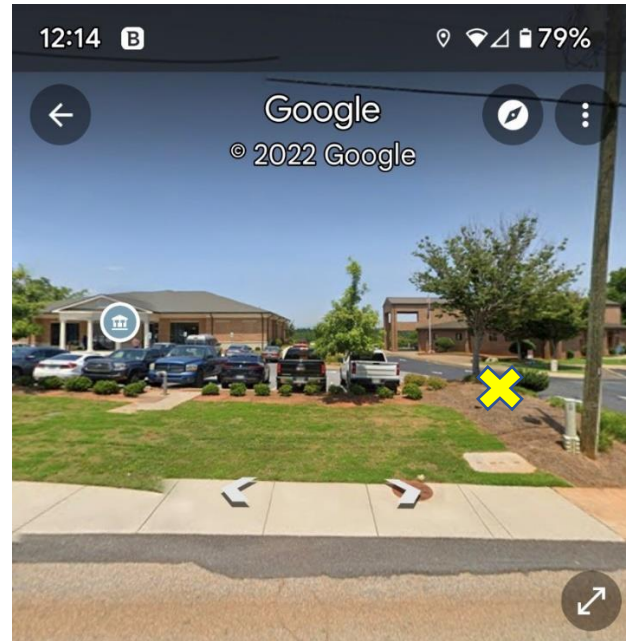
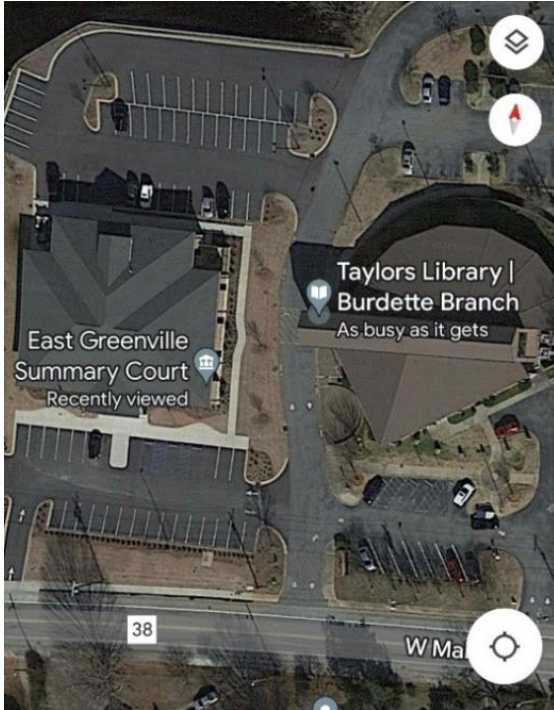
Dr. Fellicia Smith, Co-Chair

Ellen Stevenson, Co-Chair

Proposed Placement of the George Green Historical Marker

Proposed Location:

In front of the East Greenville Summary Court, 320 W. Main Street Taylors
(approximately 15' from the edge of road or 25' from center line of road)



 Exact location of the marker is to be determined with appropriate County personnel

Next Steps:

1. Receive written authorization for locating the historical marker from the County
2. Request EJI to order the manufacture of the marker (usually takes about 12 weeks to receive). Marker is paid for by EJI.
3. Contract to have the marker physically installed at the designated sight.
4. Schedule and plan an event to unveil the marker. One hour educational program, including the unveiling.

Pictures and Language for the George Green Historical Marker

Side 1 of Historical Marker: THE LYNCHING OF GEORGE GREEN

On November 16, 1933, a white mob lynched an African American man named George Green in his home near this site off North Adams Street in Taylors for challenging a wrongful eviction. A farm laborer in his sixties, Mr. Green and his wife, Mary Green, lived in a sharecropper's dwelling owned by his white employer, C.F. James. After a dispute arose about Mr. Green's wages, James ordered Mr. Green to immediately vacate the property. However, Mr. Green checked with the local magistrate and learned he was entitled to stay on the property through the end of the year. Mr. Green's resistance to the unlawful eviction angered James, who enlisted local Ku Klux Klansmen to terrorize the Green family. On the night of November 16, about a dozen armed Klansmen broke into Mr. Green's home. Mr. Green tried to defend himself and his wife against the attack, but the white men shot Mr. Green in the chest, killing him in his home. After the lynching of her husband, Mrs. Green sued Greenville County for damages and was awarded \$2000. However, on appeal, the South Carolina Supreme Court ordered a new trial. The new jury reversed the ruling, providing no compensation to Mr. Green's widow. Over the next year, despite multiple arrests and indictments, including C.F. James, there is no evidence that anyone was ever convicted or sentenced for the lynching of George Green.



Side 2 of Historical Marker: LYNCHING IN AMERICA

Racial terror lynching claimed the lives of thousands of African Americans between 1865 and 1950. Following the Civil War, white Southerners sought to uphold an ideology of white supremacy and used fatal violence and oppressive economic systems, like sharecropping, to reinforce racial subordination and segregation. Many Black women, men, and children were exploited through sharecropping for their labor and were denied equal access to jobs, housing, and basic necessities. When Black farmers sought to enforce their sharecropping labor contracts to receive their wages, white landlords often sought to silence and intimidate them through acts of terror. Lynching emerged as the most public and notorious form of racial terrorism used against African Americans who pursued economic, social, and political opportunities in resistance to racial hierarchy. State and federal officials largely tolerated these lawless killings by not holding white mobs accountable for their crimes. Although South Carolina's state constitution allowed some families of lynching victims to sue the county, the law's limitations made these cases rarely successful. Mr. Green's lynching, for example, did not qualify because he had not been accused of a crime before he was killed. Over 189 racial terror lynchings have been documented in South Carolina alone, with at least four in Greenville County.



The Community Remembrance Project of Greenville County, SC Background and Goals

The Community Remembrance Project of Greenville County, SC, was formed in the spring of 2019 in collaboration with the Equal Justice Initiative's (EJI) work to bring the discussion of race and racial injustice in America into the forefront of our society. EJI launched the Community Remembrance Project to help communities around the country remember and address the legacy of slavery, lynching, and racial segregation that still impacts communities to this day.

The Community Remembrance Project of Greenville County SC (CRP)

The mission of the CRP is to commemorate the victims of racial terror and preserve the social memory of our local community by engaging in a more honest conversation about the history of lynching in Greenville County SC. We endeavor to commence, sequentially, the process of restorative truth-telling and healing in Greenville County, SC.

EJI has documented 4 victims of racial terror lynching in Greenville County, SC

- Robert Williams – November 4, 1881
- Ira Johnson – July 15, 1895
- Tom Keith – August 16, 1899
- George Green – November 16, 1933

The CRP of Greenville County, SC, has set out to recognize these victims of lynching by (sequentially):

- Hosting public education events to promote dialogue about historic and current day racial inequity in our community,
- Holding public soil collection ceremonies from lynching sites,
- Erecting historical markers to memorialize the four victims of racial terror lynching,
- Conducting an essay writing contest with Greenville County public high school students,
- Retrieving county monument from the National Memorial of Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL

Community Wide Events Conducted since our beginnings in 2019:

- George Green Educational Event: Say His Name George Green: November 14, 2019
- Virtual Dialogue re: Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: June 8, 2020
- George Green Soil Collection Ceremony in Taylors: November 7, 2020
- Tom Keith Educational Event: The Presumption of Guilt: March 20, 2021
- Tom Keith Soil Collection Ceremony in Greenville: June 19, 2021
- Tom Keith Historical Marker Installation and Ceremony: November 20, 2021
- Tulsa Race Massacre Commemorative Event: May 31, 2021
- Essay Contest Awards Ceremony at SC Governor's School: May 15, 2022
- Ira Johnson/Robert Williams Educational Event: Judicial Complicity: April 30, 2022

- Collaboration with Warehouse Theatre: June 15, 2022
- Collaboration with GLOW Lyric Theatre: July 30, 2022
- Robert Williams Soil Collection Ceremony in Pelzer: August 20, 2022
- Ira Johnson Soil Collection Ceremony in Greenville: October 20, 2022

The Community Remembrance Project is a collaborative effort in Greenville County. We have many individuals and organizations that have partnered with us and support our work.

We are working closely with the Upcountry History Museum to create a permanent display of the CRP's Soil Collection jars (one for each of our 4 victims). This display is in the design phase and we hope to have it completed by early 2023. We will have an event in 2023 in collaboration with the Upcountry History Museum to unveil the display and introduce it to the Greenville community.

This Soil Collection display, along with the Historical Markers placed throughout Greenville County and the monument will be linked via our website and QR codes to lead visitors and residents to each of the installations in order to facilitate a better understanding of our history and to promote dialogue and healing.

CRP's fiscal sponsor from 2019 to present is Mill Community Ministries. Beginning in 2023 the REEM Commission will become our fiscal sponsor.

A Partial List of Our Community Partners:

Christ Church Episcopal	Soteria CDC
Furman University	Taylor's Townsquare
GLOW Lyric Theatre	United Ministries
Greenville Branch NAACP	Upcountry History Museum
Jolley Foundation	Upstate Circle of Friends
LiveWell Greenville	Urban League of the Upstate
Long Branch Baptist Church	Valley Brook Outreach Baptist Church
Mill Community Ministries	Warehouse Theatre
Mountain View Baptist Church	Westminster Presbyterian Church
Nicholtown Missionary Baptist Church	Wyche, P.A.
Springfield Baptist Church	212 Community Development Corporation