

Righting the Record Announces Historic Court Order, Special Event on December 16 Regarding Victims of Culpeper Lynchings

Join Righting the Record, members of the judiciary, and special guests at 5pm ET on December 16, 2024 at Culpeper Baptist Church following courthouse proceeding

CULPEPER, VA, UNITED STATES, December 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, nonpartisan research and advocacy organization [Righting the Record](#), along with Judge Dale B. Durrer of Virginia's 16th Circuit Court and Commonwealth's Attorney Russell L. Rabb III, announced that on Monday December 16, 2024, an historic court order will be filed and a special "Peace Through Justice" event will take place to officially right the record regarding the lynchings of three men in Culpeper County.

“

While this order won't bring back the lives and legacies lost to these grave injustices, it's never too late to do the right thing.”

Zann Nelson, Righting the Record

The court order will affirm the presumption of innocence and acknowledge the denial of due process for William Grayson, William Thompson, and Charles "Allie" Thompson, who, while awaiting trial in the custody of the Culpeper County jail, were kidnapped and brutally murdered by lynching.

“Righting the Record's research indicates that this court order is unprecedented – not only in Virginia, but across the nation,” said Zann Nelson, the organization's president. “We welcome the community to join us as we commemorate this truly historic milestone.”

Historic Event on Monday December 16, 2024 at 5pm ET

What: Peace Through Justice Commemoration

Where: Culpeper Baptist Church, 318 S. West Street

Righting the Record will host a special commemoration for the three men and a celebration of this restorative justice milestone.

This event is free and open to the public and will feature guest speakers related to the court order, musical performances, and light refreshments.

The court order hearing that precedes the formal event takes place at 3:30pm ET in the circuit

court room of the Culpeper Court House. Judge Durrer will review and rule on the motion, which was filed by the Commonwealth's Attorney and written in collaboration with Righting the Record. Please note there is limited seating in the circuit courtroom. While this is an open court hearing, organizers request that those who are not directly involved in the case (descendants of victims, members of the judiciary, special guests, etc.) show their support at the larger 5pm event.

"A great community acknowledges all of its history," said Judge Dale B. Durrer. "The forthcoming order takes a small step in recognizing an American ideal of together working toward a more perfect union."

Lynchings Over Lawful Due Process

According to the [NAACP website](#), from 1882 to 1968, more than 4,700 lynchings occurred in the U.S. The site states that "it's impossible to know for certain how many lynchings occurred because there was no formal tracking. Many historians believe the true number is underreported."

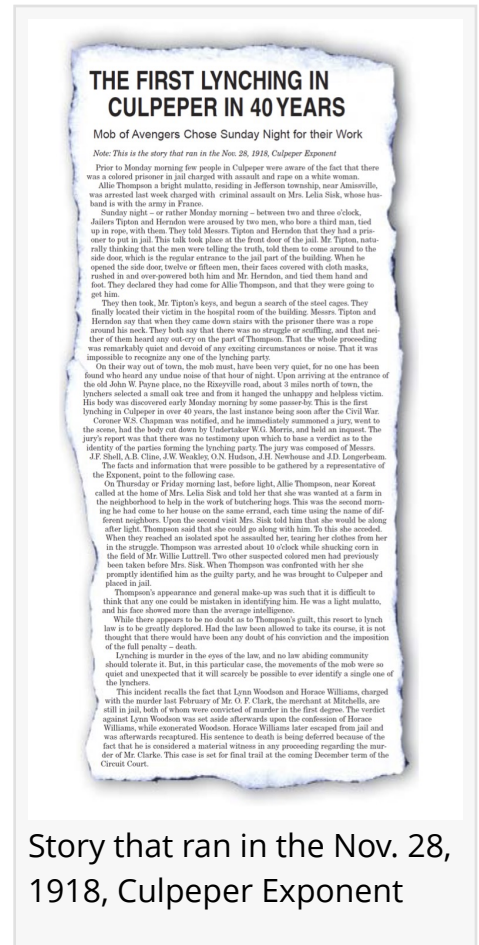
The James Madison University's data and research project, [Racial Terror in Virginia](#), has documented 116 lynching cases in the state spanning the years of 1866 and 1932. Ms. Nelson noted that the number of cases is directly related to the range of years being reported; for example, William Grayson is not counted in the list.

Russell L. Rabb, III, Commonwealth's Attorney for Culpeper County spoke to this blight on Virginia's history: "The United States Constitution guarantees all people a right of due process of law. It is axiomatic in American jurisprudence that all people are presumed innocent unless and until guilt is established beyond a reasonable doubt. Sadly, this did not occur for these men, but now we proudly affirm their constitutional right, albeit posthumously."

More About the Victims

1850: The lynching of William Grayson

In April 1849, William Grayson, a free man of color living in the Jeffersonton/Rixeyville area of Culpeper County, was arrested and charged with the murder of David Miller. In the summer of that same year a trial was held with a judge, jurors, a prosecutor and an attorney for Grayson. Grayson was convicted and sentenced to hang. His attorney successfully appealed the decision to the State Supreme Court and a new trial was scheduled for June of the following year. The second trial, though with a different set of jurors, was a repeat of the first. Again, an appeal was submitted and again the lower court's ruling was overturned. A third trial was ordered, planned to take place in a neighboring county. In June 1850, a mob of local men kidnapped Grayson from



Story that ran in the Nov. 28, 1918, Culpeper Exponent

the jail and hanged him before that trial took place.

1877: The lynching of William Thompson

In August of 1877, William Thompson, an African-American male with no other documented description, age or any other personal information was accused of rape by the alleged victim, a white girl named Dollie Britton, described by authorities as under 12 years of age. Thompson was remanded to the Culpeper County jail on August 7, 1877. Three days later, an order was filed with the sheriff to summon a Coroner's Jury to examine Thompson's body, which would be found lying on the ground or hanging from a tree (location stated), to determine the cause of death.

1918: The lynching of Charles "Allie" Thompson

On Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1918, eighteen-year-old Charles Allie Thompson, simply known as Allie, was arrested for the alleged crime of raping a white woman named Lelia Sisk. Within five days of being accused and arrested, Allie was kidnapped from the Culpeper County jail and – without a trial, testimony, evidence, or deliberation of guilt by a jury of his peers – he was murdered by a lynch mob.

"While this order won't bring back the lives and legacies lost to these grave injustices, it's never too late to do the right thing," said Ms. Nelson.

About Righting the Record

Righting the Record, Inc. is a nonpartisan nonprofit research and advocacy organization that focuses on projects that correct, add, and/or amend the histories that have been ignored, denied and excluded.

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