



*Margaret "Sis"  
Vinegar*

**HISTORICAL MARKER MEMORIAL  
DEDICATION**

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**8TH STREET AT  
KENTUCKY STREET**

**JUNE 10, 2023**

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**6:30 - 7:45 PM**

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Lawrence, KS 66044

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## *Welcome & Remarks*

*Kerry Altenbernd*, Coordinator for the Lawrence/Douglas County  
Community Remembrance Project Coalition

*Rev. Rachel Williams-Glenn*, St. Luke AME Church

*Ursula Minor*, Lawrence Branch NAACP President

*Mimi Stephenson and Kaitlynn Sedich*, Lawrence Branch  
NAACP Youth Council

*Lisa Larsen*, Lawrence Mayor and Honorary CRP Coalition Co-Chair

*Jennifer Ananda*, Executive Director, Sexual Abuse & Trauma Care Center

*The Honorable Judge Mark Simpson*, Division V, Kansas 7th Judicial District

*Sierra Two Bulls*, Indigenous Community Center

*Michaela Clarke*, Columbia University Justice Lab and formerly with  
the Equal Justice Initiative

## *Reading of Marker Text*

*Annette Dabney*, USD 497

*Amber Sellers*, Lawrence City Commission

*Ursula Minor*, Lawrence Branch NAACP

## *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

*Barbara Ballard* - State Representative - Kansas 44th District

## *Closing*

*Kerry Altenbernd*

## *Unveiling*

# *Lift Every Voice and Sing*

*James Weldon Johnson - 1900*

Lift every voice and sing  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the listening skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith  
that the dark past has taught us,

Sing a song full of the hope  
that the present has brought us.

Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,  
Bitter the chastening rod,  
Felt in the days when  
hope unborn had died;  
Yet with a steady beat,  
Have not our weary feet  
Come to the place for which  
our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way  
that with tears has been watered,  
We have come, treading our path  
through the blood of the slaughtered,  
Out from the gloomy past,

Till now we stand at last  
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,

God of our silent tears,

Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;

Thou who hast by Thy might

Led us into the light,

Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places,  
our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine  
of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand.

True to our God,

True to our native land.



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## **RACIAL VIOLENCE IN AMERICA**

After the Civil War, many white people sought to uphold white supremacy and used violence to reinforce racial subordination. Black women were killed in racial terror lynchings, and they also suffered the trauma of sexual violence. During the era of enslavement, white men faced no consequences for sexually assaulting Black girls and women, who had no legal protections. After emancipation, Black girls and women faced dangers based on their race and sex, just as they had for generations while enslaved. White men summarily lynched Black men after - often false - accusations of sexual assault of white women, while they also held tightly to the view that Black girls and women did not have the right to refuse advances from any white man. Racial control through extralegal violence, and racist laws that provided for different punishments based on the race of the offender and the race of the victim left Black people vulnerable to horrific abuse, especially Black girls and women. Local media contributed to the tragic abuse of Black people by making false reports and condoning mob violence. 14-year-old Margaret Vinegar was never described as a child who had been sexually assaulted but instead was falsely characterized as a "prostitute" adding to the outrage of her victimization and the plight of other Black girls and women vulnerable to racial violence in this region.

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## THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MARGARET "SIS" VINEGAR

In June 1882, two Black men discovered a white man sexually assaulting 14-year-old Margaret "Sis" Vinegar. The Black men, who were living with the Vinegar family at the time, came to Margaret's defense and the white assailant was killed. Although she was just 14 and had been the victim of a sexual assault, Margaret was arrested along with her father and the two Black men who rescued her. While in jail, she was terrorized by a white lynch mob that broke into the jail and debated whether or not to lynch her, ultimately voting not to by a majority of one. However, the mob did kidnap her father and rescuers and lynched all three of them on June 10. Margaret remained in jail and in October she was tried for capital murder of the white man who sexually assaulted her. An all-white jury quickly convicted her. Her lawyers requested a new trial in another county, and in 1883 a second all-white jury convicted Margaret and sentenced her to execution. A local newspaper in Lawrence celebrated the conviction: "very little surprise was manifest at the finding of the jury, which is undoubtedly a just one." A few years after her conviction, Margaret died from tuberculosis in 1889 while incarcerated in Lansing. Decades after the era of enslavement, sexual violence against Black girls and women was tolerated and unaddressed. Margaret Vinegar became a victim of this violence and the racial bias that punished all who resisted the horrors of this abuse.

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*Douglas County Community  
Remembrance Coalition Members*

*Organizational members*

Black Jack Battlefield Trust  
City of Lawrence  
Douglas County, Kansas  
Douglas County Historical Society  
First Presbyterian Church  
Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area  
Kansas-Oklahoma Conference UCC  
Langston Hughes Center  
Lawrence Branch NAACP  
Lawrence Kansas Juneteenth Organization  
Lawrence Public Library  
League of Women Voters of Lawrence-Douglas County  
LETUS/WAT  
Mayhew Cabin with John Brown's Cave  
Plymouth Congregational Church



*Douglas County Community  
Remembrance Coalition Members  
Organizational members*

St. Luke AME Church  
Sierra Club - Wakarusa Group  
Sunrise Movement – Lawrence  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence  
USD 497, Lawrence Public Schools

*Individual Members*

Samir Arif  
Audrey Cress

*Special thanks to the countless people who have worked long and hard  
over the past five years to make this day a reality.  
We could not be here today without them.*



**LAWRENCE/  
DOUGLAS COUNTY  
COMMUNITY  
REMEMBRANCE  
PROJECT  
COALITION**



The work of the Lawrence/Douglas County Community Remembrance Project Coalition continues on past this historic day of solemn remembrance. We are committed to the ongoing process of bearing witness to the past in the hopes of creating a better future for this community as it fully embraces and celebrates its racial diversity.

Please keep in touch with us and follow our work at: [ldccrp.org](http://ldccrp.org) and Lawrence/Douglas County Community Remembrance Project Coalition on Facebook.

We are grateful to Central Bank of the Midwest for providing refreshments and the use of their parking lot.