



Open Doors, Open Minds

Monmouth Reform Temple

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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monmouth Reform Temple Hosts Bearing Witness Soil Display and Program on March 19 to educate public on only documented lynching in New Jersey

Tinton Falls: Samuel Johnson was born into slavery in 1820 in New Jersey on the property of the Laird family. Once NJ emancipated its slaves in 1840, Mingo Jack worked odd jobs as a free man to support his family. The job of horse trainer earned him the nickname Mingo Joe for the Laid colt, Chief Mingo, he rode to victory at the Monmouth Park racecourse. On March 5, 1886, Samuel Johnson was lynched on what is now Route 35 and Poplar Road in Eatontown. No one was ever held accountable for his murder. Last year, A plaque was raised by the [New Jersey Social Justice Remembrance Coalition](#) (NJSJRC) to bear witness to the only documented lynching in New Jersey. MRT is located at 332 Hance Avenue Tinton Falls, NJ 07724.

On March 19th, 2023, the Monmouth Reform Temple (MRT) will host the kickoff to the (NJSJRC) Bearing Witness Soil Display with a special program at the temple at 3pm. The public is welcome to attend. Samuel Johnson's story will be narrated by Reverend Terrance K Porter, Pastor of the Pilgrim Baptist Church in Red Bank. He will be joined by Rabbi Steve Sirbu of Temple Emeth in Teaneck, NJ. who is an active member of NJSJRC and was instrumental in bringing the soil collection traveling program to the attention of Cantor Gabrielle Clissold at MRT. A soil collection from Wampum Park in Eatontown, the site of Samuel Johnson's lynching, will be on display at the temple from March 19 through the next six weeks, as the display continues its travels throughout the state.

Cantor Clissold comments, "The Jewish social justice organizations, as I, believe that it is important that this story be told as most people only associate the Jim Crow South with terrorist lynchings. No one really knows that this happened in New Jersey too, and in our own backyard. We are determined to convey that this man's life was not in vain. And as history is our teacher, its purpose is that it not repeat its atrocities. In Judaism, we believe that if you save one life, you save the world. We hold witness to all injustice. And how can we expect people to learn about the horrors of the Holocaust if we are not just as concerned about all people who were tortured and murdered out of racism and xenophobia."

The NJSJRC is a coalition partner of the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) who is bringing awareness to terrorism lynchings throughout the country through its Community Remembrance Project.