

Public Meeting: Springfield 1908 Race Riot National Monument

6:00-7:30pm, June 10, 2024

Union Baptist Church, 1405 E. Monroe St.
Springfield, Illinois

TELL PRESIDENT BIDEN: DESIGNATE A 1908 SPRINGFIELD RACE RIOT NATIONAL MONUMENT

Our History. In August 1908, a White mob attacked and lynched Black residents of Springfield, Illinois, and burned their homes within blocks of the former home of Abraham Lincoln. As one of the country's worst examples of mass racial violence, the Springfield Race Riot generated outrage, leading to, with the help of Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909.

Proposed National Park. The City of Springfield and the HSHS St. John's Hospital have pledged to donate land to establish a National Park (designated as a National Monument) to mark the events of the 1908 Springfield Race Riots. This National Monument would include objects of historic interest including the foundations of Black homes that were burned in the riot.

- **We urge President Biden to designate a National Monument in Springfield through the Antiquities Act to acknowledge this terrible chapter in our history and to help our nation heal and learn.**
- **Highlighting this story with a national monument designation allows the National Park Service to tell a fuller account of American history.**
- **Designation as a National Monument will help fill a critical gap in the National Park System, which currently does not have parks that tell the story of race riots or the founding of the NAACP.**
- **A National Monument designation should preserve the objects of historic interest including the foundations of the Black homes and businesses destroyed in the riots.**
- **A National Monument designation is the first step in getting a memorial at the site of the riots.**

The monument enjoys broad support

- In 2020, Congress passed bipartisan legislation to authorize a Special Resource Study. The National Park Service study found that the site meets criteria to be added to the Park System.
- In 2020, Department of Interior Secretary David Bernhardt added the site to the African American Civil Rights Network.
- In August 2022, a public meeting, one step in the Special Resource Study process, was held in Springfield, with a broad show of community support for a National Monument.



The Springfield site would be the first national park to tell the story of Ida B. Wells-Barnett (pictured above). Her famous 1908 speech, "Lynching Our National Crime," addressed the tragic events in Springfield. The Springfield site holds objects of historic interest including the remaining foundations of Black homes (pictured right) that help document these tragic events and tell a fuller story of American history.

Contact: James Bass, Springfield NAACP (jbass1452@gmail.com) or Ken Page, Springfield ACLU (kenpage1@comcast.net)

Monument Supporters

- American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois - Springfield Chapter
- Black Lives Matter Springfield
- Delta Sigma Theta - Springfield-Decatur Area Alumni Chapter
- Fever River Research
- Lincoln Presidential Foundation
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- National Religious Partnership for the Environment
- Prince Hall Masons of Central Lodge #3
- Sierra Club
- Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum
- Coalition to Protect America's National Parks
- Springfield Urban League



A National Monument, part of the US National Park System, is a protected area that preserves historic landmarks, structures and other sites of historic and scientific interest. Currently, there are just over 130 National Monuments.