

Chatham Commissioners Apologize For 1921 Lynching

By Administrator

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On September 20, 2021, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a resolution formally apologizing for any participation by a Chatham County elected or appointed official in the 1921 lynching of Eugene Daniel.

On September 18, 1921, Daniel, who was 16 years old, was unlawfully taken from the Chatham County jail in Pittsboro and lynched by a mob of residents on the basis of an unsubstantiated allegation. Daniel was denied the opportunity to present his defense and his constitutional right to a fair trial.

There is evidence that a Chatham County Commissioner, the Chatham County Sheriff, the Chatham County Coroner, and the Chatham County Jail Keeper were complicit in the perpetration of Daniel's lynching. No suspects were ever investigated or prosecuted.

The Board of Commissioners hopes to publicly acknowledge these facts and offer a formal apology for the heinous acts committed against Daniel.

"The lynching of Eugene Daniel is a painful part of Chatham County's history, and while our apology can't change what happened, we feel it is an important step in helping his family and our entire community heal," said Chatham County Commissioner Karen Howard, who read the resolution. "I am deeply grateful for my fellow commissioners and our supportive staff who helped make this happen. Taking actions like this demonstrates our steadfast commitment to make the Chatham community a better place today – and welcoming to everyone."

Lynching was a form of terrorism in the United States, practiced predominantly against African Americans, that claimed thousands of lives. Nearly all of those involved in these lynchings went unpunished.