

New marker will remember lynching of Marietta's past  
State historical marker, near Roswell Road and Frey's Gin Court, to remember the 1915 lynching of Leo Frank

By [TUCKER MCQUEEN](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 03/07/08

A group —many wearing no place for hate stickers— met in Marietta today to remember the place where Leo Frank was lynched nine decades ago.

About 50 government, civic and religious leaders attended the unveiling of a state historical marker that tells Frank's story. The sign was recently placed in a grass island near an I-75 bridge over Roswell Road at Frey's Gin Court.

Frank, the Jewish superintendent of the National Pencil Factory in Atlanta, was convicted in the 1913 murder of 13-year-old factory worker Mary Phagan. After Gov. John M. Slaton commuted his death sentence two years later, a group of prominent Marietta residents abducted Frank from the state prison in Milledgeville. They drove him to Marietta, where Phagan had lived, and hung him in an oak grove belonging to a county sheriff. Frank was granted a posthumous pardon in 1986.

Recognition from the state was a long time coming, said Rabbi Steven Lebow of Temple Kol Emeth in east Cobb. Lebow placed brass plaques on an office building at the site in 1995 and 2005, the 80th and 90th anniversaries of Frank's death. "This is an unfortunate part of Marietta's history, but it needs to be remembered," Lebow said. "For Jews, memory is the beginning of redemption."

Georgia Historical Society spokesman Stan Deaton said the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation applied for the marker in 2005. He said the application was approved immediately, but the group had to find local support —the Anti Defamation League and Temple Kol Emeth— before placing the marker. The Savannah based historical society took over the marker program after the state privatized it 10 years ago.

"Markers sometimes draw attention to ugly parts of our past," said Deaton. "But we gain nothing in understanding by ignoring the past."

Bill Nigut, Southeast Regional Director of the Anti-Defamation League, said "it's a great day when we can remember the worst that hatred can produce and how far we have come."