

# “We Drew a Map to a Better Place”

Emily Cunningham, Natalie Hawkins, Laneisha Jeans, Daniel Miller  
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## Introduction

The purpose of this poster is to provide a visual representation of the lynching of Frazier Baker, as well as demonstrate significant places of interest regarding the case. Frazier B. Baker, was the first black postmaster in South Carolina. He was lynched in 1898 after refusing to resign from his government position. One primary objective was identifying the location of the case. Rather than being positioned exactly where the lynching occurred, the marker is roughly a mile or so away, closer to the center of Lake City. A major issue we encountered when locating this site was that the location of the marker gives the wrong impression. Research regarding this incident is scattered, and some documents are inconsistent. Looking at various maps made the research more clear, as well as reading old documents. Identifying the correct location of an archaeological site is vital in any archaeological process. Our research and data revolves around the location of the lynching, and any other possible relative areas.

## Significance

After conducting research on the events surrounding the murder and lynching of Frazier B. Baker and the attack on his family, one of the main conclusions that was drawn is that the historical marker that was placed on the corner of Deep River and S Church St in Lake City, South Carolina honoring the site where the lynching took place is in the wrong location. Our research supports the idea that the events happened near the corner of Lake and N Church St. at the edge of town. The documentation of the events was contradictory at times and upon investigation it was discovered that the location of the Baker family home and post office where Frazier and his baby Julia were murdered was at a different location than where the historical marker currently resides. The archaeological research conducted thus far has provided a visual representation and aerial view connecting the significant points of interest involved in this case, and has helped to untangle the misdocumented information about the locations of each of the sites being observed.

## Research Methods

Research begun by asking the question of where the lynching of Baker took place, and if there are any other areas of interest involved with the case. The Greater St. James A.M.E church location was the first point of interest to be researched. By finding the churches' original location, the location of Baker's post office was then identified. After searching the church's website and looking through the records of Sanborn Insurance Fire maps, it was discovered that the location was the Greater St. James A.M.E. Comparing the Sanborn maps with Google maps helped define the concurrent locations of the points of interest. The fire maps displayed the town in 1913. There are buildings that have been taken down or renovated over time, and that had to be considered during this study. Researching this case took plenty of digging and thinking outside of the box. Interviews from Baker's wife and remaining living children helped identify some of the locations. For instance, Baker's wife states the dimensions of the home they lived in, as well as being across from the railroad tracks. As shown in *Figure #1*, the railroad that is mentioned runs through the center of Lake City. Taking Lavinia's (Baker's wife) statement and translating it aided in identifying that the historical marker was not at the site of the crime.

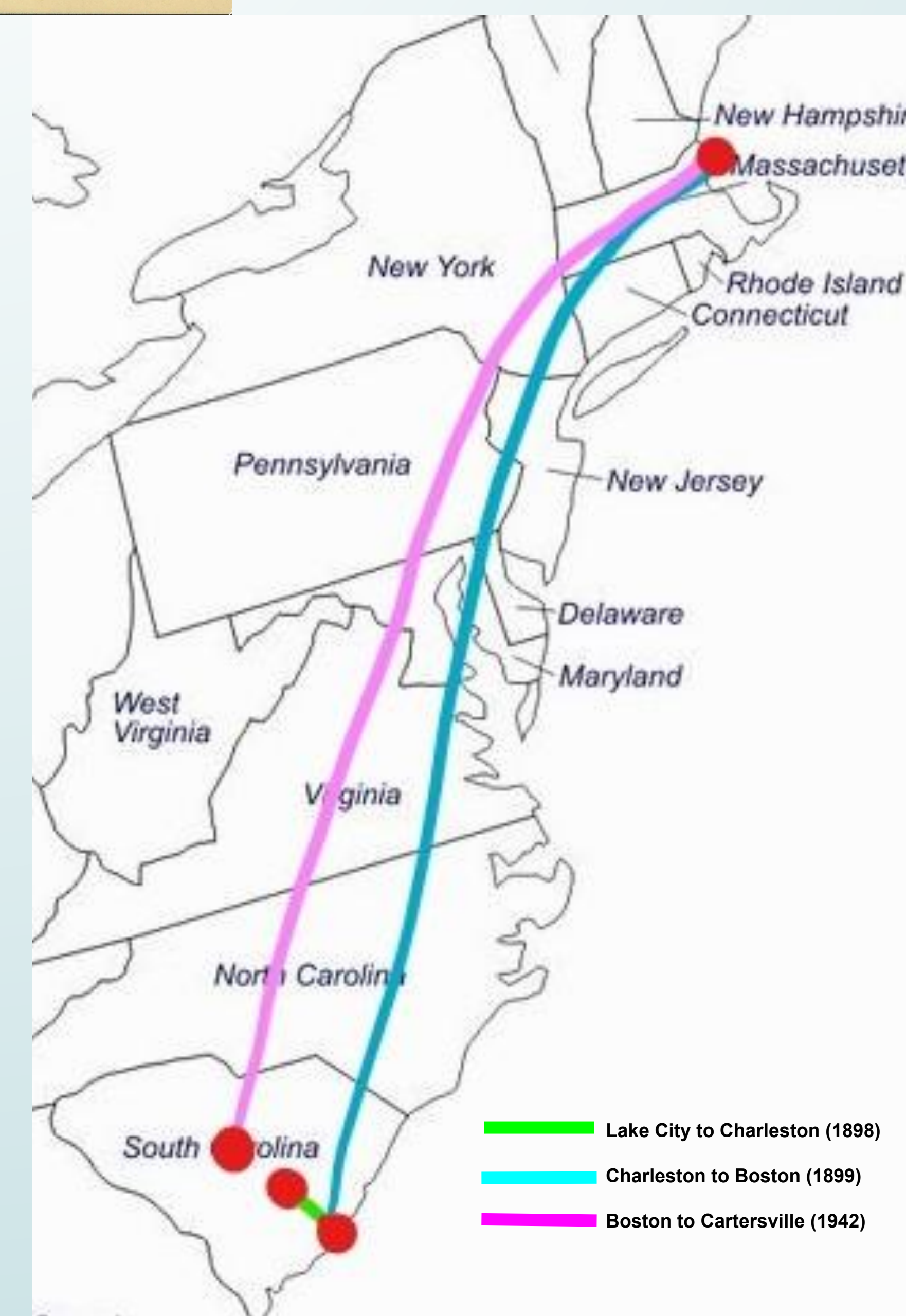


Figure #1

Two days after the lynching of Frazier and death of the youngest child Julia, his wife Lavinia and the surviving children moved from Lake City to Charleston, South Carolina. They stayed there until the trail was settled. In June of 1899, the family moved all the way up north to Boston, Massachusetts. The Bakers spent the next 40 years there. Unfortunately, Lavinia outlived all her children and returned alone to South Carolina in 1942.



Charleston Federal Courthouse, where the lynch mob members' trial was held. (rs.locationshub.com)



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