

THE VOICE

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FOR STUDENTS, BY STUDENTS

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The legacy of abolitionist Lewis Leary

By John Caldwell
Voice staff writer

What connection does the immortal abolitionist John Brown have to Fayetteville State University? He led 21 men on the U.S. Arsenal raid at Harpers Ferry, Va. in 1859 with the intention of emancipating enslaved black people, an event many historians say was a strong catalyst for, and precursor to the Civil War.

And how does this man connect to a recently erected state historical marker on Murchison Road and the Harlem Renaissance poet and playwright Langston Hughes.

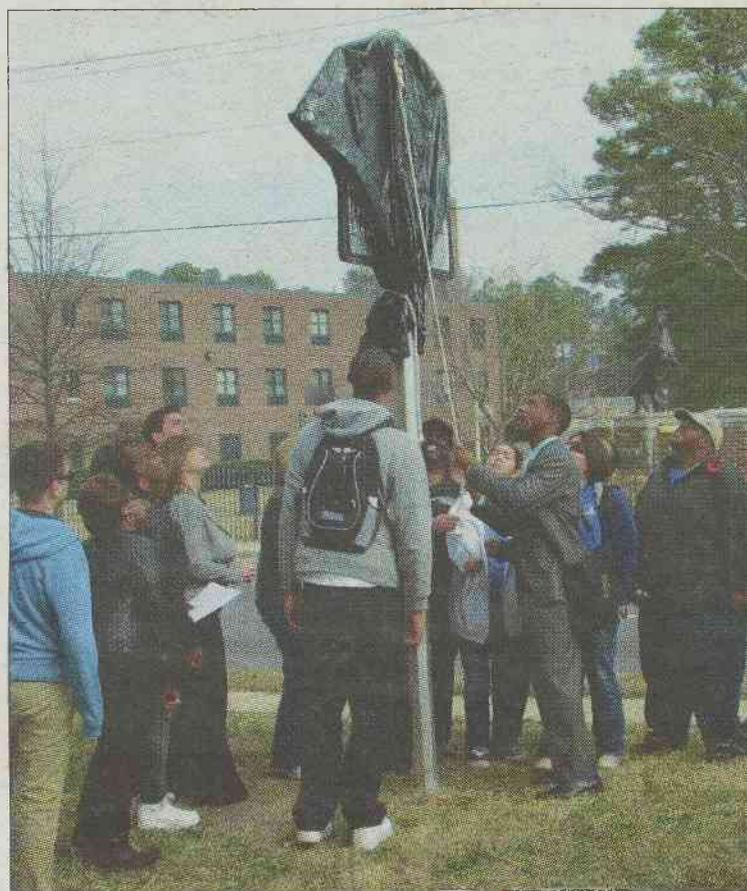
Woven amidst the quilt of history binding these people and events is the name Lewis Sheridan Leary. Lewis Leary was born free in Fayetteville in 1835 to Mathew N. Leary, Sr., a very successful business owner and Juliette Anna Memorial. Lewis Leary and his six siblings, including older broth-



er Mathew Leary, Jr, were educated by private tutors. Mathew Leary, Jr. is one of the Founding Fathers of FSU.

In 1856, 21-year-old Lewis Leary sought refuge in Oberlin, Ohio after committing a serious offense of beating a white man. He had seen the man savagely attack an enslaved black and intervened and fled the law. Lewis Leary joined several of his sisters and became a member of the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society. He married Mary Patterson in 1858, who bore him a daughter named Lois. He participated in late 1858, with the rescue of a runaway slave imprisoned in Wellington, Ohio.

At 24, Lewis Leary was introduced to John Brown by abolitionist John Mercer Langston, and declared himself "ready to die if need be" under John Brown's leadership according to the NC Department of Cultural Resources. John Brown and his band of men to include his two sons and Lewis Leary began



Voice photo by John Caldwell

FSU students unveil the Lewis Leary historical marker located at the corner of Murchison Road and Washington Street during a ceremony for Black History Month, Feb. 24.

their campaign, attacking the armory on October 16, 1859. John Brown's plan was to arm the enslaved Blacks with the weapons seized from the armory to begin a war of liberation, first in Virginia, and then across the south.

Two days later, Lewis Leary demonstrated the pledged commitment with the ultimate sacrifice, giving his life in the effort to secure for so many others what he had enjoyed his entire life - that is freedom for the enslaved Americans.

"The raid on Harpers Ferry sent a signal to pro-slavery southerners that there were 'madmen' in the North that would use organized

violence against slavery," says Dr. Claude Hargrove, a professor of history at FSU. "Extreme repression of African-Americans, and enslavement of African-Americans called for extreme actions - the Civil War was extreme action with over 700,000 people dying during the war."

An historical marker recognizing Lewis Leary's connection to John Brown and the raid was unveiled during Black History Month on Feb. 24 on the corner of Murchison Road and Washington Street. FSU hosted the dedication ceremony, which was attended by FSU stu-

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'Where are we going?'

MLK book rings true 43 years after his assassination

By John Caldwell
Voice staff writer

"These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wombs of a frail world new systems of justice and equality are being born...Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit and go out into a sometimes hostile world declaring eternal opposition to poverty, racism and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores...," wrote Dr. Martin Luther King.

"Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?"

It was a question on the mind of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. more than 44 years ago, when he penned and titled his final book. It is also a question on the minds of many people today, in light of revolutionary movements around the world.

Beacon Press re-released the book last year, and Monday the country marked the 43rd anniversary of Dr. King's assassination.

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