



## MENCKEN & LYNCHINGS

**On Tuesday, March 27, Marion Elizabeth Rodgers, author of “Mencken: The American Iconoclast”, will speak on the man who was known as the “Baron of Baltimore”, H. L. Mencken. Her remarks will focus on Mencken’s writings concerning lynchings, writings that in 1934 would lead to the Nation magazine placing Mencken on its Honor Role of the Nation for his denunciation of them.**

On December 4, 1931, on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, an African American named Matthew Williams was arrested for the murder of his employer. Hours later, a mob descended on Salisbury hospital where he had been taken, seized Williams and dragged him to the courthouse green where he was lynched. The event, as well as what he perceived to be the “cowardice” of the Eastern Shore press shocked and revolted the Baltimore Sunpapers’ most famous columnist, H. L. Mencken. The columns he would write, the campaign that he would help lead, led to cancelled newspaper subscriptions, advertiser boycotts, and threats to Mencken’s very life. When a second lynching would take place several years later in Maryland, he would join forces with Clarence Mitchell of the NAACP to promote the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill. Years later, when someone asked him about the continuing animosity of the Eastern Shore towards him, Mencken responded in his typical style saying “Inasmuch as I had no desire to be admired by morons I let the Shoremen howl.”

**Place:** Mitchell Courthouse – 100 North Calvert Street – Room 504, entrance on Lexington Street between St. Paul and Calvert Streets, followed by a wine and cheese reception in the Bar Library (Room 618, Mitchell Courthouse).

**Time:** 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 27, 2012, with a wine & cheese reception immediately following in the Main Reading Room of the Bar Library.

**Invitees:** Members of the Library Company of the Baltimore Bar, judges, employees of Baltimore City and its courts, courthouse employees, government lawyers, public interest lawyers, law librarians, law and college faculty and students. Others may attend on payment of a \$20 admission charge or upon application for Bar Library membership.

**R.S.V.P.:** If you would like to attend telephone the Library at 410-727-0280 or reply by e-mail to [jwbennett@barlib.org](mailto:jwbennett@barlib.org)