

New memorial unveiled on centennial of racial mass killing in Arkansas



Little Rock, October 2 (RHC)-- This week marks the 100th anniversary of the Elaine massacre, when white vigilantes in Arkansas massacred hundreds of African Americans in one of the deadliest incidents of racial violence in U.S. history.

The massacre began after Black sharecroppers attempted to organize with the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America to demand higher pay for cotton.

On October 2, 1919, a group of white men, some of whom may have been affiliated with local law enforcement, fired shots into the church where the Black sharecroppers were meeting.

Rumors arose that the sharecroppers were leading an organized “insurrection” against the white residents of Phillips County. Governor Charles Brough called for 500 soldiers from nearby Camp Pike to, as the Arkansas Democrat reported, “round up” the “heavily armed negroes.”

The troops were “under order to shoot to kill any negro who refused to surrender immediately.” They went well beyond that, banding together with local vigilantes and killing at least 200 African-Americans (estimates run much higher -- some saying more than 800 -- but there was never a full accounting). And

the killing was indiscriminate, with hundreds of Black women and children among the victims of the slaughter.

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