

Elaine Riot Project: The Event

On the evening of September 30, 1919, a group of sharecroppers (men, women and children) met at a black church at Hoop Spur, Arkansas to discuss problems they had trying to get a fair price for their cotton crops which they were in the midst of harvesting. Merchants and planters, who "furnished" sharecroppers and tenant farmers with seed, fertilizer, equipment, etc. in exchange for portions of the farmers' crops, insisted on buying the cotton of black farmers at a price far below market value. To combat this problem, black farmers (men and women) joined the Progressive Farmers' and Household Union and began organizing to buy land, through a cooperative venture, and to hire legal representation to fight the efforts of merchants and planters to secure the farmers' crops without fair compensation. At the meeting, leaders of the organization explained the purpose of the union and signed up new recruits. Fearing possible trouble, the farmers posted armed guards outside the church. After night fell, an automobile stopped outside the church and shots were fired through the windows and into the congregation. A fire fight between the white men (in at least one automobile) and the black farmers ensued. A white railroad detective was killed in the exchange and an unknown number of people in the church were killed and wounded. News of the battle spread throughout Phillips County and a general alarm was sounded among whites that blacks in the region were seeking to kill white people. The slaughter of African Americans in Phillips County that followed the battle at Hoop Spur, or the "Elaine Riot," was cast by the press as a defensive act against an "uprising" of blacks against whites in the region. The story of what happened to the black cotton farmers took on a life of its own.

October 1-2, 1919

["Serious Race Riot Near Helena--Troops Enroute"10/1](#)

["Big Race Riot on in S. Arkansas"10/1](#)

["Seven Unidentified Negroes wounded"10/1](#)

["J.S. Bratton, Jr. is Charged With Inciting Blacks" part 1 10/2](#)

[J.S. Bratton, Jr. is Charged with inciting Blacks" part 2](#)

["10 Dead, Dozen Hurt, Race War At Elaine: ARK." part 1 10/2](#)

["10 Dead, Dozen Hurt, Race War At Elaine: ARK." part 2](#)

["10 Dead, Dozen Hurt, Race War At Elaine: ARK." part 3](#)

October 3-4, 1919

["Helena Alderman, Former Jonesboro Man, Killed Today"10/3](#)

["Gov. Brough and Col. Jenks Fired on at Elaine; Five More Killed" 10/3](#)
[headline "Gov. Brough and Col. Jenks . . ."](#)

["There is not trouble in Helena at this time. . . ."10/3](#)

["Five hundreds soldiers arrived at Elaine. . . ."10/3](#)

["Federal Troops Have Situation Under Control"10/3](#)

["Federal Troops . . . " part 2](#)

[". . .about a dozen are"](#)

["500 Camp Pike Soldiers Sent to Quell Riot" 10/3](#)

["500 Camp Pike Soldiers Sent to Quell Riot" part 2](#)

["Six More Are Killed In Arkansas Riots" 10/3](#)

["Proclamation Is Addressed To Negroes"](#)

["Three Whites, Eleven Negroes Killed In Race Fights"](#)

["Elaine Race Riot Premature Burst, Was Set for Later"](#)

["Deaths In Phillips County War Now Total 22"](#)

["Deaths" cont' "...deputy sheriffs"](#)

["Eleven More Die in Arkansas Riots"](#)

["Total Dead in Elaine Riot 22"](#)

["Son Innocent, Says Father of Bratton"](#)

["Son Innocent" part 2 "...several days later"](#)

["Negroes Have Been Aroused By Propaganda"](#)

["Negroes Have" part 2](#)

["Negroes Inflamed By A White Man"](#)

["26 Killed Elaine Says Governor"](#)

["Blacks Headed By Man Suspected as Leader In Recent Trouble"](#)

[". . .ing all the trouble here"](#)

["Vicious Blacks Were Planning Great Uprising"](#)

[". . . tots from negroes in the"](#)

["No Lynching In Phillips County"](#)

["Disturbances on Wane Except for Round-Up Work"](#)

["Phillips County Affair Gets On Peoples Nerves"](#)

["Nine Persons Dead in Arkansas Riots"](#)

["Wynne's Citizens Plead For Troops To Prevent Riots"](#)

["Ring Leader Arrested"](#)

October 5-9, 1919

["Big Uprising Was Plotted"](#)

["Today Was Set For Big Uprising"](#)

["Troop Cordon Around 35 Sq. Mile Area To Capture Negro Desperadoes"](#)

["Phillips County Quiet Today--Designing Negro Led Plot to Make Money"](#)

["Frank Hicks"](#)

["Insurrection Was Planned Says Committee of Seven"](#)

["Arkansas Blacks Plotted To Kill White Residents"](#)

["Arkansas Negroes In Gigantic Plot" \(cont'\)](#)

["Young Arkansas Negro Blamed for Race Riot" 1](#)

["Young Arkansas Negro Blamed For Race Riot"](#)

["Plotters Behind The Plots"](#)

["Instigator of Negro Plot Leaves Arkansas"](#)

["Troops Recalled from Riot Duty"](#)

October 10-29, 1919

["Four Negroes Held As Leaders of Elaine Trouble"10/10](#)

[Helena Committee Says Bratton is 'Not In Danger'"](#)

["Lays Riot To Cotton Row"](#)

["21 Indicted for Elaine Race Riot"10/29](#)

November

["Hundred Negroes To Be Tried This Week For Murder"11/3](#)

["18 Negroes Go On Trial in Helena"11/4](#)

["37 Rioters of Elaine Given Prison Terms"11/6](#)

["Helena Court Sends Eleven Negroes to Chair and Fifty-Four Other to Penitentiary"11/8](#)

["Two Negroes Are Arested At New Orleans, Confess"11/10](#)

["Eleven Negroes Are Sentenced to Death Over Elaine Rioting"11/11](#)

["Rumor of Intended Race Riot is Strongly Denied By Negroes" 11/28](#)

January 1920

["12 Elaine Negroes Are Given Stays"1/10](#)

February 1920

["ARK. Negroes Ask for Hill"](#)

March 1920

["Petition Asking For Extradition of Elaine Uprising Leader Refused" 3/25](#)

May 3, 1920

["Phillip"Phillips Co. Negroes Lose Their Cases"](#)

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