

By: Veasey

H.R. No. 865

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, The year 2010 marked the centennial of the Slocum
2 massacre, a horrific incident in our state's history and one that is
3 deserving of attention and discussion; and

4 WHEREAS, In the summer of 1910, racial tensions were running
5 high in East Texas after the lynching of an African American in
6 Cherokee County and the subsequent rumors of unrest among area
7 blacks; in the small community of Slocum, in Anderson County, the
8 atmosphere grew more heated when a dispute arose between an African
9 American resident and a white man over an unpaid debt; around the
10 same time, several whites in the area had become incensed over what
11 they viewed as inappropriate behavior by certain blacks; in late
12 July, these factors combined to touch off a violent and deadly
13 attack; and

14 WHEREAS, A mob of white men brandishing rifles, shotguns, and
15 pistols descended on Slocum and began firing on unarmed African
16 Americans; the attackers were estimated to number as many as 1,000
17 people, and their bloody rampage took a heavy toll; the murder of
18 eight people was confirmed, and reports indicated that many more
19 may have died in what became known as the Slocum massacre; and

20 WHEREAS, The incident was reported in newspapers across the
21 nation, and Texas Rangers and state militia were sent to the area to
22 prevent further bloodshed; an investigation by an Anderson County
23 grand jury overseen by Judge B. H. Gardner of Palestine led to the
24 indictment of seven people, including Jim Spurger, who was believed

1 to have been a prime instigator in the attacks; because of the
2 emotions surrounding the case, Judge Gardner moved the trial to
3 Harris County, but it was there that the wheels of justice stopped
4 turning; the prosecuting attorney never brought the case to trial,
5 and no one was ever convicted of the crimes; and

6 WHEREAS, In Slocum, the African American survivors mourned
7 their lost friends and loved ones and lived in fear of further
8 violence; ultimately, many of them chose to move away, abandoning
9 homes, stores, and farms; ancestors of the Hollie family suffered
10 the loss of one son and the wounding of another, and they were
11 forced to abandon property that included a home, a store, and
12 several hundred acres of farmland; and

13 WHEREAS, The event wreaked devastation in the lives of
14 African Americans living in the area, yet it has since been largely
15 ignored, receiving no formal acknowledgment by state or local
16 officials and little coverage in historical accounts of the era;
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Only by shining a light on previous injustices can
19 we learn from them and move toward a future of greater healing and
20 reconciliation; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
22 Legislature hereby acknowledge the Slocum massacre of 1910.