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Minnie Langley, 83 Sought Recompense for Racist Rampage

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Minnie Lee Langley, an early and persistent leader in the effort to have the State of Florida compensate survivors of a white mob's rampage in the black settlement of Rosewood, Fla., in 1923, died on Saturday at a hospital in Jacksonville, Fla. She was 83 and lived in Jacksonville.

She had cancer surgery earlier in the week, her family said.

Mrs. Langley was one of the few remaining witnesses to one of the worst episodes of racial violence in Florida history. A white mob, looking for a black man accused of assaulting a white woman, was responsible for a week of burning and shooting that left at least six Rosewood residents dead and the hamlet in ruins. Two white men were also killed.

Mrs. Langley and eight other survivors received some satisfaction last year when Gov. Lawton Chiles, a Democrat, signed a bill recognizing the depravity of the event and authorizing \$150,000 in compensation for each of them. She was the lead witness in the legislative hearings, providing vivid testimony about the destruction of Rosewood. In the end, the state acknowledged that the authorities, from Gov. Cary Hardee on down, had failed to protect the hamlet's residents.

Mrs. Langley was one of several children staying in an uncle's home when the mob closed in on a January night. They escaped through a rear door and hid shivering in the woods for several days. The mob never found the man it was looking for, and doubt remains whether any white woman had been attacked.

After moving to Jacksonville in 1926, Mrs. Langley made a living making brooms and brushes.

She is survived by a son, Anthony H. and a daughter, Dorothy Smith, both of Jacksonville; 10 grandchildren and 24 great-grandchildren.