

Talmadge part of lynching re-enactment: 07/24/07

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A new character will be introduced into an annual drama recreating a horrific 1946 lynching on a Walton County bridge: Gov. Eugene Talmadge.

Recently released FBI files indicate that the agency investigated the possibility that Talmadge may have played a role in inciting the murders of two black couples on the Moore's Ford Bridge in Monroe.

State Rep. Tyrone Brooks (D-Atlanta) said the third annual dramatization will take place Wednesday at the site, featuring Talmadge for the first time due to his "very prominent role in inciting violence." Brooks' group, the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, is staging the re-enactment to bring attention to the still-unsolved crime.

Brooks said Talmadge's "racist rhetoric, fiery oratory" incited the violence that led to the murders of George and Mae Murray Dorsey and Dorothy and Roger Malcom on July 25, 1946.

A gubernatorial race that summer had been rife with the race-baiting typical of that era in the Jim Crow South. Talmadge, a three-term governor, had visited Monroe during the campaign shortly after a fight in which a black sharecropper had stabbed and wounded a white farmer. The sharecropper, Roger Malcom, was one of the four people who would later be lynched.

According to an Associated Press review of the FBI files, a witness reported that Talmadge visited the farmer's brother and offered immunity to anyone "taking care of negro." Shortly after the primary election, the Malcoms and Dorseys were riding in a car across the Apalachee River when they were stopped by a white mob. The African-American couples were dragged from their car into the woods, tied to trees and shot to death. Dorothy Malcom was seven months pregnant. Despite investigations by local authorities, the GBI and the FBI, no one has ever been arrested for the crime.

Brooks noted that there is still a \$27,000 reward for anyone who provides information leading to an arrest in the Moore's Ford Bridge case. He said there are still suspects alive in the area.