

BEATEN ON REFUSAL TO SALUTE THE FLAG

61 of 'Jehovah's Witnesses' Attacked in Illinois Town and Taken to Jail

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LITCHFIELD, Ill., June 16—Sixty-one members of "Jehovah's Witnesses," a religious sect, were rushed to the city jail here this morning when aroused townspeople attacked them and overturned or destroyed sixteen automobiles after sect members had refused to salute the flag.

Chief of Police George W. Taylor was forced to ask assistance from Sheriff Leo Gilliland of nearby Hillsboro, Montgomery County, when a crowd of townsfolk estimated at 1,000 milled threateningly around the little jail. State highway policemen under Lieutenant Raymond May also hurried to the scene.

Residents asserted that the sect had been warned on four or five previous occasions to remain away from Litchfield. One woman said that the American Legion had run members of the group out of town about a week ago. Efforts of the sect to hire a hall for a meeting have been balked.

Literature, entitled "Religion as a World Remedy," was burned in the streets today. Thirteen cars were driven to a vacant lot and overturned. Three others were driven into an old reservoir. One member of the sect is said to have been beaten until he kissed the flag.

The sect's cavalcade of cars, most of which bore Missouri license plates, arrived in town about 10 A. M. Indignant citizens began phoning the authorities within a few moments as the "Witnesses" rang doorbells and began distributing pamphlets, some of which merely advertised a coming national convention of the sect.

A woman resident said that she had phoned the police and had been told that "the Legion and others are out rounding them up."

A short while later there were fist fights in the northeast part of town, a residential section, as four or five men of the sect's group stoutly refused to salute the flag. The entire group was in jail by about 11 A. M.

A few of the "Witnesses," about half of whom were women, were scratched or bruised. So far as could be learned there were no serious injuries. The major damage was done to the autos, many of which were nearly new.