



A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE · RESEARCH

TULSA 21

RESEARCH DOSSIER

Tulsa 21 – Research dossier on the massacre event and related history

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INTRODUCTION

Rather than a huge (and possibly too detailed) document I have chosen to bring out some interesting facts that may not generally be known in the public domain and also to address pertinent questions regarding the history of Tulsa

References to key sources are provided. David Gardner comments of his own are stated where relevant and intended to bring context to the background and reality of this complex and pertinent part of American history. I have also tried to feature some of the less well known aspects leading up to and after the Tulsa massacre, the worst outbreak of racist violence in the history of America.

The structure of the dossier is compiled with a view to chronological order.

SECTION 1

01

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY AND THE SO-CALLED “JIM CROW LAWS”

Following the famous act in UK that abolished slavery in 1833, years later the USA abolished slavery in 1865 with the 13th amendment to the constitution. It stated the following :-

"Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

DAVID GARDNER COMMENTS : From so many of the interviews made with survivors and the comments of independent journalists of recent times, far from liberating African Americans many of the whites then resented seeing them having the right to vote and wanted to see a way of keeping them down with continuing servitude and oppression. They wanted to find a way around this change to the legal status of African Americans.

Reconstruction (1865-1877), the turbulent era following the Civil War, was the effort to reintegrate Southern states from the Confederacy and 4 million newly- freed people into the United States. Under the administration of President Andrew Johnson in 1865 and 1866, new southern state legislatures passed restrictive “Black Codes” to control the labor and behavior of former enslaved people and other African Americans.

Outrage in the North over these codes eroded support for the approach known as Presidential Reconstruction and led to the triumph of the more radical wing of the Republican Party. During Radical Reconstruction, which began with the passage of the Reconstruction Act of 1867, newly enfranchised Black people gained a voice in government for the first time in American history, winning election to southern state legislatures and even to the U.S. Congress. In less than a decade, however, reactionary forces—including the Ku Klux Klan—would reverse the changes wrought by Radical Reconstruction in a violent backlash that restored white supremacy in the South.

REF : History.com Editors

KKK FOUNDED 1865 DECEMBER 24

In Pulaski, Tennessee, a group of Confederate veterans convenes to form a secret society that they christen the “Ku Klux Klan.” The KKK rapidly grew from a secret social fraternity to a paramilitary force bent on reversing the federal government’s progressive Reconstruction era-activities in the South, especially policies that elevated the rights of the local Black population.

The name of the Ku Klux Klan was derived from the Greek word *kyklos*, meaning “circle,” and the Scottish-Gaelic word “clan,” which was probably chosen for the sake of alliteration. Under a platform of philosophized white racial superiority, the group employed violence as a means of pushing back Reconstruction and its enfranchisement of African Americans. Former Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest was the KKK’s first grand wizard. In 1869, he unsuccessfully tried to disband it after he grew critical of the Klan’s excessive violence.

Most prominent in counties where the races were relatively equal in number, the KKK engaged in terrorist raids against African Americans and white Republicans at night, employing intimidation, destruction of property, assault, and murder to achieve its aims and influence upcoming elections.

In a few Southern states, Republicans organized militia units to break up the Klan. In 1871, the Ku Klux Act passed by Congress, authorizing President Ulysses S. Grant to use military force to suppress the KKK. The Ku Klux Act resulted in nine South Carolina counties being placed under martial law and thousands of arrests. In 1882, the U.S. Supreme Court declared the Ku Klux Act unconstitutional, but by that time Reconstruction had ended and the KKK receded for the time being.

The 20th century witnessed two revivals of the KKK: one in response to immigration in the 1910s and ’20s, and another in response to the African American civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s. Various chapters of the KKK still exist in the 21st century. White supremacist violence, in general, is again on the rise in America. Several high profile events, including the 2015 Charleston church shooting; the 2017 "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia; the 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting; and the 2019 shooting in an El Paso, Texas Walmart were all fueled by white supremacy and racism.

REF : History.com editors

DAVID GARDNER COMMENTS : It is worthy of note that there has been a strong relationship between the KKK and the masons. The founder of the KKK was a mason and senior politicians throughout the years have been masons with links to the KKK. George Washington himself was a mason. The majority of masons however are completely unaware of the ultimate goals and beliefs at the top of the masons’ hierarchical structure. The masons adopted the Latin motto that reads as “Ordo ab chao” meaning ‘Order out of Chaos ‘ with an end goal of a New World Order in which they are masters and organisers of a global network. At the top of the pyramid and above the 33rd degree I believe they hold dear the idea (in secret) that Lucifer is the brother of Jesus Christ and is the one to be worshiped.



Jim Crow laws were a collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation. Named after a Black minstrel show character, the laws—which existed for about 100 years, from the post-Civil War era until 1968—were meant to marginalize African Americans by denying them the right to vote, hold jobs, get an education or other opportunities. Those who attempted to defy Jim Crow laws often faced arrest, fines, jail sentences, violence and death.

The roots of Jim Crow laws began as early as 1865, immediately following the ratification of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States.

Black codes were strict local and state laws that detailed when, where and how formerly enslaved people could work, and for how much compensation. The codes appeared throughout the South as a legal way to put Black citizens into indentured servitude, to take voting rights away, to control where they lived and how they traveled and to seize children for labor purposes.

The legal system was stacked against Black citizens, with former Confederate soldiers working as police and judges, making it difficult for African Americans to win court cases and ensuring they were subject to Black codes.

The post-World War II era saw an increase in civil rights activities in the African American community, with a focus on ensuring that Black citizens were able to vote. This ushered in the civil rights movement, resulting in the removal of Jim Crow laws.

In 1948 President Harry Truman ordered integration in the military, and in 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that educational segregation was unconstitutional, bringing to an end the era of “separate-but-equal” education.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which legally ended the segregation that had been institutionalized by Jim Crow laws.

And in 1965, the Voting Rights Act halted efforts to keep minorities from voting. The Fair Housing Act of 1968, which ended discrimination in renting and selling homes, followed.

Jim Crow laws were technically off the books, though that has not always guaranteed full integration or adherence to anti-racism laws throughout the United States.

REF: Editors of History.com

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : So many African Americans had moved up to the so-called “Indian territories” and became entitled to land allotment. They saw a real chance for freedom but this was all to change when Oklahoma became a State in 1907 and evidently white supremacy was again a dominant force with racist hatred and lynchings along the way.

SECTION 2

02

WORLD WAR 1

When war broke out in Europe in 1914, Americans were very reluctant to get involved and remained neutral for the better part of the war. The United States only declared war when Germany renewed its oceanic attacks that affected international shipping, in April 1917. African Americans, who had participated in every military conflict since the inception of the United States, enlisted and prepared for involvement. However, many of those who enlisted or were drafted found themselves in noncombative support roles. Many African Americans served under the Services of Supply section of the American Expeditionary Forces. This section comprised of stevedore, labor, and engineers service battalions and companies. The main function of these companies was to support and provide materials to other companies along the front.

The notable exception were the soldiers who fought on the front lines in the 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions. The 369th Infantry Regiment, known as the Harlem Hellfighters, were assigned to the French Army in April 1918. In this post the Hellfighters saw much action, fighting in the Second Battle of the Marne, as well as the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. For his valiant and brave actions during World War I, Private Henry Johnson became the first American to receive the Croix de Guerre, and an additional 170 members of the 369th were also awarded the French medal.

The 370th Infantry Regiment, given the name "Black Devils" by Germans, were also assigned to the French Army. This was the only unit to be commanded by Black officers. Corporal Freddie Stowers was a standout soldier among the 371st Infantry. During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Stowers lead troops through a German line in spite of receiving mortal wounds. He was recommended for the Medal of Honor shortly after his death, but it was not processed and awarded until 1991.

REF : African-American heritage



DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : Those African Americans serving with the US Army were not allowed to carry weapons – typical duties were in supply support and also carrying dead bodies. Those serving with the French were allowed (and encouraged) for use of weapons. The picture above was originally monochrome – now colorised for illustration purposes. Picture was taken on Bastille Day 1918 when Mr. Johnson and others were awarded the Croix de Guerre for their bravery in the front line. Mr. Taylor (who later became known affectionately as “Peg”) lost his leg in action.

SECTION 3

03

POLITICS

O.W. Gurley, a wealthy Black landowner, purchased 40 acres of land in Tulsa in 1906 and named the area Greenwood. Its population stemmed largely from formerly enslaved Black people and sharecroppers who relocated to the area fleeing the racial terror they experienced in other areas.

Oklahoma, which became a state in 1907, was still staunchly segregated at the time. So as Gurley opened a boarding house, grocery stores and sold land to other Black people, they secured their own houses and opened businesses. The population grew to 11,000 and the area became an economic powerhouse affectionately called “Black Wall Street.”

Greenwood functioned independently, with its own school system, post office, bank, library, hospital and public transit. It also had luxury shops, restaurants, grocery stores, hotels, jewelry and clothing stores, movie theaters, barbershops and salons, pool halls, nightclubs and offices for doctors, lawyers and dentists.

REF: Tulsa Historical Society

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : It is not clear to what extent the politicians at the federal level were instigating the plan to “get the blacks out of Tulsa” but they were clearly quietly supportive of the local government officials, including the mayor of Tulsa, to yield to pressure from the white community and the commercial interests of the railroad company to rid the land space of Greenwood of its black inhabitants. The Ku Klux Klan were effectively able to act as a terrorist arm of the local government officials in Tulsa to enlarge and grow the background of racial hatred against the people of Greenwood.

In contrast O.W. Gurley was one of the visionaries wanting to see the success of the black community in Greenwood – he worked closely with another very talented gentleman, J.B. Stradford, a leading black entrepreneur to lead and plan the success and growth of Greenwood. It strikes me as ironic that the vicious and racist policies of segregation imposed in the white community had the effect of boosting further the material wealth of Greenwood and its people.

By 1919 racial terror had spread across many of the states reacting badly to the very idea of black advancement. By 1921 Tulsa (the most successful oil boom town in America) had become a tinder-box.

SECTION 4

04

THE TULSA OIL BOOM AND THE “ORIGIN” OF GREENWOOD’S COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

Oklahoma’s first commercial oil well came into production near Bartlesville and was called the “Nellie Johnstone.” This early strike prompted thousands of people to stream into the region in the hopes of becoming rich. Those who drilled wells in hopes of making a strike were called “wildcatters”. The next three decades were filled with these wildcatters, discovery wells, gushers, and boomtowns that made Oklahoma the center of the oil industry. Out of the many boomtowns that sprung up with each new strike, some survived, others vanished quickly, and a very small number thrived to become Oklahoma business centers. Tulsa was one of them.

During the Jim Crow era, African-Americans were not allowed to make purchases or services in predominantly white areas. In particular, Oklahoma was known to have some of the harshest and most unjust Jim Crow laws in the country. Some economists theorize this forced many African-Americans to spend their money where they would feel welcomed, effectively insulating cash flow to within the black community and allowing Greenwood to flourish and prosper.

On "Black Wall Street", there were African-American attorneys, real estate agents, entrepreneurs, and doctors who offered their services in the neighborhood. One primary example of the black entrepreneurial spirit is illustrated by J.B. Stradford. He had graduated from Indiana University with a law degree and had moved to Greenwood to purchase various land vacancies in the area. After buying these vacant spaces, he would then sell them to African-American residents for redevelopment so that these empty spaces could be transformed into residential houses and profitable businesses. By 1921, Stradford had been considered one of the wealthiest African-Americans in the country as he owned numerous properties in Greenwood and even had his hotel named after him: Stradford Hotel.[4] In addition to Mr. Stradford, there were also investments and reinvestments into the community. One executive of the local YMCA recalled that there were several barbershops, several grocery stores, and even a funeral home service. Greenwood was known to be an active religious community as there were numerous black-owned churches, Christian youth services, and other religious organizations.

REF : Wikipedia records

DAVID GARDNER COMMENTS : The so-called Jim Crow laws were rigorously enforced in Tulsa's white areas as mentioned above.

In contrast to the reprehensible hijacking of religious doctrine by the KKK to present a facade of respectability, many of the citizens of Greenwood were committed Christians and very active in their local churches. Solomon Sir Jones was one of the Baptist ministers at the time for a number of churches and took the only real video footage of the tragic event as it unfolded. Solomon Sir Jones was a very decent man and was a good friend of the school teacher, Mary Parrish, well known and respected by the people of Greenwood.

SECTION 5

05

LIFE OF THE TIME

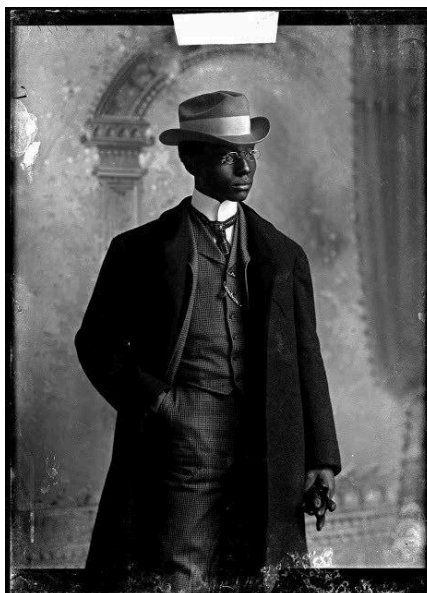


REF : Smithsonian Institution

DAVID GARDNER COMMENTS - In the Spring and early summer of 1921 Greenwood was a happy place, with full employment and self-contained to the extent of every service and product of the time being available to the local community. All professional services abounded with bankers, lawyers, doctors, and some of the most qualified surgeons in the country. Evening time was also a very lively time with nightclubs, theatres, and jazz bars and its own “red lights”



Above : Typical Evening dress in Greenwood



Walter Barnes and his band

In his book, *The Chitlin' Circuit: and the Road to Rock 'n' Roll*, Preston Lauterbach writes:

The tour [Walter Barnes and his Royal Creolians] kicked off in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the week before Thanksgiving, where Barnes found “Black Wall Street” bustling. “Greenwood is the name of the colored district of Tulsa, and one can get anything here from a shoe shine up.” Barnes highlighted the stroll’s musicians, dance promoters, dance halls, and its dentists, barbers, pharmacies, cafes, cab companies, and lodgings, always stressing the up-to-date. “I stopped

with my entire orchestra at the modern and exclusive Small Hotel” in Tulsa, “one of the best equipped in the country, having newest electrical fixtures, telephone in each room, bath in every room, and modernistic furniture.” The Kings of Swing played the Crystal Palace Ballroom, “the last word in beauty,” and hung around the Goodie Goodie Club, Cotton Club, and Del Rio. “There’s plenty niteries here.”

SECTION 6

06

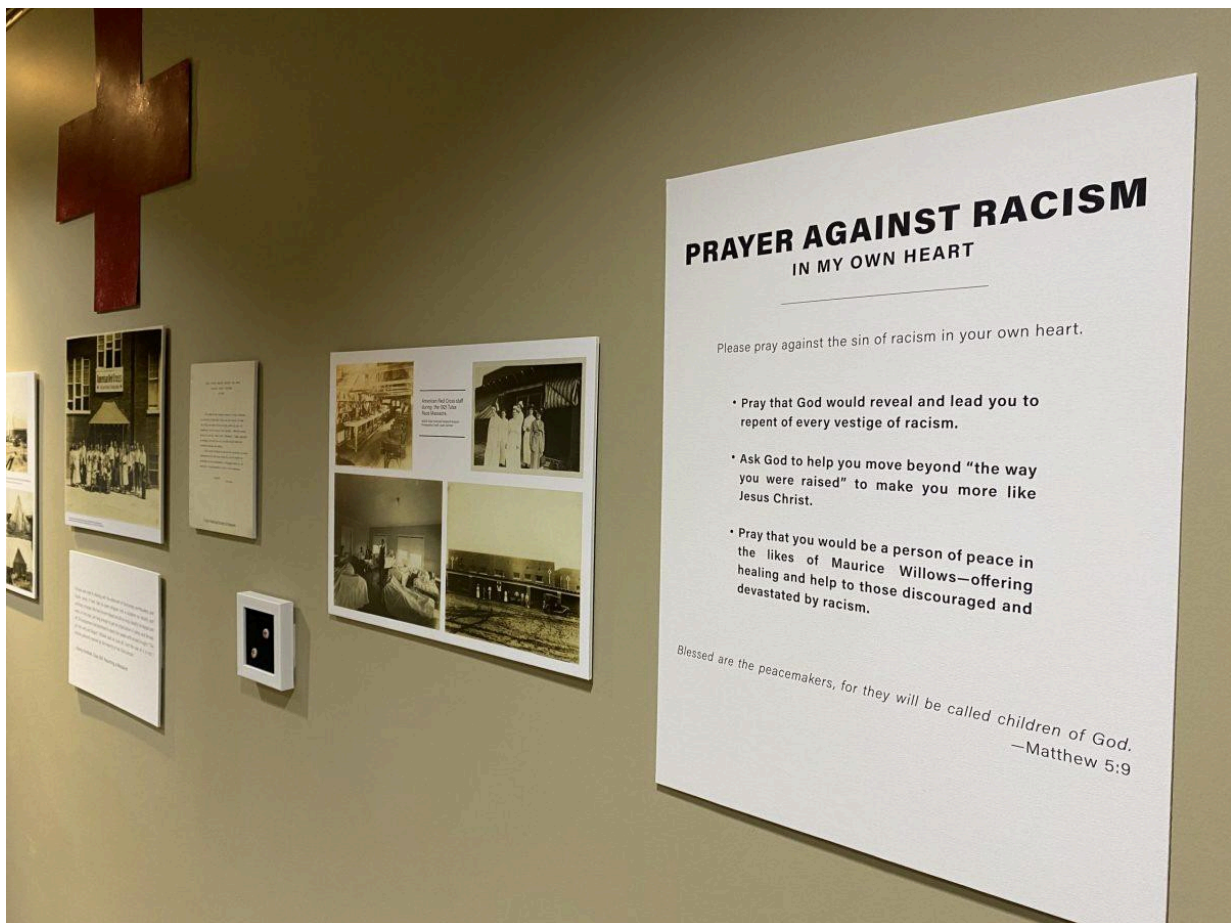
THE CHURCH AND ITS PEOPLE.

ARTICLE

Tulsa Race Massacre Prayer Room Highlights Churches' 1921 Sins, Seeks Healing

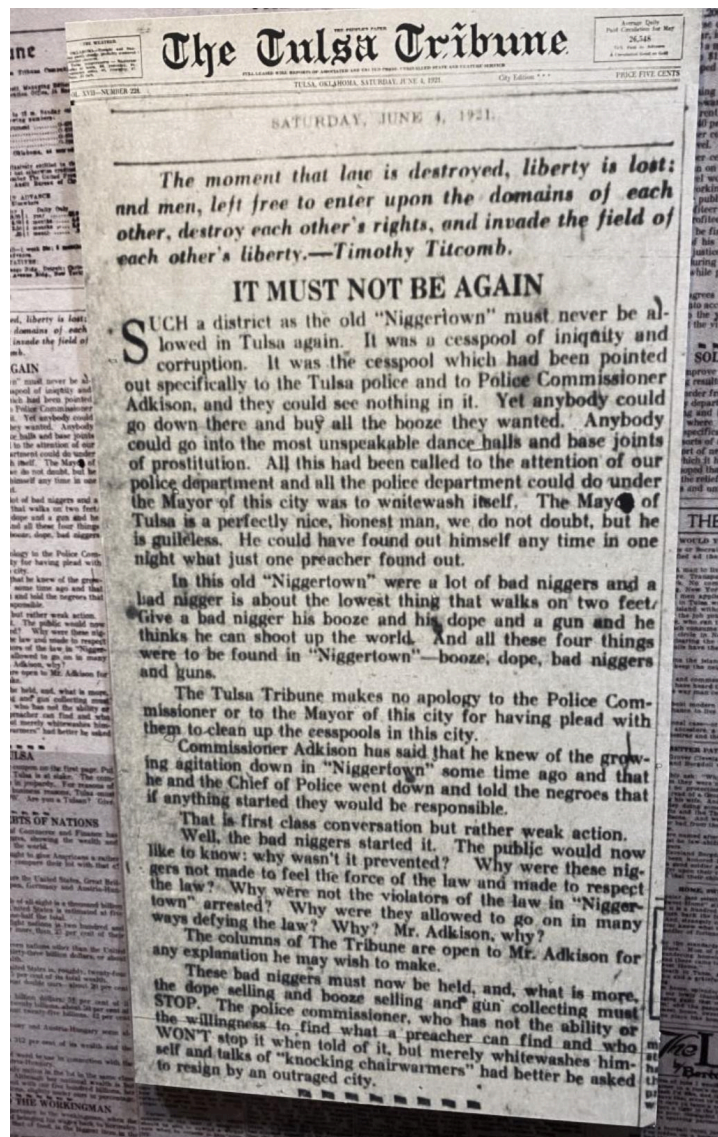


by Bobby Ross Jr. May 30, 2021



A display in the Tulsa Race Massacre Prayer Room at the First Baptist Church, designed to highlight local churches' sins prior to and following a white mob's deadly siege of the Greenwood community on May 31-June 1, 1921. (Bobby Ross Jr./For Oklahoma Watch)

TULSA — The words on the wall are jarring. They are filled with racist language and victim blaming.



Worst of all, they are taken from the mouths of professed men of God — from sermons preached on the Sunday after the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921.

“I got emotional about some of the things that I did not know,” said state Sen. Kevin Matthews, founder and chairman of the 1921 Centennial Commission, which is commemorating the unlikely rise and devastating fall of Tulsa’s “Black Wall Street.”

Visitors such as Matthews, a Black Democrat who grew up in Tulsa but did not learn about the massacre until adulthood, experience the painful quotes through a special prayer room at the First Baptist Church.



Sen. Kevin Matthews

The Southern Baptist congregation aims to tell the truth about past sins while asking God to bring racial unity at the 100-year anniversary of an atrocity that this Oklahoma city — and the nation — tried for decades to ignore.

“As a person of faith, as a follower of Jesus, I believe that talking to God can heal a lot of things, so we got our creative people behind this,” said the Rev. Deron Spoo, whose church, founded in 1897, occupies a sprawling downtown campus.

Up a short stairway by the congregation’s main worship area, the museum-like exhibit features historical notes, photos and newspaper clippings, along with suggested prayers.

Guests take seats on maroon-cushioned benches as they pause and bow their heads.

“I think we need to confront sin where we can, where we recognize it, and also pray against our own blind spots,” said Eric Fox, a First Baptist member who came with his wife, Jamey, and their 19-year-old daughter, Kennedy.

“So, for me, this was a way to take a prayerful approach, to do some self-examination, some self-reflection, but also to pray for myself, my family, my church, my community,” added Fox, a former history teacher who serves as an associate principal at Jenks High School, one of Oklahoma’s largest high schools.

“As I saw the centennial approaching, I felt a personal and pastoral obligation to be better informed,” Spoo said, “and hopefully form a meaningful response on the part of my church.”

About a year ago, he read “Tulsa 1921: Reporting a Massacre,” a 2019 book by *Tulsa World* journalist Randy Krehbiel.

“Krehbiel goes into great detail about things that, even though I’ve lived in Tulsa for 21 years, I never knew,” Spoo said. “By the way, I kind of count that to my shame.”

Spoo’s awakening led to the creation of the prayer room, which opened in February and will close next week.

Among the newspaper clippings displayed at the church: a *Tulsa Tribune* editorial — published three days after the massacre — that repeatedly uses a racial slur in reference to the decimated Greenwood District and its people.

“It uses some words that we shouldn’t use in our culture anymore, and that’s right there in the center of our prayer room,” Spoo said, explaining that the church wanted to reflect the

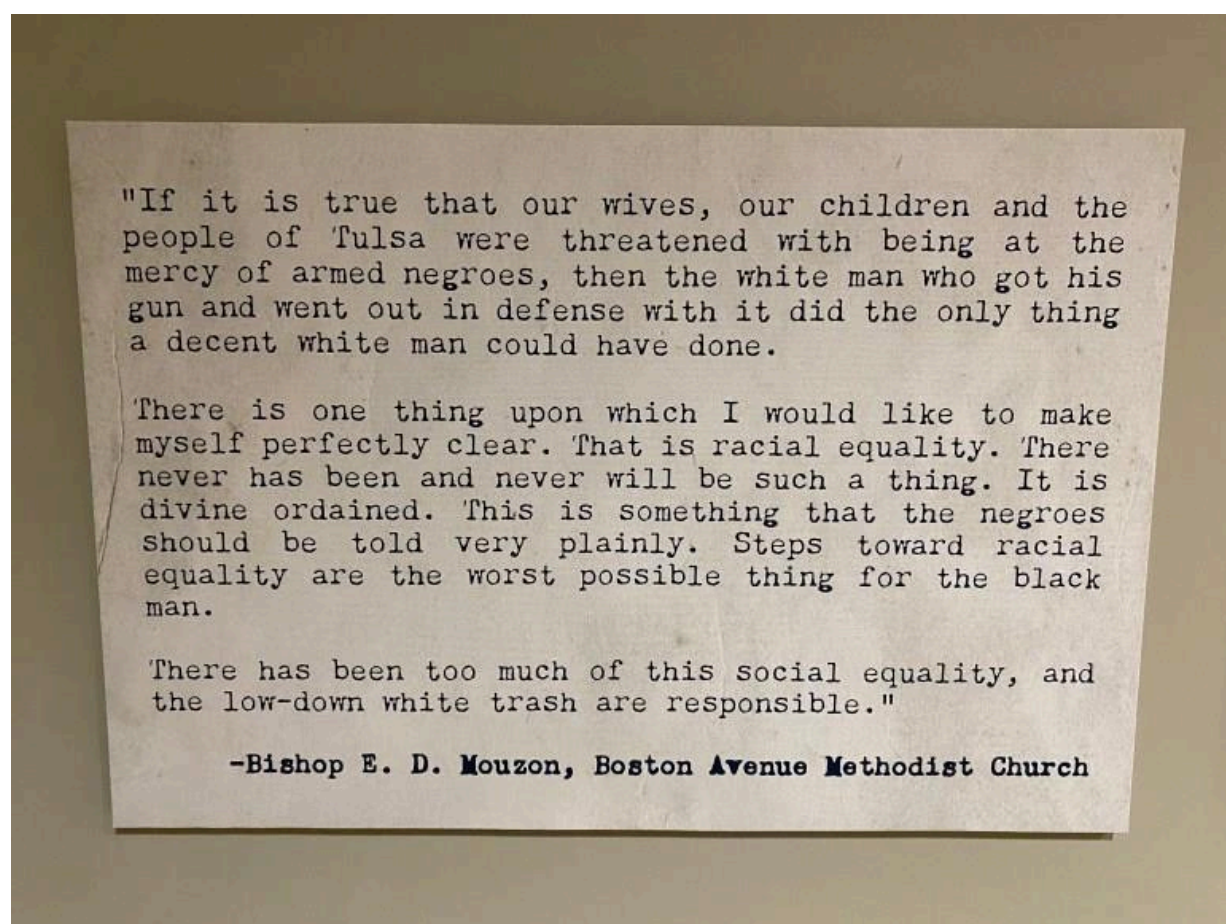
past accurately “because that shows us what we’re trying to change.”

Even more shocking to many visitors, though, are the words attributed to pastors of some of Tulsa’s oldest churches.

“The most disturbing thing to me was ... what the heads of these large churches of Christian faith said about Black people,” said Matthews, who toured the prayer room with fellow state Sen. Dave Rader, a white Republican who is a First Baptist member.

“It was basically horrific and disappointing,” added the Centennial Commission leader, who attends the North Peoria Church of Christ, a predominantly Black congregation. “It seemed to be a sign of the times, and I thank the bold leadership of Pastor Spoo and that church to tell that story in an honest way.”

RACIST SERMONS



Tulsa newspapers covered what prominent white pastors preached in the race massacre’s aftermath. This presentation of a portion a sermon by Bishop E.D. Mouzon of Boston Avenue Methodist Church is displayed in the Tulsa Race Massacre Prayer Room at the First Baptist Church, 420 South Detroit Avenue in Tulsa. (Bobby Ross Jr./For Oklahoma Watch)

The Tulsa Race Massacre occurred on the Tuesday and Wednesday after Memorial Day 1921 — fueled by racial clashes over a purported incident involving a white teenage girl and a young Black man or teen.

No written records remain, if any ever existed, of what was said in the surviving Black churches the following Sunday, according to Krehbiel's book.

But the local papers covered what prominent white pastors preached in the massacre's aftermath, and Spoo deemed it important to reflect their sentiments in the prayer room.

"There has been a great deal of loose-mouthed and loose-minded talk about the white people of Tulsa being equally to blame with the Blacks," the Rev. Harold Cooke said at Centenary Methodist Church in 1921. "Any person that makes that assertion makes an assertion that is false to the core. It should be a lesson learned, once and for all that the colored man is a colored man and a white man is a white man, and there can never be anything like social equality between the two races. Many negroes realize this and are the better element of the colored race."

At First Presbyterian Church, the Rev. C.W. Kerr said: "The colored people must understand they started it. The fact of their arming and coming up through the city was an outrage to the citizenship of Tulsa."

At Boston Avenue Methodist Church, Bishop E.D. Mouzon said:

"If it is true that our wives, our children and the people of Tulsa were threatened with being at the mercy of armed negroes, then the white man who got his gun and went out in defense with it did the only thing a decent white man could have done. ... There is one thing upon which I would like to make myself perfectly clear. That is racial equality. There has never been and never will be such a thing. Steps toward racial equality are the worst possible thing for the Black man. There has been too much of this social equality, and the low-down white trash are responsible."

And at First United Methodist Church, the Rev. J.W. Abel said:

"We must not make a martyr of the negro, even though many hundreds of them have suffered innocently. There are all too many of the so-called leaders of the negro race who habitually discredit the white race as to our willingness to give the negro a chance under all the rights to American citizenship. What other nation in all human history has done as much ... as the white race has done for the race which but a brief half-century ago emerged from slavery? A race which even in slavery was a thousand times better off than the Black princes who ruled their race in Africa. We tax ourselves to educate him; we help him to build churches, we are careful to keep him supplied with work at a good wage, and trust him with a ballot, and all we ask of him is to behave himself and prove himself worthy of our trust."

Missing from the prayer room is any mention of what was said at First Baptist itself that Sunday.

The church's archives "are mysteriously silent" on the Rev. William O. Anderson's sermon that day.

"However, we have little reason to hope that his statements departed from that of the other pastors that history happened to record," suggests a note beside the other statements.

COMING FULL CIRCLE

But the prayer room experience does not end with the 1921 sermons.

After envisioning the thick, black smoke rising from the Greenwood District and trying to reconcile the racist statements “coming from the hearts of people who claim to know and serve God,” visitors encounter a joint message from those same churches’ present-day pastors.

A redeeming moment, Spoo calls it.

“Racism, in any form and at any level, is incompatible with being a follower of Jesus Christ,” he and the other pastors declare.

The Rev. Jessica F. Moffatt, First United Methodist Church’s lead pastor, characterizes the prayer room as a “tangible, visible expression of the commitment of Tulsa pastors and churches to fight against racism.”

“The room leads a person full circle,” said Moffatt, who has urged her congregation to visit it. “It begins with the 100-year-old truth that the ugly sin of racism brought inhumane acts against Black Tulsans, but then it leads participants to the new truth. The new truth is that the Tulsa faith community will not tolerate racism in our city, and we will take actions toward healing and unity.”

“Racism, in any form and at any level, is incompatible with being a follower of Jesus Christ.”

REV. DERON SPOO, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TULSA

REF : Student researcher – University of Colorado

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : It is truly shocking that so-called men of God were able to preach racist messages as though this was a Godly thing to do – it clearly fuelled the beliefs within the KKK that they were on a moral and God based crusade. I believe this illustrates the danger of religion and underlines the fact that God actually hates religion – however he loves his true church of believing Christians who have their faith – this is quite a different thing to the examples throughout history of murder in the name of God such as the Inquisition, the Crusades, and of course Jesus Christ himself who was accused of being Beelzebub by the Pharisees, the most religious men of their time.

SECTION 7

07

KEY CHARACTERS (GOOD AND BAD)

KEY CHARACTER

MAYOR T.D. EVANS

In a written statement published in a local paper, the *Tulsa World*, Tulsa mayor T.D. Evans squarely placed the blame on the inhabitants of the Greenwood District:

“Let the blame for this negro uprising lie right where it belongs — on those armed negroes and their followers who started this trouble and who instigated it and any persons who seek to put half the blame on the white people are wrong and should be told so in no uncertain language. . . . It is the judgment of many wise heads in Tulsa, based upon observation of a number of years, that this uprising was inevitable. If that be true and this judgment had to come upon us, then I say it was good generalship to let the destruction come to that section where the trouble was hatched up, put in motion and where it had its inception. (“Riot Statement,” 1921, p. 7)”²



KEY CHARACTER

O.W. GURLEY

The Visionary of Black Wall Street Tulsa

Just around the start of the 20th century Ottawa W. Gurley, a wealthy African American landowner from Arkansas, traversed the United States to participate in the Oklahoma Land run of 1889. The young entrepreneur had just resigned from a presidential appointment under president Grover Cleveland in order to strike out on his own.

In 1906, Gurley moved to Tulsa where he purchased 40 acres of land which was "only to be sold to colored". Black ownership was unheard of at that time.



"You had the wealthy, middle class, the poor Blacks all living on the same block, and so many of those individuals who started out in the working class, because they lived there, would eventually go on to own their own business in the Greenwood district," said Dr. Michael Carter, Sr., founder and national president of the Black Wall Street USA national movement. "That's a result of Gurley's contributions." Dr. Carter added.

Dr. Carter, a theologian, told INC. Magazine that, "Out of the 600 businesses in Tulsa, Gurley owned at least 100 as a result of demand and need," Dr. Carter says. "What Gurley did was for the long term--for the generations who never would have met him.

Calling Gurley's work "a blueprint for future generations: He laid the groundwork for our generation to pick it up and run with it."

An educator and entrepreneur who made his wealth as a landowner, Gurley purchased 40 acres in Tulsa to be sold to "coloreds only." Senate Bill Number 1, the state's first piece of legislation, prevented coloreds from residing, traveling and marrying outside their race. Gurley's property lines were Pine Street to the north, the Frisco rail tracks to the south, Lansing Avenue to the east and Cincinnati Avenue to the west.

Among Gurley's first businesses was a rooming house which was located on a dusty trail near the railroad tracks. This road was given the name Greenwood Avenue, named for the city in Mississippi. The area became very popular among African American migrants fleeing the oppression in Mississippi. They would find refuge in Gurley's building, as the racial persecution from the south was non-existent on Greenwood Avenue.

REF : Black Wall Street USA

KEY CHARACTER

J.B. STRADFORD

J.B. Stradford was a pillar of Tulsa's Greenwood neighborhood in 1921. He owned several businesses and his Stradford Hotel was one of the largest Black-owned hotels in the United States.

Today, Stradford's great grandson is a well known Black investor in the modern Wall Street, and he remembers the emotional – and financial – impact the riots had on his family.

"Over time, we think it would have compounded to over \$100 million," says John W. Rogers Jr., who is co-CEO of Ariel Investments, reflecting on the wealth that his family could have accrued.

"We think it would have been real, serious wealth that J.B. Stradford would have been able to create, and then to share with his descendants," he adds.



Exterior view of the Stradford Hotel, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in the late 1910s or early 1920s. One of the largest black-owned hotels in the United States, it was destroyed during the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921. Today, the great grandson of the Stradford hotel chain's founder is a well known investor in Wall Street.

REF : NPR

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : During the night of the massacre members of the white mob persuaded J.B. Stradford to give himself up from his armed position high up in the building and agreed that he would have safe passage and his building would be left alone. After his surrender the building was torched and he subsequently lost all his wealth. He eventually escaped from Tulsa after bail and never returned.

KEY CHARACTER

IDA B. WELLS

Despite the barriers she encountered, locally and nationally, Wells-Barnett remained committed to anti-lynching activism. By disrupting the “rhetorical link between lynching and black criminality,” Wells-Barnett “undermined romantic notions of lynching as an expression of justice. Consequently, local communities began to see an “association with *lynching* as undesirable. Wells-Barnett’s activism was instrumental in establishing the “discursive space in which future debates” on American lynching would take place. Wells-Barnett died on March 25, 1931, in Chicago “as the terror of the lynching era still raged on.



KEY CHARACTER

SOLOMON SIR JONES



In addition to his work with film, Jones was a businessman and a Baptist minister, who either established or was the pastor of some 15 churches in his lifetime.[1] He was the son of ex-

slaves, was born in Tennessee and grew up in the South, before moving to Oklahoma, where he lived for most of his life.[1] Jones spent the next several decades building black institutions; establishing churches, newspapers, and businesses; and supporting the activities of schools and hospitals. Jones also remained active in church politics, holding leadership roles in the National Baptist Convention of America, one of the largest African American denominations in the United States, for many years. Jones was a fierce defender of black institutions, one of many African American leaders in Oklahoma who supported what came to be called “All-Black towns,” municipalities occupied and governed by black settlers.

REF : Wikipedia

DPG COMMENT – Solomon Sir Jones made 29 different black and white films in the years between 1924 and 1928.

KEY CHARACTER

MARY PARRISH

In 1921, Mary E. Jones Parrish was a relative newcomer to Tulsa. Born Mary Elizabeth Jones in Mississippi in 1890, she spent some time in Oklahoma in her early adulthood, giving birth to her daughter Florence in the all-Black town of Boley, in 1914. (In 1912, she had married Simon Parrish.) Soon after having Florence, Parrish migrated to Rochester, New York, where she studied shorthand at the Rochester Business Institute.

Parrish was called back to Oklahoma, where her mother was ailing in the town of McAlester. Six months after Parrish arrived, her mother passed away. Around 1919, Parrish settled in Tulsa, attracted by the friendly faces and collaborative enterprises in Greenwood. The neighborhood was home to two movie theatres, a jeweller, a small garment factory, a hospital, a public library, and many restaurants, dance halls, and corner dives. In her book, Parrish describes the thrill of stepping off the Frisco railroad and into a world of Black-owned businesses and well-kept homes. She dubbed the community the “Negro’s Wall Street,” one of the first documented uses of a now iconic phrase. “I came not to Tulsa as many came, lured by the dream of making money and bettering myself in the financial world,” she wrote, “but because of the wonderful co-operation I observed among our people.”

She opened the Mary Jones Parrish School of Natural Education on the neighborhood’s most popular thoroughfare, Greenwood Avenue, and offered classes in typewriting and shorthand. She was one of many female entrepreneurs in the neighborhood who never received the



A photo of Mary E. Jones Parrish from “Events of the Tulsa Disaster,” her own book about the race massacre. Photograph from Tulsa Historical Society & Museum

same level of renown as their male counterparts. “When we talk about Greenwood, it usually is a very male-focussed story,” Brandy Thomas Wells, a professor at Oklahoma State University who specializes in Black women’s history, told me. “The day-to-day activities of those businesses depended upon the invisible labor of women.”

During the massacre, Parrish lost everything. But, instead of leaving town, she remained in Greenwood. As the neighborhood smoldered, she immediately realized how important it was to bear witness to what had happened to her community. The attack destroyed the offices of Tulsa’s two Black-owned newspapers, the *Tulsa Star* and the *Oklahoma Sun*; the former never resumed publishing. The city also had two white-owned newspapers—the *Tulsa World* and the *Tulsa Tribune*—which published stories blaming Black people for their own community’s destruction. There was little space in the city for Black residents to explain what had happened to them in their own words.

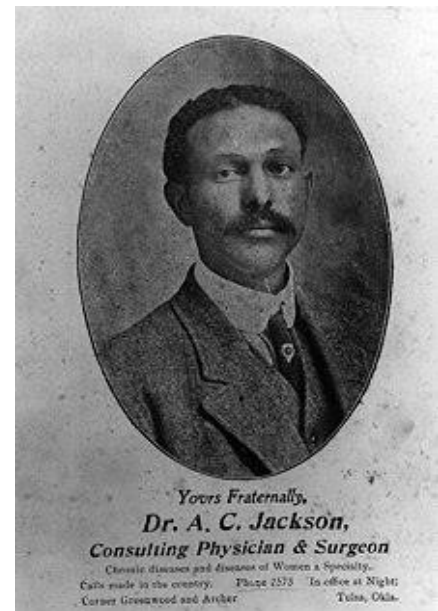
KEY CHARACTER

DR. A.C. JACKSON

A.C. Jackson was an African American surgeon who was killed during the Tulsa race massacre in 1921. According to the Greenwood Cultural Center, Jackson was considered as the "most able Negro surgeon in America" by the Mayo brothers, founders of the Mayo Clinic.[1] He was born in Memphis and raised in Guthrie, where his father worked as a law officer. Jackson graduated from Meharry Medical College in Nashville and later took his surgery training in Memphis. He specialized in "chronic diseases and surgery for women" and practiced in Claremore and Tulsa. Some of the surgical tools he invented are still in use today.[2]

Former police commissioner and retired judge John Oliphant reported that Jackson was fatally shot in 1921 during the Tulsa race massacre when he "came walking toward me with his hands in the air" saying "here am I. I want to go with you", surrendering.[1] A mob of about seven armed men intercepted him and two of them shot him. One of the men shot him after he had fallen to the ground. Jackson was 40 years old when he was killed. His killers were never identified.

REF : Wikipedia



Portrait of A. C. Jackson

KEY CHARACTER

HOOLIGAN WHOSE NAME WE DON'T KNOW

DPG COMMENT : Much research was done to try and identify who this particular hooligan was but without success. This picture has been colourised for illustrative purposes; my research did however indicate that he was probably seventeen years old and was responsible for shooting several if not many African-American citizens.



KEY CHARACTER

“PEG LEG” TAYLOR

“Peg Leg”, an African-American veteran of World War I, lived on First Street, five blocks from where the whites gathered to go into the African American section. Peg Leg had been stealing things from Dick Barton’s, a general store that had more ammunition than any other store in town. He slipped in the store and carried away ammunition all day Sunday and until ten o’clock Monday morning, when the white store operators were planning to seize the Negro again. Peg Leg had enough ammunition to hold the whites off while other Negroes looted the store.

REF: J.Mason – American Negro Folklore

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : I believe this gentleman was known as “Peg” to his friends and family and he was certainly one of the group of armed African Americans who went to the Court House to prevent the shoe shine boy being extracted from his cell for a lynching. He had become known as “Peg Leg” as a result of losing his leg WW 1 when he served with the French Army and was later decorated with the Croix de Guerre for bravery.

Below is a picture showing African American soldiers who had been seconded to the French Army in which they saw front line duty and received awards for gallantry.



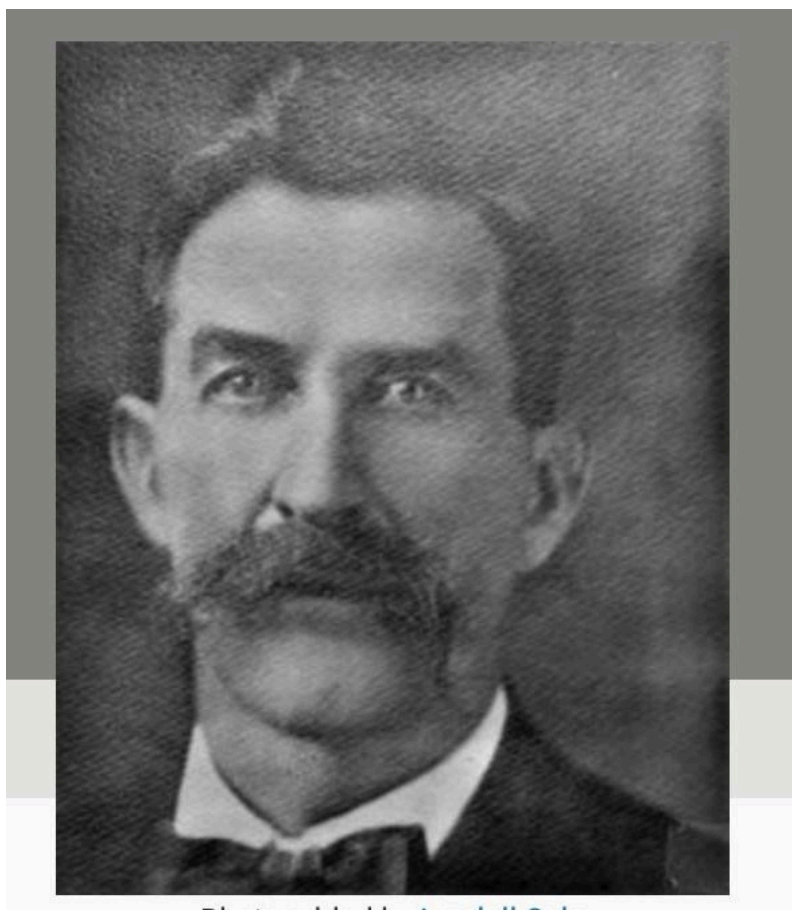
Soldiers of the 369th (15th N.Y.), awarded the Croix de Guerre for gallantry in action, 1919.

KEY CHARACTER

SHERIFF WILLIAM (BILL) MCCULLOUGH



William "Bill" McCullough served a total of eight years as Tulsa County Sheriff, 1911-1914, 1917-1918 and 1921-1922. When he was elected to his first term, he was the first Republican elected in Tulsa County. Sheriff McCullough also carried out the first and last legal hanging ever carried out by a Tulsa County Sheriff.



KEY CHARACTER

POLICE OFFICER BARNEY CLEAVER

"Barney S. Cleaver, the first African-American policeman in Tulsa, was born in Newbern, VA in 1865 (the actual date was January 2, 1867). In Newbern, he attended public school until he was fifteen. He then moved to Charleston, WV where he initially worked on a steamer and later worked in the coal mines. As an Oklahoma & Gulf Coal Company employee, he served as an immigrant agent, bringing more than four thousand employees from West Virginia to Oklahoma.

While living in Coalgate, OK, he was appointed special deputy U.S. marshal under Captain Grady. He moved to Tulsa circa 1907, was first appointed city patrolman, and later became deputy sheriff under Sheriff McCullough.

Deputy Sheriff Cleaver and his wife, Vernon Wren, lived at 508 North Greenwood (Street) in 1914 and owned interest in the building across the street from their home, the Cleaver-Cherry building. The insurance on his home and on the Cleaver-Cherry building shows the property to be worth about \$26,000."



Subsequent articles about Cleaver in the January 9, 1915 Tulsa Star reported that Cleaver had opened a detective agency in the building he owned, the Cleaver-Cherry Building. The firm, the Colored Detective Association was said to be the first colored owned company in the country. Later, he received a state charter for the Barney Cleaver Detective Agency which was said to be worth \$1,000.

Cleaver is cited in numerous stories in the Tulsa Star that relate to his work as a police officer and deputy sheriff. He did not always enjoy full support in the Black community although he was credited with keeping order in "Little Africa", the pejorative term used for the Black community of Tulsa.

Cleaver was actually terminated from his police position in May 1912. According to the Tulsa Star, the dismissal was political. He was later hired as a deputy sheriff.

It is reported that Cleaver twice convinced the Black men, who came to the Tulsa jail house to protect a young Black man, Dick Rowland from a white mob, to leave the courthouse. However, a third time when a group of Black men returned to the court house the incident occurred that reportedly lit the fuse initiating the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. Cleaver later testified in the inquiry regarding the riot that the men had laughed at him and threatened to beat him. Like other prosperous Black Tulsans, Cleaver lost his home and property on Greenwood Street in the riot.

REF : FAMILY RELATIONS

The courthouse jail was on the building's top floor, which was accessible only by elevator and a single stairwell. As night fell, Sheriff William McCullough had the elevator disabled and ordered his deputies to shoot anyone who tried to come up the stairs. Then he went down to face the white mob, which now numbered in the hundreds. He told them there would be no lynching and tried, unsuccessfully, to get them to disperse.

While McCullough dealt with the whites, his black deputy, Barney Cleaver, went to intercept the groups of African-American men coming down from the Greenwood neighborhood. Cleaver managed to convince the first few parties to turn back, but more continued to arrive. Matters reached a head shortly after 10 p.m., when a final group of about seventy-five armed black men approached the steps of the courthouse. A white man in the crowd tried to take a pistol from one of the blacks, and "all hell broke loose."

The blacks, who were vastly outnumbered, staged a fighting retreat to Greenwood. A battleline was drawn along the railroad tracks that separated Greenwood from downtown. Greenwood's defenders set up sniping positions in buildings overlooking the tracks, and while whites managed to set fire to some of the buildings, the defensive line held. The two sides continued to exchange gunfire until about two in the morning, at which point it seemed as if the worst might be over.

It wasn't. Frustrated in their desire to lynch Dick Rowland, the whites now spent the rest of the night planning an all-out assault on the Greenwood neighborhood.

At dawn on the morning of June 1, 1921, a whistle sounded near the Frisco freight depot. Thousands of armed whites broke cover and came charging across the railroad tracks, while a machine gun opened fire from atop a nearby grain elevator. This time, Greenwood's

defenders were overwhelmed. As the residents fled for their lives, small planes began buzzing the neighborhood, shooting at people on the ground and, according to some reports, dropping explosives and “flaming turpentine balls.”

REF : Find a grave

SECTION 8

08

MASS MURDER AND DESTRUCTION

On the morning of May 30, 1921, a young black man named Dick Rowland was riding in the elevator in the Drexel Building at Third and Main with a white woman named Sarah Page. The details of what followed vary from person to person. Accounts of an incident circulated among the city’s white community during the day and became more exaggerated with each telling.

Tulsa police arrested Rowland the following day and began an investigation. An inflammatory report in the May 31 edition of the Tulsa Tribune spurred a confrontation between black and white armed mobs around the courthouse where the sheriff and his men had barricaded the top floor to protect Rowland. Shots were fired and the outnumbered African Americans began retreating to the Greenwood District.

In the early morning hours of June 1, 1921, Greenwood was looted and burned by white rioters. Governor Robertson declared martial law, and National Guard troops arrived in Tulsa. Guardsmen assisted firemen in putting out fires, took African Americans out of the hands of vigilantes and imprisoned all black Tulsans not already interned. Over 6,000 people were held at the Convention Hall and the Fairgrounds, some for as long as eight days.

Twenty-four hours after the violence erupted, it ceased. In the wake of the violence, 35 city blocks lay in charred ruins, more than 800 people were treated for injuries and contemporary reports of deaths began at 36. Historians now believe as many as 300 people may have died.

In order to understand the Tulsa Race Massacre it is important to understand the complexities of the times. Dick Rowland, Sarah Page and an unknown gunman were the sparks that ignited a long smoldering fire. Jim Crow, jealousy, white supremacy, and land lust, all played roles in leading up to the destruction and loss of life on May 31 and June 1, 1921.

REF : Tulsa Historical Society

DAVID GARDNER COMMENTS : There is no doubt concerning the depth of evil that drove and led the level of hatred stirred up by the local white politicians supported by the KKK and endorsed to a large extent by the white community of Tulsa :-

- The right to shoot a black person in the street given “reasonable” cause
- The perception that blacks were “lower than dogs”
- That black people were genetically inferior according to the teaching of evolution.
- Going to a lynching was an enjoyable public event

After the murder and destruction of Greenwood and the National Guard came in there was more violence, and the authorities mandated that the African Americans must surrender themselves to local community centers where they would have a lanyard type ID to wear and had to be vouched for by a white person. This reminds me of how the Nazis convinced the local Jewish communities to wear their arm bands. A lesson for today.

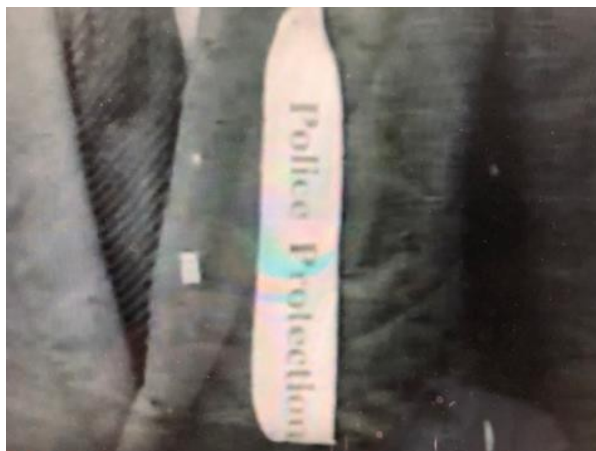
Pictures below of the violence in progress



The Jenny WW1 bi-plane flown by ex WW 1 white pilots used to drop turpentine bombs on Greenwood and a typical truck of white mobsters driving into the Greenwood district to burn houses and kill residents



Mount Zion church after being torched by the white mob. To the right we believe is the first death of an African American as the riot turned massacre started.



The spectacle of a lynching for public enjoyment. To the right the personal ID tag for those vouched for by a white person as the dust settled on Greenwood - community centres turned into internment camps by the authorities with the National Guard patrolling the streets to shoot any dissenters on- sight.

THE RED CROSS HOSPITAL

KEY CHARACTER

THE UNSUNG HERO - MAURICE WILLOWS



Prior to this riot, the Red Cross had responded to and provided aid strictly for those who were victims of natural, not man-made disasters. Willows was the first Red Cross representative sent to Tulsa to investigate the event. Witnessing the destruction and need for medical aid and assistance, Willows called Red Cross Headquarters in Washington D.C., urging that the event be classified as a natural disaster. Within 24 hours of his call, the Red Cross was dispatched to provide relief to the black community and set up a makeshift hospital and school. Willows developed a more permanent housing plan for those who had been made homeless. What's more, he secured \$100,000 in funding to mount a sustained relief effort. Willows' leadership secured resources and aid for those affected by the riot, setting a precedent for future humanitarian efforts. The Red Cross was the only organization that provided aid to the victims of the Tulsa Race Riots.

REF : Lowell Milken Center for unsung heroes



"I can never erase the sights of my first visit to the hospital. There were men wounded in every conceivable way, like soldiers after a big battle. Some with amputated limbs, burned faces, others minus an eye or with heads bandaged."

Above quote from one of the nurses who worked in the hospital

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : Maurice Willows later stated that he had to work extremely hard to have permission to respond to the disaster because it was not naturally caused. He

also secured funding for the land development plan for the homeless African-Americans and worked tirelessly to help the African-American community. As a result of his efforts the Red Cross changed their policies and mandated that their relief efforts in future shall not discriminate on grounds of race or religion.

VERNON A.M.E. CHURCH

During the chaos, some Black Tulsans resisted while others fled. Many were put in makeshift internment camps or imprisoned. The only edifice to survive the eighteen hours of destruction was Vernon Chapel A.M.E. Church, a place where Black people hid to escape the violence. Though Rev. Dr. Robert Richard Allen Turner, the current pastor of Vernon Chapel, lauds the resilience of Greenwood, he points out the historical ramifications the massacre has had on the community.

“In this one or two block area, we still have about 26 Black-owned businesses in the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce,” Dr. Turner said. “But to go from like 600 hundred to less than 30, shows how far we have fallen. But there are still remnants left.”

At Vernon Chapel, the basement survived but the sanctuary and other buildings needed to be rebuilt. Reconstruction of the church started right after the massacre, and through community efforts and grants from local foundations in Tulsa, the main church building was fully rebuilt by 1928. The church has been in operation and growing in membership since then.

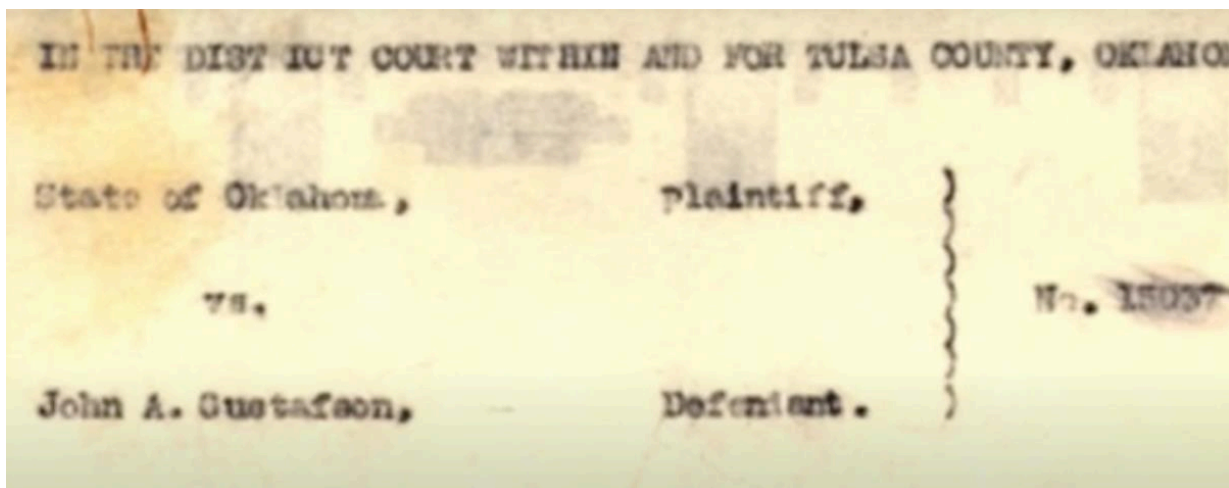


A photo of the Vernon AME church, undated. Photo: Courtesy of Tulsa Historical Society & Museum

SECTION 9

09

AFTERMATH



The only white American charged was one John Gustafson who was Chief of Police at the time of the massacre and was blamed for his handling of the event. Dick Rowland was released without charge.

A federal lawsuit was pursued by the survivors of the massacre against the Tulsa and Oklahoma state departments and the Police but it failed with the stated reason being that the Statute of Limitations had run out.

REF: Lowell Milken Center

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : Despite the relentless pursuit by the so-called “City Fathers” to deny the African-Americans to have their rightful land (a rather silly change to fire safety requirements) the African Americans moved rapidly to re-gain their land, inspired and led by one D.C Franklin, a well respected African American lawyer. Not only this but the African Americans got together using their own funds to re-build the local church within a very short time – they knew that God was on their side! I think they were right!



Re-building of the local church to Greenwood within weeks of the massacre

Quote by Hannibal Johnson, a well known historian on the subject of the Greenwood massacre

“It was a real testimony to the human spirit, that they would not be bullied, they would not be moved, by this violence, that they would stay home and they would rebound and rebuild”

REF : Hannibal Johnson – The Tulsa massacre documentary

DAVID GARDNER COMMENT : At the carol service I noted that Mary Parrish was asked to say a few words to the 2500 congregation sat in front of the emergency hospital. These are the two quotes said by her to the best of our knowledge.

“In the spirit of the best Negro tradition we will never have grievance in our hearts”

“There’s only one race that matters – that’s the human race”

Finally see and hear the statement below :-



DOSSIER AUTHOR

David Gardner - Researcher for Tulsa 21

REVIEWED BY :-

Hannibal Johnson - Leading Historian and Authority on the Tulsa massacre.