

Original Paper

The Tulsa Race Massacre, White Supremacy and the Destruction of Black Wall Street

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Abstract

Some might think about what happened in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921, as unimportant; but the destruction of “Black Wall Street,” or the gem of the Black Greenwood District, was uncalled for. After all, segregation, white supremacy and white mob rule was the order of the day at this time. Furthermore, those who have tried to omit this incident from history or the historical record insult the intelligence of all Americans. But this “cover-up” is the repressive nature of sinister white supremacy. The destruction of “Black Wall Street” has been described as one of the most heinous crimes in American history. So can something like this racist incident happen again? Keep in mind that those heartless individuals who perpetuated the assault on the Black Greenwood community, obviously, didn’t care about the humanity of Black Tulsans. Of course, there was nothing dignified about this crime; therefore, what happened can never be rationalized or justified.

Finally, as a nation, we must come to terms with this tragedy through reconciliation, atonement and reparations, without sweeping what happened under the rug, or pretending that this incident never occurred; or that it is not important, particularly during these polarizing times in our history.

Keywords

white supremacy, segregation, racial, racism, discrimination, racial violence, extremism, white rule

1. Introduction

In 2020, June 19, African Americans, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, were extremely upset about a U.S. presidential visit, which was billed as a “big campaign event”, because it was “the location of one of the worst massacres”, by white Americans against Black Americans, “in U.S. history” (Subramanian,

2020, p. 6A). To be sure, the *tone-deaf* administration at this time disrespected the Black residents of the Greenwood District once again, over a century after the fateful event and destruction of the Black community there, which was once a very prosperous “business community,” called the “Black Wall Street” (Subramanian, 2020, p. 6A). Moreover, in 2020, the Black people of Greenwood were also protesting “against police brutality and racism” (Subramanian, 2020, p. 6A), which was front and center in the United States at the time. The editors of the *Las Vegas Black Image Magazine* tell us that: Black Wall Street was a self-sufficient community where Black people ran prominent businesses. It was [also] a thriving community in which centers of cultural institutions, banks, theaters, churches, schools and houses set the blueprint for Black people to create healthy and vibrant neighborhoods. (Remembering Black Wall Street, 2020, p. 5) (Note 1)

Of course, in 1921, “white rule” reigned supreme, as Blacks in Greenwood were looked down upon, harassed, and discriminated against, because whites in Tulsa didn’t like the idea of African Americans having wealth and *political clout*, or economic power. Or some white Tulsans “resented” the Blacks of Greenwood, and “their upper-class lifestyle” (Fain, 2017, p. 2). Less fortunate whites of Tulsa also argued that Blacks were criminals, *ingrates*, lazy, thieves and ungrateful to whites. White Tulsans especially felt this way about Blacks, who “no longer passively accepted second-class citizenship in their own homeland” (Fain, 2017, p. 5). Among other things, Blacks in Greenwood didn’t *kowtow* to whites either. But even more insidiously, whites in Tulsa at this time (in 1921) considered Black people as inferior, or “the other,” as they were negatively portrayed. According to Kimberly Fain, “Tulsa newspapers regularly referred to the Greenwood District as “Little Africa” and “n-town.” Also, African-Americans in the district were labeled “bad n-s” who drank booze, took dope, and ran around with guns” (p. 6). (Note 2) These awful sentiments about Black Tulsans were common among white supremacists; as they “seethed at Greenwood’s economic success” (Fain, 2017, p. 6). Hence, an unhinged white mob felt justified in attacking “Black Wall Street,” because they firmly believed that Black people should be, or “needed to be subjugated” (Fain, 2017, p. 6); and subordinate to whites, in all things. Therefore, enraged whites violated the social order in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921, because of their racial hatred and unconscionable jealousy. Again, many white supremacists “found it [extremely] difficult to tolerate Black economic success. They resented Black progress and lashed out at those who had achieved it,” with violent intent (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 333). Furthermore, some white Tulsans thought that they were “entitled” in many ways, because of “white privilege.” Which is to say that the white rioters who rampaged through the African American district, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, perhaps thought that they had every right to destroy the livelihood and lives of the Black people of Greenwood. Quite frankly, what happened was more than an unfortunate situation. It was a crime. To say the least, this horrendous incident, or attack on “Black Wall Street” wasn’t even considered (or announced) as a State of Emergency, because the white supremacists of Tulsa knew exactly what they wanted to do—that is, to destroy the Black Greenwood neighborhood. So was it a coordinated attack? Probably. After all, the white citizens of Tulsa did not intervene to stop the outbreak of violence and

racial *carnage*. The response of white Tulsans certainly wasn't sufficient enough to slow down or even stop what happened.

Later, white Tulsans only faced minor criticism for not taking stronger measures to curtail the vicious assault, and naked violence of the white mob. And white "politicians and the media falsely framed the Tulsa [race] riot as an uprising started by lawless blacks" (Fain, 2017, p. 6). This falsehood is obviously important to understand, because the Tulsa race massacre was an enormous undertaking by the forces of evil. Furthermore, what white Tulsans did to their Black neighbors was shameful, and unforgivable—that is, in attacking the Greenwood District. Indeed, the ghoulish white mob or rioters had probably *eschewed* all reason, because they didn't seem to care about the terrible suffering and (Black) deaths that their terrible, negative actions would eventually wrought. So was this brutal assault a deviously planned way to essentially crush the economic independence of "Black Wall Street"? Perhaps. According to journalist Brent Staples (2021, p. 8), white supremacists "were just as often deployed to crush Black economic independence by destroying homes and, particularly, [Black] businesses that competed with white owned ones in the marketplace." And therein lies the economic rub or problem. Unfortunately, in 1921, the "economic status" of the wealthy Black residents of Greenwood "could not save them from the racial hostility of their day," and beyond (Fain, 2017, p. 6). And without exaggeration, this racist incident should be considered a bloody stain on our history, especially the racial savagery that ensued in the Black Greenwood District.

So we must ask: Did the mostly white planners of the 2020 presidential visit to Tulsa, Oklahoma ignore the hurtful, sensitive feelings of the African Americans of the Greenwood District? Probably. Bear in mind that the devastation of "Black Wall Street" wasn't just an *aberration*. Therefore, when the Black residents were protesting against what happened to the Greenwood enclave, as well as speaking out about racism, discrimination, and the militarization; or militarism of law enforcement officials across the United States—it was absolutely the correct (or right) position to take (Subramanian, 2020, p. 6A). (Note 3) Nevertheless, in regard to this awful event, some white Tulsans, perhaps, didn't see the U.S. Presidential visit in 2020, as a big deal. So do whites in Oklahoma and elsewhere still see "the racial violence differently" (Fain, 2017, p. 6) than the Black Tulsa community? Perhaps as time has passed, the racially motivated assault by the white Tulsan mob has almost been forgotten by most white Americans. Or so it seems. But what happened in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1921 was a brazen, criminal, *grotesque*, violent endeavor by a *phalanx* of over 500 white extremists and supremacists—almost of one hateful mind—who wanted to *snuff out* the wealthy Black, Greenwood community. So was the attack carried out by white Tulsans to denigrate and demoralize the residents of "Black Wall Street?" Fain tells us that: "For those [whites] who supported Black subjugation, witnessing Blacks thrive and defy the stereotypes of Black inferiority was too much" (Fain, 2017, p. 8). In this regard, the ostensible purpose of the (ill-planned) 2020 presidential visit to Tulsa, Oklahoma, was, perhaps, to spit in the faces of the Black descendants of Greenwood, or the African Americans who survived the destruction of "Black Wall Street," as if they didn't really matter. Indeed, no one from the White House, in 2020,

coordinated or considered the raw nerves of the Black people still living in Tulsa, Oklahoma; but it should be noted that African Americans have *very* long memories. Therefore, the revered place of the Greenwood District shouldn't have been disrespected or *put upon* any more than it already has over the years. For African Americans, it was just another way of whites having the ability to thumb their noses at the Black Tulsan community, one more time.

2. Method

2.1 Understanding White Mob Violence and the Profane

It is worth emphasizing that the once “thriving African American commercial sector” (Duncan, 2003, p. 93), was thoroughly up-ended by an angry white mob, irrespective of the Constitutional rights of Black Tulsans during this time period. Perhaps most of all, “the destruction of this successful African-American community was no accident” (Fain, 2017, p. 9). According to historian Melba J. Duncan (2003, p. 93), and as explained earlier, “the [Tulsa race] riot was among the worst in American history,” and “its human and economic impact has few parallels.” Equally important, the white mob’s bald-faced crimes, violation of the law, and *unbridled greed* was on full display, as they might have gleefully converged upon the Greenwood District—to destroy this special Black place, while ransacking and looting Black homes and businesses before burning *everything* down to the ground, wreaking havoc. It was like, perhaps, a *smorgasbord* of racial violence and indifference. Staples (2020) explained it this way:

The [the white mob] murdered at will while forcing Black families from their homes. They looted valuables that included jewelry, furs and fine furnishings. They used torches and oil-soaked rags to set fires that incinerated homes, churches, doctors’ office, hotels and other businesses across an area of 35 square blocks. (p. 3)

Question: Where was the Tulsa police or law enforcement officials when this *mayhem* was being committed by the disorderly crowd of mostly white men against the African Americans of “Black Wall Street?” For some Black residents, it was soul-shattering, stomach-churning, and the worst time of their lives. Essentially, the *inaction* of the white police, in Tulsa, Oklahoma was because they were a part of the (cursed) mob—and the problem. This is to say that the white police and white Tulsans conspired against the African Americans of “Black Wall Street,” no doubt about it. In fact, the white, Tulsa police lit the flame of racial violence, setting things off to explode. Perhaps they (and white Tulsans) just needed a reason to forcibly attack the Black community of Greenwood. Staples explained that, “The Tulsa, Oklahoma police department set the stage for mass murder in the spring of 1921 when it deputized members of [the white] mob that invaded and destroyed the prosperous” Black community of Greenwood (Staples, 2020, p. 3). (Note 4) Perhaps white supremacist members of the police force also saw Blacks as only beasts of burden, lowlifes, sub-humans, or animals, who deserved no respect, or consideration. In addition, “the [Tulsa] police disregarded due process, arresting Blacks and interning them in detention camps; meanwhile, no whites were arrested during the [race] riot” (Fain, 2017, p. 6).

Why? It was immediately clear that the intent was to destroy the means of subsistence for Black Tulsans, which was (in no uncertain terms) a crime against humanity. It should be noted that, “Greenwood residents were doctors, lawyers and entrepreneurs. [And] many made a solid living as domestic workers in the homes of rich white Tulsans” (Ford, 2019, p. 1B); but this particular fact didn’t seem to matter, apparently, to the white Tulsa police, as they were also responsible for reducing “to ashes a muscular business strip known as the [Black or] Negro Wall Street” (Staples, 2021, p. 8). In other words, these white, armed marauders ferociously and unapologetically perpetuated an irrational, lawless assault on *law-abiding* African American citizens in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with no consequences or serious recriminations.

The Black residents of Greenwood only wanted respect, peace, equality and justice—that is, even with the racial hatred (from whites) all around them. Which is to say that African Americans wanted to stop the imposition of white supremacy over their lives. Nevertheless, the white mob in Tulsa, in 1921, was staunchly determined to destroy the vulnerable Greenwood community, knowing that there wouldn’t be *any* repercussions, as already stated, even for mass murder. Also, bear in mind that Black Tulsans only wanted to live a decent life, while raising their children, without having to look over their shoulders. Ford (2019, p. 1B) quotes Black author Shomari Wills, when she once commented: “Black folks came to Oklahoma, and they called it the ‘promised land’ because it was supposed to be a place where [they] could get away from what was happening in the Deep South, with lynching, the low wages and the sharecropping.” In so many words, it was a tangible and wonderful place for Black people to pursue the *American Dream* and their independence from white Americans, in general. But the Tulsa police and white Tulsans persisted in interfering with the Black Greenwood community, fighting them (African Americans) left and right, and on almost *everything*, like voting or political participation, and economics, which was the *crux* of the racial issues. In this way, “white supremacy was not only legitimized but also promoted with legal impunity” (Fain, 2017, p. 7), and *verve*. When it was all said and done, the white Tulsan mob felt no compunction about killing African Americans. Or so it seemed. We need not doubt that the deadly (race) riot happened in Tulsa, Oklahoma, because it did, where the white, “blood-thirsty” mob spilled and smeared the blood of the innocent; and all those who died in the Greenwood community. With nothing left to lose, and their lives hanging in the balance, some of the Black Tulsans fought back, without reservation, and with a vengeance. And although they were *aghast*, these Black men and women who fought back were not afraid of the rampaging, malicious white men, with their guns and other deadly weapons.

2.1.1 Of Tulsan Cowards and Black Heroes

To be sure, “Black men [and women] retreated to their [residential] neighborhood... to protect their families and homes” (Hines, Hines, & Harrold, 2009, pp. 393-394), as they came under heavy fire. The Blacks who fought back against the white mob were heroic and showed unimaginable courage, putting their lives on the line, to protect and defend those Black residents who couldn’t fight back or protect themselves. It was a struggle, as the white, Tulsan mob became violently agitated that there was

resistance in certain pockets of the Greenwood enclave. For example, “approximately fifty armed Black people defended themselves in a Black church near the edge of their [Greenwood] neighborhood as white men advanced on them [the Black residents].” According to Hine *et al.* (2009, pp. 393-394), the cowardly white plotters and white rioters “set fire to the church. [And] as Black people fled the burning building they were shot,” indiscriminately, while more Black homes and businesses were ignited *willy-nilly*. In the end, Black Tulsans lost the battle against the murderous white mob and extremists, and their terrible actions. That said, “White men even utilized aircraft for reconnaissance and to drop incendiary devices on Greenwood” (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 394), with homemade bombs. It was probably a horrifying sight that was so unspeakable that it is hard to even imagine—that is, the idea of the vicious attack by whites, happening on “Black Wall Street” in the United States of America. Undoubtedly, the humanity of Black Tulsans or having compassion were set aside by the ruthless white mob. Fortunately, approximately “two thousand Black residents [of Greenwood] managed to escape...” (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 394), but it was perhaps one of the worst episodes of white law enforcement, deliberately using *incendiary* devices to kill Black people—that is, until January 1923, where the prosperous Black town of Rosewood in the Pinewoods of West Central Florida was attacked by local white, law enforcement and a band of white vigilantes, or “a racist white mob of 250, including Ku Klux Klan members from Gainesville [Florida].” This white mob “invaded, [lynched], burned, [bombed], and destroyed Rosewood” (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 394) (Note 5), slaying most of the Black inhabitants. Rosewood, of course, was also a thriving, small Black town, much to the chagrin of their white neighbors. The start of the massacre at Rosewood was based on a lie from “Fannie Taylor, a married white woman from a nearby [white] town,” who “claimed she had been raped and beaten by a Black man” (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 394). This false accusation wasn’t true, but the white community believed it, and were out for blood, and up-in-arms; and “quickly assumed [that] Jessie Hunter,” an innocent Black man, was probably responsible for the crime. Therefore, angry “white men sought Hunter and [racial] vengeance” (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 394). (Note 6) Perhaps this deranged white mob only wanted a Black man to blame, which would have provided an excuse for their lawless behavior and actions. “Unable to locate him [Hunter], they brutally beat another man,” named Aaron Carrier, “who may have helped [Fannie] Taylor’s white lover escape.” Later, during the course of this racial violence, “the [white] mob shot and killed Samuel Carter [a Black man] after savagely mutilating him” (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 394). In the final analysis: The [Rosewood] community’s Black residents fled to the nearby woods and swamps with little more than the clothes on their backs never to return. Rosewood was no more. The precise number of Black people who died will never be known. It may have been well over one hundred. (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2009, p. 394) (Note 7).

Clearly, what happened at Rosewood ended in tragedy; and there was a terrible loss of Black life; hence, this incident should be considered an awful and unkind portrayal and indictment of some white Americans in Florida. The much-maligned Black community of Rosewood was subjected to a

cornucopia of evil and white racial hatred (and grievances), as the white mob felt no qualms, whatsoever, about taking innocent Black lives.

Similarly, in the case of the destruction of “Black Wall Street,” the start of the race riot and massacre was based on an *egregious* lie told by whites, claiming that a young Black man had raped a white woman; but this was just a *pretext* to destroying the Greenwood District by a gang of white criminals in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921.

A more recent racial incident happened in Pennsylvania, where the predominant white, State Police used their “helicopter to drop high powered C4 explosives” on the African American separatist group called MOVE, in 1985. Unfortunately, “the bombing of the MOVE compound killed six [Black] adults and five children and destroyed more than sixty homes, leaving more than 250 Philadelphians homeless” (Tomek, 2017, p. 3) (Note 8).

3. Result: The Fuel that Started the Flames and the Riot

To be clear, “the [race] riot [in Greenwood] ignited after a Black teen was falsely accused of assaulting a white woman” (Remembering Black Wall Street, 2020, p. 5). Hine *et al.* (2009) explained it this way: Violence erupted in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on May 31, 1921, after still another black man was accused of rape. Dick Rowland allegedly assaulted a white woman, elevator operator, and rumors circulated that white men intended to lynch him. To protect Rowland, who was later found innocent, Black men assembled at the [Greenwood] courthouse jail where white men [had] also gathered. Angry words were exchanged, and shooting erupted. Several Black and white men died in the chaos that ensued. (p. 394)

To say the least, the malevolent white mob probably didn’t care about the truth, or the facts of this case—that is, the young Black man, Dick Rowland *did not* rape Sarah Page, a white woman and elevator operator in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Perhaps they (the white mob) just wanted to hurt, maim or kill *someone* Black, knowing that they wouldn’t be punished for their deadly actions. So was it all in the *warped* minds of the white men who wanted to believe that Rowland had raped Sarah Page? Or was this just an excuse, again, to justify their cruel actions to destroy “Black Wall Street”? Perhaps. According to a 2001 Oklahoma State Commission report, the “elevator incident was probably minor and essentially innocent,” where Rowland “most likely tripped and stepped on the foot” of Sarah Page, who might have screamed, “prompting him [Rowland] to run from the elevator” (Ford, 2019, p. 2B); and where a nearby store clerk mistakenly believed that Rowland “had tried to rape [Sarah] Page” (Ford, 2019, p. 2B). The damage had certainly been done, as the (un-named) store clerk sounded the alarm. Indeed, this horrible incident conjures up memories of the lynching deaths of Black men, who were/are accused of raping white women almost anywhere in the United States, particularly in the Deep South. This is to say that it was a death sentence for *any* Black man, to be even accused of such a crime. According to columnist for *The New York Times*, Charles Blow (2021, p. 3), citing a 2020 report by the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC), “An examination of death sentencing for rape in Texas [for example] between 1924 and 1972” concluded that “when a Black offender was convicted of raping a

white woman, he was virtually assured of a death sentence,” by all-white juries. Even more important, what happened to Dick Rowland in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921, also harkens back to the death of fourteen-year old Emmett Till, a Black boy, who was brutally murdered by two racist white men in 1955, in the Mississippi delta for supposedly accosting Carolyn Bryant, a white woman.

In a joke of a criminal trial by an all-white Mississippi jury, the two, white (admitted) murderers were found not guilty (or acquitted) for killing Emmett Till, which was more than a travesty of justice. White historian Timothy B. Tyson (2017, p. 7), in his investigative book, *The Blood of Emmett Till* tells us that Carolyn Bryant, the white woman involved, “became the mouthpiece of a monstrous lie” (Note 9)—that is, of being accosted by Till; and because of this *untruth*, this terrible lie, the young Black teenager (Till) was deprived of his life. Of course, Emmett Till did not deserve to die. Over half a century later, Carolyn Bryant stated, in 2017 that, “Nothing that [Black] boy did could ever justify what happened to him” (Tyson, 2017, p. 7). But her (contrite) words, after so much time, are insulting to Black men, in particular, and African Americans everywhere. Unfortunately, Black men are still being falsely accused of rape or assaulting white women, even today, in the 21st century. Take for example what happened to Christian Cooper, a Black man, in New York, in 2020. Apparently, Amy Cooper (of no relation), a white woman, called the NY police on the Black man, Christian Cooper, accusing him of “trying to assault her.” But Christian Cooper was bird-watching, who politely asked Amy Cooper “to leash her dog in an area [in Central Park] that requires that dogs be on leashes” (Miller, 2020, p. 2A). Fortunately, Christian Cooper was video-taping the entire incident with his own cell phone; or he might have been in *real* trouble. And “after [the NY] police arrived at the scene, she [Amy Cooper] backtracked and told an officer that the [Black] man did not try to assault her or touch her” (Miller, 2020, p. 2A). (Note 10) The point: Things might have gone horribly wrong for Christian Cooper—like his arrest, without *due process*—or maybe even his murder by the NY police. As in the case with the destruction of “Black Wall Street,” based on the lie that a white woman was raped by a Black man, it should be noted that the “defense of white female virtue,” by white men and white supremacists, in particular, “was the expressed motivation for the collective, racial violence” (Fain, 2017, p. 2) that took place in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921.

Cries of innocence and injustice by Black Tulsans went on death ears; and their objections and complaints were virtually silenced by the dominant group. The white supremacists of Tulsa, Oklahoma also vociferously objected to publicizing what actually happened to the Greenwood District. Why? Was it because white Tulsans were ashamed, felt guilty, or just didn’t want *anyone* to know about the destruction of “Black Wall Street”? Or did the white supremacists want to *sugarcoat* this tragic history before explaining or broadcasting their vile deeds to the larger American public? It was as if the white community of Tulsa had even abandoned their common sense; and, it was, perhaps, incomprehensible that white Tulsans tried to obfuscate (or *whitewash*) the truth. Was it because they (white Tulsans) didn’t want to be held accountable? To be sure, “White Tulsans who wanted the story of the [Tulsa Race] massacre to stay [hidden or] buried [even] resorted to intimidation when necessary” (Staples,

2020, p. 3). (Note 11) In other words, white Tulsans tried to keep this illegal rampage, and race riot/massacre secret and local, as they wanted this very unpleasant incident to recede into the nation's memory, and history. But what happened to "Black Wall Street" was also a massive miscarriage of justice; and a disastrous racial event of the first magnitude.

4. Discussion: The Aftermath and Rebuilding

In the immediate aftermath of the Tulsa race riot, and massacre—started by a racist white mob—the white Tulsan community, and those involved didn't show *any* remorse for the heinous acts of their relatives; or they lacked empathy, or *any* contrition. Or so it seemed. Furthermore, after the Black community of Greenwood sifted through the shards and wreckage, we discovered that dead, *ghastly* Blackbodies were mishandled and "stacked up like cordwood" (Staples, 2020, p. 3) (Note 12), or like so much human trash or *detritus*, to get rid of, in unmarked graves. "After the massacre", columnist Brent Staples (2020, p. 3) tells us that, unceremoniously, "Tulsa buried the dead quickly—in a heat wave—to stave off disease". The white Tulsa community "then lost touch with the [gruesome] dead through a pervasive act of willful forgetting" (Note 13), which was, no doubt, convenient for them at that time. But this unpleasant business, or nightmarish history was not in accordance with justice or *morality*. It was also more than the Black residents could possibly bear, as a "2001 commission found that [only] 168 people died in the violence, but other reports put the number as high as 300 with more than 800 wounded" (Remembering Black Wall Street, 2020, p. 7B). It was very much like a murderous *crusade* against a hapless Black people. Even today, white Tulsans use an entirely different language or conversation when it comes to talking about or discussing the destruction of "Black Wall Street," as the descendants of the white mob, who robbed and invaded the streets of the Greenwood District, really don't want to be blamed, reminded or held responsible for their ancestors' uncouth, horrific actions. Indeed, many of these un-named (white) individuals want to "marginalize the truth" (Staples, 2020, p. 3), or cover it up. Quite truthfully, and paradoxically, "Black Wall Street" will never be the same; but it hasn't been from a lack of trying. Unfortunately, the Black residents of the Greenwood community have struggled mightily because of the infamous Tulsa race massacre of 1921.

Needless to say, the Black community and the people that still live in the Greenwood District today don't have the economic wherewithal or the means to begin anew, or to revive the place as it once was during its heyday. Therefore, it will be difficult and extremely hard to rebound or rebuild, because of a lack of funds, and because of "the construction of a highway through the area," and the almost total "collapse of Tulsa's Black business community" (Ford, 2019, p. 2B). Moreover, "the civil rights movement, unfortunately, gave Black residents[of the Greenwood District] the option to shop at [other] stores once reserved for [only] whites," after the end of legal racial segregation, in 1964. This means that the Black people of Greenwood are spending "less money in their [own] community" today (Remembering Black Wall Street, 2020, p. 5). Hence, *reparations* would certainly make it a lot easier to rebuild, and recover, while providing the material needs for the Black people in the Greenwood area.

After all, the severe losses to the financial center of “Black Wall Street” after the Tulsa race massacre “ran into the millions (in 1921 dollars)” (Duncan, 2003, p. 93). (Note 14) Therefore, a major consideration (by the state of Oklahoma) should be that the Blacks of Greenwood absolutely deserve compensation. Unfortunately, the Tulsa Race Riot Commission, in 2001, “concluded its [specious] work without awarding [Black] reparations” (Painter, 2006, p. 330). In this regard, this unsatisfactory decision by the Tulsa Race Riot Commission should be largely seen as only *symbolic* and *toothless*, because it didn’t have *any* real power to provide redress, or to do *anything* for the long suffering Black Greenwood residents. Therefore, the Tulsa Race Riot Commission’s final decision about *not* providing *reparations* (to African Americans) was incorrect, unfair and plain wrong. Finally, in spite of the many bad things that have happened to the Black community of Greenwood over the years, the Black people of the District haven’t given up. Thus, financial support is the key to reviving “the economic and cultural *mecca*,” and hopefully the embattled enclave will bounce back, and continue on, without forgetting. Furthermore, according to journalist Justin Juozapavicius (2017, p. 8A), Black leaders in North Tulsa, Oklahoma are “attempting to make good on failed hopes of an eventual renaissance” of the neglected Greenwood neighborhood by bringing 100 businesses back to the depressed area, this year (2021), which marks “the [massacre or] race riot’s 100th anniversary.” Incredibly, this “ambitious, perhaps audacious, endeavor” and sincere effort is called “the *North Tulsa 100* initiative” (Juozapavicius, 2017, p. 8A). However, this needed project might “be met with difficulties, as cities around the county confront similar challenges” with rebuilding and “getting businesses to move back into Africa-American communities, particularly poorer ones” (Juozapavicius, 2017, p. 8A) (Note 15). Not irrelevantly, and for the immediate future, Black Tulsans will try to carry on, and, perhaps, restore and fashion “Black Wall Street” as it was during its glory days.

5. Acknowledgement/Conclusions

To be abundantly clear: The white mob of Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921, was directly responsible for tearing down the racially segregated, Black Greenwood District. This extreme, racist, *unprovoked* attack, by nearby white Tulsan residents, and Ku Klux Klan members also (sadly) provided “a springboard” for the absolute “infiltration of white supremacy into contemporary policing and other key institutions” (Ali, 2021, p. 7B) in the state. To be sure, the destruction of “Black Wall Street” was another mass casualty killing of Black people by law enforcement officials in the state of Oklahoma. Black Tulsans felt *incredulity*: Many probably asked why did this happen to us? Indeed, did the Black residents of Greenwood anticipate the kinds of indefensible things that occurred? That is, the *melee*, and slaughter, sparked by the *manic* white supremacist groups, and the Tulsa, Oklahoma police. To be certain, the negative impact to the Black economy was enormous, as the Greenwood District was completely destroyed, or demolished, playing out over “two days of unprecedented racial violence” (Fain, 2017, p. 2). This historical fact is not *hyperbole*, as the “white mob” was motivated by feelings of racial purpose, white superiority, and racial *animus*. In this regard, also, white Tulsans seemed to

have had tremendous contempt for the Black people of Greenwood; but their violent deaths (in 1921) were totally unnecessary. To get a sense of what it might have been like, we only have to watch the 2020 limited HBO series “Lovecraft Country,” episode 9, entitled Rewind 1921, to see how *incendiary* bombs were dropped by a white pilot on “Black Wall Street.” Or we can also watch the 2019 HBO series, the “Watchman,” episode 1, entitled “It’s Summer and We’re Running Out of Ice,” which examines the Tulsa race massacre “and [white] policing in an alternate reality...” (Ali, 2021, p. 7B). These television films are somewhat embellished, but they are based on historical truths. Unfortunately, white Tulsans want to move on from the Tulsa race riot/massacre, even though it *did* happen. Question: Why did the truth of this deplorable event remain hidden for several decades by white Americans? More importantly, are white Americans comfortable with the monstrous actions of radicalized, white marauders and rioters, who committed indiscriminate, merciless killings of Black Tulsans? Or do they want to *omit* or pretend that this massacre is not worthy of further discussion, investigation, or even writing about, because it might spoil the so-called righteous, “lily white” image they want to project? Perhaps.

When it is all said and done, we should continue to commiserate, and shine a spotlight on this disturbing racial incident. Or we will never learn from this *ugly* American history. Aside from shying away from racial justice, we still don’t know all of the names of the white extremists, or mob members and foot soldiers that assaulted the Black residents of the Greenwood District, and decimated “Black Wall Street.” These nameless white rioters deserve our condemnation, and derision, because a broken Tulsa criminal justice system and white, law enforcement officials did nothing to punish these white murderers and wrong-doers. Therefore, we cannot let *bygones* be *bygones*, or we might invite even more racially motivated attacks by white supremacists, thugs and criminals. Also, in this regard, we should never try to defend the indefensible, or what happened to the innocent Black souls who perished in Tulsa, Oklahoma. To be honest, the Black community of Greenwood have always been right about their mistreatment by white Tulsans; but their legitimate complaints have been, seemingly, ignored, or forgotten, as if Blacks are of no consequence by the powers-that-be, or by white Tulsans. That said, we need the wisdom and maturity to understand the truth of what was done to “Black Wall Street,” without the lies, platitudes, and misinformation from those who don’t want to revive or restore the historic District of Greenwood, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Finally, it will take *dialogue* and *reconciliation*, with both the Black and white communities of Tulsa, Oklahoma, to insure that nothing like the destruction of “Black Wall Street” ever happen again. And we must always remember that, “an officially sanctioned white mob attacked a flourishing Black Tulsa neighborhood in 1921, killing possibly hundreds and destroying its entire business district” (Bates & Chow, 2021, p. 87), without a sense of guilt. This knowledge should also be the path forward in *redressing* the Black residents of Greenwood. So it is critical that *all* Americans know the truth about the Tulsa race massacre, because it “is rarely taught in schools” (Bates & Chow, 2021, p. 87). In the end, we must also ask some hard questions about the *needless* deaths of Black Tulsans, mainly because

it is time for a reckoning about this heart-wrenching tragedy. And regardless of what white Tulsans decide to do about racial *inclusivity* and *reparations* for the Blacks of Greenwood, the fight and struggle for racial and social justice will continue.

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Notes

Note 1. It should be noted that the Black community of Greenwood and Black Wall Street were founded by O. W. Gurley, a wealthy Black man, in 1906.

Note 2. Fain tells us that, "Portraying all Blacks as criminals served the Black inferiority narrative, maintained Jim Crow segregation, and promoted the violent enforcement of racist ideology." See reference, Fain.

Note 3. In retrospect, having such concerns about such racial matters were admirable—that is, as Black Tulsans felt and experienced racism and discrimination from whites.

Note 4. This horrid, intimidating situation was untenable, like a time bomb ready to explode; especially as the Black Greenwood community was concerned, and negatively affected.

Note 5. Generally speaking, the lies of white women have led to the lynching of Black men, especially in the Deep South, because of the *omnipresence* of white supremacy.

Note 6. Keep in mind that the white mob (in Florida) morphed into a dangerous group of thugs, out for blood against the Black people of Rosewood. Therefore, they seemed totally unconcerned about their murderous activities.

Note 7. What the white mob did was startlingly wrong and unimaginably cruel, destructive, and devastating for the Black Rosewood residents. And, unfortunately, the white mob got away with it; and white Floridians tried to keep this Rosewood incident hidden for over seventy years.

Note 8. According to professor Tomek, “MOVE [was] a controversial Philadelphia-based organization often associated with the Black Power movement, [which] combined philosophies of Black Nationalism and an archo-primitivism.... The group’s very loud and public quest for racial justice, as well as its strong views led to a number of confrontations between MOVE members and their West Philadelphia neighbors as well as with Philadelphia police.” See reference, Tomek.

Note 9. According to Tyson, Carolyn Bryant “charged only that Till had “insulted” her, not grab her, and certainly not attempted to rape her.” See reference, Tyson.

Note 10. Unfortunately, cries of assault and rape from white women continue—that is, when it comes to Black men. Today, these white women have been dubbed “Karen,” because of their lies, out of control and nasty comments against Black men, in general.

Note 11. When it was discovered what the disdainful white mob did, the powers in charge tried to keep what happened secret. And contrary to widespread beliefs, white Tulsans did not condemn the violence.

Note 12. Worse of all, white Tulsans never wanted to talk about this matter—this distasteful incident—as it might have upset the white majority.

Note 13. White Tulsans also conveniently ignored the failure of their state criminal justice system, to protect its Black Greenwood citizens, as they were, perhaps, determined to cover-up “white crimes.”

Note 14. Blacks in Greenwood are still dealing with the ramifications of being African Americans in their own space, no matter the time period.

Note 15. It should be pointed out that Black Tulsans partially “rebuilt the [Greenwood] area in the decades” following the smoldering ruins of *Black Wall Street*, “only to see their work wiped out during the so-called urban progress of the 1960s” and later “under the guise of urban renewal....” See reference, Juozapavicius.

Biographical sketch

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