

The Tulsa Race Riot



Fall 2015

Analyzing This...

☞ Causes

☞ Triggers

☞ Results

CAUSES

∞ First Cause: Vigilantes

- Since statehood in 1907, Oklahoma had seen ~30 lynchings (hangings / burn at the stake / shooting)
- Of those, 26 were of African American descent.
- Others were common criminals or ‘undesirables’.

CAUSES

- ✎ Second Cause: Segregation
 - During this time, remember segregation laws are being passed like crazy.
 - In Tulsa, most of the 'well-off' white families had African American domestic help (butlers, housemaids, cooks, etc.)
 - There were also segregated businesses, schools, etc.

CAUSES

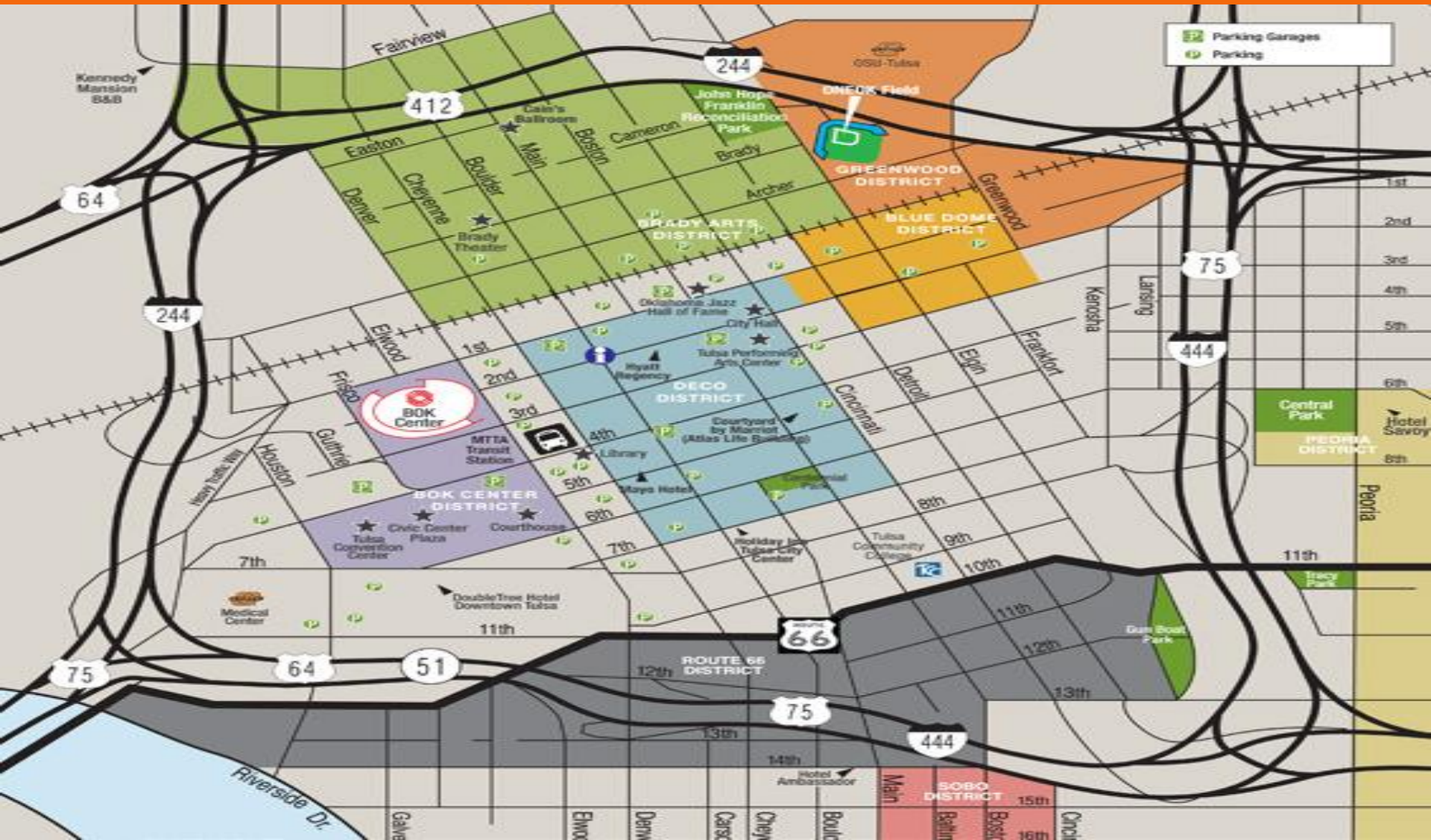
- ⌘ Third Cause: The KKK Influence
 - Tulsa had a very active Klan presence.
 - Remember, in the 'South', this organization seemed very respectable and necessary... to those who were involved.

CAUSES

∞ Fourth Cause: Black Prosperity

- By the 1920's, 'Greenwood' (street / area to the East of ONEOK Field) was a very prosperous African American community.
- A 'White' Tulsa + Oil Money = "The Magic City".
- Segregation → Black Prosperity
 - "The Black Wall Street"
 - Grocery Stores, Churches, Businesses, etc. all formed into this community of 'Greenwood'.

Downtown Tulsa



TRIGGER

- ☞ Monday, May 30th (Memorial Day)

- ☞ “Diamond Dick”, Dick Rowland
 - Age: 19
 - Race: African American
 - Occupation: Shoe shiner

- ☞ Sarah Page
 - Age: 17
 - Race: Caucasian
 - Occupation: Elevator Operator – Drexel Building

- ☞ What Happened?

TRIGGER

- 🌀 Tuesday, May 31, 1921 → Wed. June 1 – The Event
- 🌀 “Diamond Dick” is arrested and taken into custody.
- 🌀 The word gets out... People start talking (including *The Tulsa Tribune* or as we know it now, *The Tulsa World*)
- 🌀 “To Lynch Negro Tonight”



TRIGGER

- 🌀 Tuesday, May 31, 1921 → Wed. June 1st – The Event
- 🌀 Angry whites start gathering at the courthouse.
- 🌀 Armed blacks start gathering to protect Dick Rowland.
- 🌀 The sheriff is able to barricade the fourth floor, to hopefully calm the crowd.

TRIGGER

- 🌀 Tuesday, May 31, 1921 → Wed. June 1st – The Event
- 🌀 From mid-afternoon → nightfall, things are able to be kept under control.
- 🌀 Then... It gets real...
 - 10:00 PM – Tuesday, May 31, 1921
 - A 'disagreement' between a white and black man leads to shots being fired.
 - This 'kicks-off' the riot and several are killed.

TRIGGER

- 🌀 Tuesday, May 31, 1921 → Wed. June 1st – The Event
- 🌀 African Americans – protect families / houses.
- 🌀 Whites – let's do whatever we have to do.
 - Broke into stores for weapons.
 - Many were 'deputized' to 'protect' Tulsa.
 - Headed for Greenwood to take care of business.

GREENWOOD - BEFORE



DURING / AFTER THE RIOT







RESULTS

- Property Damage – approx. \$1.5 Million (in 1921)
- Approx. 1200 homes were destroyed
- Approx. 300 were looted, not burned
- The Black Wall Street or ‘Greenwood’ destroyed
- Number of Casualties?
Estimated: 36; Injured: ~800.
(Official Count?)

GREENWOOD - TODAY

