

FIU Faculty Spotlight Presentation on Rosewood- Transcript to Slide Show

Slide #2 The town of Rosewood Florida was settled by White's in 1847.

Slide#3 :The Town's name comes from the cedar trees that once grew there. When the trees were cut the wood had a pink rose color inside. Hence the Rose -Wood.

Slide#4: The trees were a natural resource that allowed for pencil mills to open and flourish. Once the trees were all gone the White residents began to desert the town by 1890. They moved to nearby Sumner one mile away.

Slide#5: In 1900 there were around 200 Black families who owned land and lived in Rosewood . There were also two white families, one of them being the Wright's who owned the town's General store. Rosewood was a self-sustaining town with businesses, two churches, a Masonic temple and even had its own Baseball team. Some would call Rosewood a prosperous little town. In this era of Jim Crow Blacks and whites co-existed peacefully in close proximity. But on a cold day on Jan 1 1923 all of that Changed.

Slide#6: 22 year old Francine "Fanny Taylor" of Sumner county was married to James Taylor and was having an affair with a local white man. He would visit her after James left for work. This day Fanny decided the affair had to stop. Hearing this the jilted lover savagely beat her and left her bloody and bruised. He escaped out the back door. Hysterically Fanny screamed rape in the streets. When her husband James arrived home and saw her condition. She was fearful that he would find out about her affair so instead she told him a Black man raped her.

Slide#7: This Lie set off the events that would unfold into an apocalyptic nightmare for the Black residents of Rosewood. James gathered the townspeople and spread lies to incite them to raid Rosewood. To find and hang the Black man who harmed his wife.

Slide#8: Sarah Carrier of Rosewood did laundry for the Taylors was at the Taylor house when the So called rape happened. Sarah stated she saw a white man hastily leave the house and soon before Fanny screamed rape in the streets. Sometime that same day her son Aaron Carrier and friend Sam Carter were approached by a white man at the Carrier home. He demanded they take him out of town immediately. The two men reluctantly carried the man safely away from Rosewood hidden in the back of a wagon.

Slide#9: James Taylor and his mob later learned that an ex con named Jesse Hunter who happened to be black escaped a nearby chain gang. In their mind he had to be the one who did the crime. They figured he was hiding in near by Rosewood. They sent dogs to the town with the scent they picked up from Fanny's house. The scent led the

dogs to the Carrier Home. After sharing stories of their events of the day the Carrier armed themselves.

Slide#10: Aaron and his cousin Sylvester gathered all the women and children inside the Carrier home. The two men sat by the window and waited for whatever was going to happen. James Taylor and a mob of 50 men descended upon the Carrier home. They kicked in the door and were met with gunshots that killed the two white men who tried to enter the house. Soon the carrier home was riddled with bullets that killed Slyvester and Sarah. Aaron and His wife Gussie(a school teacher were able to escape out the back door. Aaron told his wife to take the children and hide in the swamps for safety. Soon after the Mob caught Aaron, tied him to their truck by the neck and dragged him 3 miles through the town. Miraculously he survived and was rescued by The towns Sheriff. Sheriff Walker threw Carrier into his car and took him to a Gainesville jail where Carrier received medical attention.

Slide#11: Soon after the Mob caught up to Sam Carter. They questioned him about the black man they were looking for. When he couldn't provide a name they tortured him, made him dig a grave and killed him.

Slide#12: By then word had reached Gainesville Florida. The KKK were holding an annual rally there. Taylor reported that a Black uprising was happening and soon over 100 members were on their way to Rosewood to stop it.

Slide#13: Once there they Set Fire to the town's houses.

Slide#14: Gussie hid with children in the swamps for three days. She was caught by the mob. They sexually assaulted her leaving her for dead. When the Sheriff came back Gussie was barely alive. He took her to the Wright store where they tended to her injured body and spirit. At the Store Sheriff Walker Told John Wright that he called upon train conductors called the Bryce Brothers in Cedar Key to bring a train and carry the Rosewood resident out of town. He also asked Wright to hide blacks who needed shelter in his home until the train arrived.

Slide#14:Gussie woke up, gathered the strength and told the men she would also help find the people who were hiding in the swamps for days. They set off and ended up rescuing the many helpless women and children.

Slide#15:They were able to successfully get them on the train and away from Rosewood.

Slide#16: The Mob burned the entire town to the ground in a period of six days. They raped, tortured and hung innocent people all because of a lie. And to seize upon land that wasn't theirs. Families were devastated, they were split up and now without a home. They lost valuable land as well as family members.

Slide#17: A week after the massacre newspapers stop reporting on the incident. It was first portrayed as the Black people of Rosewood being the aggressors with the KKK going there to straighten things out. The massacre that left over 100 people dead. Even though it was first reported that 7 blacks and 2 whites were killed. The story eventually was wiped away as if nothing ever happened. No one ever stood trial or held responsible for the tragedy. The events of Rosewood were kept secret for over 70 years with know one ever willing to talk about it. The town of Rosewood no longer appeared on the map of Florida.

Slide#18: In 1994 Florida Governor Lawton Chiles signed a bill that paid a measly 150,000 dollars to descendants who could prove that their family lived in Rosewood during the massacre. 150,000 dollars for generational wealth lost. In 1997 filmmaker John Singleton brought more attention to the tragedy with his movie titled Rosewood. In 2004 Rosewood was declared a Florida Heritage Landmark. A sign where Rosewood once stood now marks the site of one of America's darkest hours.

Slide#19: This is the only house left standing in Rosewood. It Belonged to John Wright. It's where he sheltered Blacks during the violence.

Rosewood





ROSEWOOD FLORIDA





James and Fannie Coleman Taylor Triggered the Rosewood Massacre
Sumner Sawmill Foreman



James and Fannie Taylor

WHITES GATHER FOR MILES TO SLAY NEGROES

Men Sought Heavily
Barricaded in
Small Hut

NEGRO LYNCHED ON MOTHER'S GRAVE

Latest Developments in Race
Troubles at Rosewood, Fla.

Rosewood, Fla., Jan. 6—A new grave was dug in the Negro cemetery at Sumner, near here late today and in it Sheriff Elias Walker placed the body of James Carrier, whose death at the hands of several white men this morning was the sequel of the clash between the races at Rosewood Thursday night.

Carrier was shot to death while standing on the graves of the four other Negroes who fell in the fighting that followed an attempt of a crowd of white men to enter a Negro house in search of Jesse Hunter, wanted for













Rosewood Cabin Burning





"Hope Prevails" painting depicting Rosewood survivors.



behind bars.”

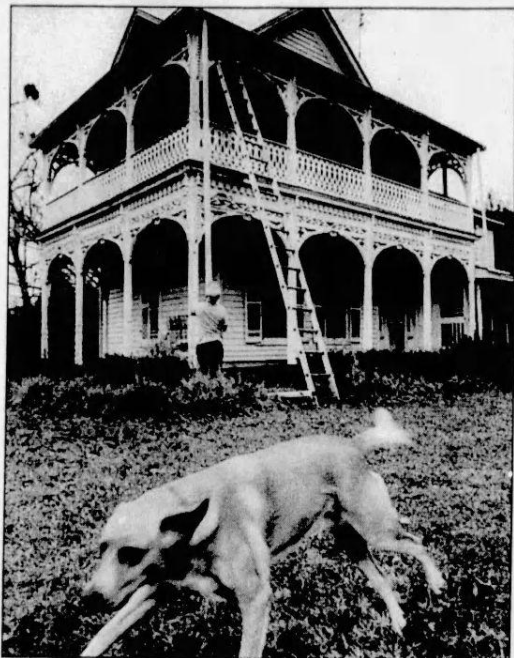
The Department of Corrections has begun review

reduced sentences, which he said endanger people and make “a mockery of the hard work our law enforce-

for overcrowding.

Even though McDougall has five years tacked onto out.”

“Let him sue,” Butterworth said. “Don’t let him



Associated Press

ROSEWOOD — Two survivors of a racial rampage that destroyed the all-black town of Rosewood 70 years ago will ask lawmakers to reimburse them for property loss and memorialize the New Year’s Day massacre.

They want the Legislature to right a wrong, put Rosewood back on the map and make it prominent in history books.

Lee Ruth Davis, 77, of Miami and her cousin, Minnie Lee Langley, 88, of Jacksonville believe they are the only people left who witnessed the chaos in 1923 when Rosewood was burned by a white mob with help from the Ku Klux Klan.

Now they want the story told. More than that, they want Florida to own up to its history, acknowledge the atrocity, and do something to right a 70-year-old wrong.

“We had all our property there, and they took everything they didn’t burn. They took our chickens and anything else we had in Rosewood. They even took it off the map,” Langley recalls.

“This part of the state’s history has been swept under the carpet,” said Manuel Dobrinsky, a lawyer from Miami’s Holland & Knight law firm, which is helping Langley and Davis. “It’s something that needs to be recognized.”

The draft proposal of the bill Dobrinsky wants the Legislature to consider reads like a tragic and lurid screenplay.

Mob survivors want lost town remembered

“As the manhunt grew, so did the mob’s fury. People came from all around to take part in the manhunt. They were people with a thirst for blood. The remaining survivors of Rosewood . . . are still tortured with the lingering image of a parent or grandparent being lynched or shot; of the family home being burned to the ground; of crawling through the woods in the dead of night and hiding from an armed and crazy mob; of being hated and attacked for nothing more than their color.”

About all that’s left of Rosewood now is a 6- by 14-inch steel sign, white letters on a green background, planted on the north side of State Road 24 in western Levy County. The two-lane highway stretches from Gainesville southwest to the Gulf of Mexico, ending at Cedar Key. Rosewood is still on some maps.

A two-story white clapboard house on the south side of the road was the only building left standing after the fires of the Rosewood riot finally went out.

Doyal Scoggins lives in that quaint house now. It was built by John Wright, who ran a general store out of his home. He was the only white person who lived in Rosewood. That’s why the house was spared when the Klan galloped through with torches on Jan. 1, 1923.

“When I moved here a few years ago, I took a Florida history course at the community college, hoping to learn more about what happened here,” Scoggins said. “The instructor didn’t know a thing about it.”

Seven decades ago, Florida was still a small Southern state. The racism and violence that scarred much of the South were present here as well.

“Florida had the highest lynching rate per capita in the United States prior to World War I,” said University of Florida history professor David Colburn. “A lot of it had to do with the transition taking place in Florida. People were moving in; blacks were demanding rights and equality for themselves.”

Only a handful of newspaper accounts of the Rosewood attack can be found. Those accounts don’t always agree. One lists the dead at seven, another at 21. Dobrinsky’s law firm puts the number as high as 100, based on interviews and other newspaper clippings.

In his 11-volume work, *A History of the South*, historian George Tindall catalogs the racist assaults of the early 20th Century.

“The last serious affair was at Rosewood, Fla., where a white mob in search of an alleged Negro rapist ran amok through the Negro community, burned six houses and a church, and left five Negroes and two whites dead,” Tindall writes in Volume 10, *The Emergence of the New South*.

Colburn said facts on Rosewood are too sketchy to make it of any real use for historians. Hard evidence of the incident is difficult to come by; anecdotal information is about all that’s available.

This house, owned by a white man in 1923, is the only remnant of Rosewood, a town razed by a white mob.



The Last House Remaining- The John Wright House



ROSEWOOD, FLORIDA

Racial violence erupted in the small and quiet Rosewood community January 1-7, 1923. Rosewood, a predominantly colored community, was home to the Bradley, Carrier, Carter, Goins, and Hall families, among others. Residents supported a school taught by Mahulda "Gussie" Brown Carrier, three churches, and a Masonic lodge. Many of them owned their homes, some were business owners, and others worked in nearby Sumner and at the Cummer Lumber Mill. This quiet life came to an end on January 1, 1923, when a white Sumner woman accused a black man of assaulting her. In the search for her alleged attacker, whites terrorized and killed Rosewood residents. In the days of fear and violence that followed, many Rosewood citizens sought refuge in the nearby woods. White merchant John M. Wright and other courageous whites sheltered some of the fleeing men, women and children. Whites burned Rosewood and looted livestock and property; two were killed while attacking a home. Five blacks also lost their lives: Sam Carter, who was tortured for information and shot to death on January 1; Sarah Carrier; Lexie Gordon; James Carrier; and Mingo Williams. Those who survived were forever scarred.

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