Disorderly History: Cultural Landscapes, Racial Violence, and Memory, 1876-1923

Monica L. Rhodes
University of Pennsylvania

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Keywords
memorials, riots, commemoration, culture, violence

Disciplines
Historic Preservation and Conservation

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DISORDERLY HISTORY: CULTURAL LANDSCAPES, RACIAL VIOLENCE, AND MEMORY, 1876-1923

Monica L. Rhodes

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2012

Advisor
Program Chair
Randall F. Mason
Associate Professor
Dedication:

The process of identifying, researching, and creating a thesis is a solo endeavor. Fortunately, I never felt too disconnected from those that truly cheered my efforts and supported my dreams. To my sisters, Cherika and Vana’. Thank you for the late night Skype conversations. My parents, Carol and Russell, thank you for the encouraging words and help to define my work by asking the famous question, “Now, what are you studying, again?”

To my friend/family circle, Chevaughn, Nikki, Keina, Marquita, Ibram, your support has meant the world to me.

Finally, to Kaylin, for the constant support and unwelcomed prodding at times. Thank you for reminding that my office hours are from 9-5.
Acknowledgements:

This thesis could have been completed all alone. However, I am completely aware that without the assistance of an advisor that asked essential questions when necessary, this project would not have been completed on time or with the level of analysis that is presented here. Randall Mason, thank you for your encouragement and conversations throughout this process.

Derek Alderman provided important direction for my thesis and led me into some interesting international conversations about this very same issue.

Last, but certainly not least, Craig Stutman for reading drafts of this work.

Any errors found in this document are my own.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

With the erection of a National Monument dedicated to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 2011, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, in partnership with the National Park Service made a deliberate effort to commemorate a time when the battle for equality was in full swing. The design of the 30-foot memorial, entitled the Stone of Hope, was borrowed from King’s “I Have A Dream” speech. The monument encourages the viewer to see the struggle for equality by experiencing excerpts from some King’s most notable speeches and is now permanently embedded on the American landscape.

Excerpts engraved on the monument offer snippets of the positions that King held during his life on issues ranging from Civil Rights to the Vietnam War. The rendition of King as a non-violent Civil Rights figure is not confined to Washington, D.C., indeed his memory has been etched across America through street names and schools. It is without question that King serves as a key figure for the non-violent pursuit of equality in the country.

In an effort to mark the violence and terrorism that plagued the time nationally known as the Civil Rights Movement, monuments that depict this period have been largely limited to a non-violent narrative about the struggle for progress. This is not to say that violent confrontations are not present on the landscape. War memorials, for instance commemorate violence episodes in history and convey a sense of place and sacredness. Civil Rights monuments, on the other hand, are typically boiled down to a more palatable version of struggle chalked full of protest songs, redundant quotes, and stagnant leaders.

The level to which the image of Martin Luther King has been appropriated to serve as the champion of non-violent resistance is unsettling. Rather than
present a more complex person that shifted his perspective over the course of his life, it is clear a the more acceptable version of the mid-twentieth century Civil Rights Movement is presented for the American public. The Stone of Hope is a reflection of that historical confinement.

Non-violence is more palatable to the taste of the American historical memory, is one of non-violence. However the struggle for Civil Rights is one that is more complicated, complex, longer, and more violent. When viewing the struggle for equal rights for African Americans in particular, the period associated with the movement begins to extend beyond the 1960s and arguably stretch as far back as the arrival of the first enslaved African, 1619. Moreover, the confinement of the Civil Rights Movement to a geographical location, the South, and the promotion of one figure over many, “simultaneously elevates and diminishes the movement.”

Creating the spaces to explore historical inequality in American society should be a particular concern for preservationists. The role of historic preservation is not only to serve as managers of change, but the stewards of the future. Preservation has taken the charge of facilitating historical change and needs to redefine its mission in order to reach and attract a broader audience. Moreover, the privileging of narratives over others in American history has hampered the field and possibly discouraged individuals interested in history for fear that their voice will not be heard.

In discussions of the development of historic preservation as a field, one often hears that for the majority of its history preservation has only concerned itself with “dead-rich-white-guys.” This seems to be an accepted notion of the narrow focus public history in general and historic preservation in particular once held. However, what is not discussed is the political, social, and economic culture
that created the opportunity for “dead-rich-white-guys” to become the center of historical analysis is not too far removed from America’s contemporary reality.

The Battle of Liberty Place in 1874 is a primary example of the contested history where one “dominant” group is lauded and the other disenfranchised erased. In New Orleans, Louisiana the Democratic party, primarily consisting of members Confederate veterans and the local White League sought to reassert control over local politics through racially motivated violence that served to reestablish European American political control over the city. The White-supremacist group held the armory and state house hostage until federal troops restored order. Throughout the violent attack on the city, no member of the White League was arrested or charged with murder or the destruction of property.

Figure 1: Battle of Liberty Place Monument, 1906: Historical Marker Database
In 1891 New Orleans erected a monument to celebrate the individuals that fought to suppress the political rights of African Americans (See Figure 1, previous page). Interestingly enough, the story does not end here. From the construction of the monument until the late 1980s when power structures in the city became more equal, Canal Street was a used as gathering space for KKK rallies and other hate groups. Because of the hostile environment created for individuals that did not approve of this activity, the city council, in 1989, voted to completely remove the statue from the city’s landscape and place it in storage. David Duke, a staunch supporter of the Ku Klux Klan, which eventually forced to a compromise between the city and European American interest groups. Currently the monument is back on display behind a power station and adjacent to the River Line street car route (Figure 2).

What demands public interpretation is the meaning of this monument as a hallmark of European American racism. To address this concern the City of New Orleans had to face the challenge of presenting “difficult” history to its citizenry. Historic preservationists missed an opportunity to engage groups and thereby broaden its audience and actively investigate the events that precipitated the violence against African and Italian Americans. Exploring civil violence is difficult to come to terms with for any field. Nevertheless, cases of violence have shaped the ways in which cities are experience and racial-memory constructed and ultimately interpreted, even if “uncomfortable.”

The idea of “difficult” or “uncomfortable” histories of violent racial conflict is somewhat problematic. First, the term is typically used when discussing violent history on one group by another. Second, the violence is usually described as “difficult” for the group that was responsible for much of the violence. Third, shifting the paradigm away from ideas about the “feelings” of one side of the
conflict reproduces the historical inequality in contemporary discussions about the past.

Recently there has been an upsurge in the recognition of the diversity of American experiences that needs to be represented in the annals of historical space. However that recognition has been slow to incorporate racial violence of the sort that devastated many American communities. American history does not attempt to tackle the built environment experienced through eyes of the terrorized group. This lacuna in scholarship and commemoration between historic preservation and “difficult” American history is where this project enters.


**Literature Review**

How have cities that experienced racial violence among its citizenry come to terms with recognizing and commemorating in these communities? This study will approach the topic by first understanding how the field of historic preservation has approached the topic of race and violent history. Moreover, an analysis of the intersections of race, violence, and commemorative space during the nadir in African American history will be put forth. Ultimately, this examination seeks to cut through the miasma of space and memory to answer tangible questions about the present and discuss the management of the future.

This section will cover the development of the literature concerning racial violence and its treatment in the world of historic preservation. A thematic discussion will serve as the structure of this section. While the discussion of race and violence is not limited to the relationship between African Americans and European Americans, this study will focus on the relationship between 1876 and 1923, known as the nadir.

A glimpse at the text related to the topic will serve as a building block for my argument that cities that have experienced violent events based on race have not fully embraced this part of their history. This fissure in national memory can be the ingress of historic preservation into meaningful conversation about race, public history, and interpretation. Racial violence beyond 1923 will not be explored in great detail and is out of the purview of this study, although room for an expansion of this study to include other time periods certainly exists.

**Racial Violence**

Scholars have extensively explored the topic of racial violence across disciplinary lines. Studies generally treat the issues as a multi-casual incident
that has significance beyond a particular location. The causes and effects of the events are investigated and the racial uprising is placed inside a larger historical narrative of the United States. However, what is not often discussed is the residual economic, political, and social effects in the location from the violence.

Scholars have approached the topic of racial violence from a sociological perspective. Allen Grimshaw, has written extensively on racial violence in the 19th and 20th century. In *A Social History of Racial Violence*, Grimshaw provides a historical and sociological framework to race-based violence. Intergroup violence and governmental responses to these events are outlined in his work. However, the work falls short in connecting the historical with the contemporary phenomena.

Literature that spans the boundary of racial violence historiography is also helpful in understanding patterns in violence. In the *Encyclopedia of American Race Riots*, riots and events related to racial violence from 1865 to 2005 are analyzed in a cursory form. This style of documentation is extremely helpful as an introductory text, but too often other books rely on this type of style. Jan Voogd’s analysis of the Red Summer offers the reader a thematic discussion of racial violence in 1919, but unfortunately falls short when discussing reasons why these events have largely been forgotten. Nevertheless the text provides an introduction to the circumstances surrounding anti-African American violence after WWI.

It is worth noting that most of the literature surrounding issues of violence and race does so in a manner that does not actively assess current conditions.

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of these same neighborhoods nor seek solutions acknowledge acts of violence against communities. There is a general disconnection between violent history and contemporary phenomena, the East St. Louis case offers insight into this all too frequent practice. Unfortunately, the crux of the analysis focuses on the experiences of one group of people.

Studies of racial violence concentrate disproportionately on the experience of African American men during the particular act of violence. The absence of women’s role in the narrative of violence is extremely significant and does not reflect the incorporation of women in the retelling of such an important period in history. While an important aspect and definitely a major reason why many of the events occurred, African American women had an equal share of the violence perpetrated against the city. 4

In Kenneth Foote’s *Shadowed Ground* he examines the difficulty in achieving full support for memorials dedicated to “minority” events and historical figures.5 Foote advocates for the erection of memorials to key figures such as Dr. King, Harriet Tubman, and Frederick Douglas. This reductionist argument for the memorialization of African American history not only gives support to this idea of a “top down” historical approach, but also reproduces a narrative of a few individuals. Seldom introduced, in the politics of violent commemoration is the ability to memorialize individuals that are not as well known.

Foote finally states “the one other option available to African Americans and Native Americans is to build memorial on neutral grounds so that controversial issues can be addressed independently of the meaning of a

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particular contested space.” Creating a monument to recognize an event and to place it outside of the community of the event could potentially create friction and lack of stewardship for certain groups. Cities continue to struggle with the interpretation and location of these sites.

The alienation of African Americans has not fallen squarely on the shoulders of municipalities, academics often perpetuate language that has the ability to limit dialogue. While Savage’s treatment of public monuments and enslavement are well researched and argued, his perpetual use of the term “slave” is particularly problematic. African Americans were enslaved and were not “slaves”. The continued use of the word “slave” reproduces a narrative that defines African Americans as property. This historically reductionist term has been taken to task numerous times in African American Studies scholarship and ultimately is an outgrowth of a racist perspective about African Americans.7

Utilizing this line of thinking of African Americas as less than agents in their own history continues the narrative of victimization and the onus is placed on the enslaved individual, rather than the person that enslaved. Moreover, his assertions can be connected to African Americans in racially violent situations merely accepting the community attack, subsequently reinforcing the narrative of victimization. It is clear throughout the nation that African American communities refused to accept violence from their European American counterparts and not dole out equal retribution.8

Preservation

The topic of racial violence has been discussed extensively in text that have taken little time to determine the vestiges of what remains from those instances. *Red Summer* by Cameron McWhirter offers an important contribution to the scholarship surrounding the summer of 1919. Unfortunately, McWhirter does not connect his analysis to what remained after the violence and what is currently on the landscape.⁹ While connecting past event with present phenomena may not be on the radar for many historians, it nevertheless adds to the understanding of the event. Furthermore, a preservationist lens that explicitly deals with past phenomena in the context of contemporary realities has not been applied.

In the text that address the negotiations between politics of meaning and the construction of a useable past, little attention is given to the economic incentives that should be tied to the argument. In “Emphasis on the Public,” Burchall examines the disconnection between St. Georges’s Bermuda World Heritage status and the majority of the Black population. She argues that public history must emphasize and engage the participation of the local population in order to be successful as professionals. Moreover she asserts that each group creates its own sense of place and in order to be relevant to the population, a professional must tap into this historical reality to reflect the values of the group.¹⁰

As Diane Barthel contends, historic preservation has an important role in shaping collective memories of communities. Barthel also asserts that preservation should actively position itself as the professionals concerned with preserving a community’s culture through selection, contextualization, and

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Memory

Unfortunately for many of the cities that experienced racial violence, many existing buildings and homes were destroyed. This rupture in the physical fabric creates a barrier to creating a sense of orientation within the city. Yet, for communities that experienced this type of loss, a commemoration of the event is an indicator of a group attempting to reattach the, often violent, rupture.

Interpreting the places where this separation has occurred has proven to be an extremely contentious zone especially when violence based on race has occurred in a community. This fissure has occurred at the local, state, and national level. It seems as if the discussion of “uncomfortable history” is lauded when discussing Enslavement. However, the level discomfort does not venture into other areas of history that were outgrowths of the institution that does not seem as peculiar when one takes account of the events that followed. As an approach to understanding the realities of the racial violence that transpired in cities such as New Orleans and East St. Louis, it is important to realize the role collective memory plays in the interpretation of events.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the home of the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, and other symbols of freedom, was the center of controversy between African American activities and Independence National Historical Park. Frustration grew when INHP announced its plans for the site in front of an audience. The crowd, increasingly disenchanted with polices and interpretative strategies of the parks’ plans were upset. In fact the argument was that there was not an African American presence in the couched in the parks’ obsession

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with its colonial past. Ultimately, the group realized that there absence should not continue and that a “shared sense of the past that is connected to a shared sense of the present.” Today, the site stands as an example of a public-private partnership and the role community support plays in the outcome of a project.

**Terminology**

Racial violence is used to highlight the amount of hatred directed towards African American community by European American citizens. The use of the term riot often masks the level of destruction created by groups towards another racial group. These events were anything but spontaneous. Groups were formed based on preconceived notions of European American superiority or the fabricated or exaggerated newspaper of events.

There term racial violence encompassed the violence committed on one group towards another centered on race. Racial violence also incorporates the destruction of life and property on both a large and small scale. Additionally, the term takes into account the lynchings that often preceded or happened in concert with extremely violent situations. Although lynchings are not explored, it is imperative to realize that it was a form of terrorism used often in numerous locations with different reasons. Shootings by police or military officers of African American civilians is also comprises the term. African American expulsion from cities is worth noting and is a part of the term as well. Finally, the sexual assault, although not discussed as prominently in racial violence literature, it nevertheless needs to be a part of the narrative.

Principally characterized as race riots, some studies have described

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these events as massacres or pogroms in cities across the nation.\textsuperscript{13} The level and magnitude of some events lend themselves to more than just isolated incidents, which scholars have defined as riots. Rather this thesis explores the interconnections between the incidences of race riots to thread together a larger narrative about racial violence in the country.

**Limitations**

Racial violence against African Americans was not the only form of violence against a particular group. Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans as a racial group have experience similar instances of intimidation and terrorism. Interestingly enough, some of the same terrorist tactics were used in order to incite violence from community members.\textsuperscript{14} There is currently opportunity to treat each group and explore the similarities of causation.

It is also worth noting that although the nadir in American race relations is between 1877 and 1901, according to Rayford Logan, this analysis has expanded the time period to include major acts of violence that occurred one year prior to the formal end of Reconstruction. Moreover, there is no way this project could have come to certain conclusions without extending the time period beyond 1901. This expansion of the “nadir” opens the topic to a more nuanced approach to discussing violence motivated by race.

The topic of lynching, while intimately connected to the racial violence should be given a deeper treatment. If racial violence is viewed as an inferno of propaganda, racism, and destruction, lynching was the match that ignited much


\textsuperscript{14} Najia Aarim-Heriot *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the United States, 1848-82*. (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
of the tension. The culture that persisted when a lynching occurred could roughly be called one of lawlessness and terror for a particular group. A wide range of issues pertaining to lynching, culture, and the American landscape will enrich historical understanding of why and how certain lynchings are discussed and others are made invisible.

Sexual assault is another form of gender and racial terrorism that has also been overlooked when studying different types of racially violent moments. Recent scholarship focuses on the role rape played in the Civil Rights Movement. While the role of rape historically has not been examined beyond the 1960s, it would be interesting to see how the rape of African American women were treated prior to these violent outbreaks. Since the reports of rape connected to racial violence only occurred between African American men and European American women.

This study focuses on physical responses to acts of racial violence and does not give too much attention to the festivals, oral histories, celebrations, marches, or annual lectures given to commemorate acts of racial violence. These commemorative responses are just as important in recognizing a violent past and the oral history ensures that the story is not completely lost. However, the separation between a sociological analysis and one that deals with historic preservation is the privileging of tangible expressions of culture.

It is clear that the recognition of racial violence on the American landscape is long overdue. Now is the opportunity to historically pivot and began to prioritize history that does not necessarily laud the achievements are paint a picture of glorious failure for national sites. After all, what we preserve now

and commemorate now, is a direct reflection about who we are as a society. Additionally, it provides glimpses of our historical reflection by what events receive recognition and perhaps even says more about the sites that are ignored.

**Methodology and Chapter Outline**

What is the status of these spaces that forces a city to confront a past sullies its new image? Documenting the number of spaces where is seen as polemical, but perhaps a study of the inventory and three cities efforts could she light on the best practices for talking about “uncomfortable” history.

Examining the historical realities of communities affected by racial violence deserves a multifaceted approach. Utilizing primary and secondary resources to discuss and support this analysis is key. Secondary research will function as the basis for a historical analysis of the events that precipitated the uprising. The treatment of the shift in interpretation of the event will be highlighted in the section.

To date, there has been no clear count of the commemorative responses to racially motivated violence between the years of 1876 and 1923. Three sites are treated as culture resources and tangible guides to the level of attention give to discussion “difficult” histories. This study will narrow the field of inter-ethnic conflict by selecting three case studies and the strategies particular cities have utilized to commemorate events. In the case of civil violence, the destruction of community supersedes the destruction of a building and serves as the nexus between meaning and interpretation.

In the prevailing narrative regarding instances of racial violence, there have been inconsistencies in reporting. The number of deaths in Tulsa, Oklahoma for example has been as low as 9 and high as 200. These discrepancies
in reporting make the task of assessing the magnitude of violence all the more difficult. Additionally, the numbers of buildings or homes burned, when reported, were most likely less than actual destruction.

There is also no national narrative for the events that were as widespread and frequent as racial violence, instead commemoration has been left to the city where the event transpired. So it is not surprising that these same cities have no been the champion for these sites. Understandably, these spaces force a city to come to terms with a history that many want to forget. This thesis argues four main points: (1) historic preservation must be more aggressive and inclusive in preserving commemorative spaces, (2) commemorative heritage must be closely connected to historic preservation to inform the narrative of American violence, (3) commemorative spaces have place-shaping values and should be more incorporated in the preservation story of American history, and (4) monumental spaces of violence should be seen as a cultural resource and managed to present a broader more complicated historical narrative of America.

Chapter Two focuses on the nadir in of American race relations. This section gives particular attention to the events that precipitated racial violence in the country. A thematic discussion of voting, labor, the threat of sexual assault, the role of law enforcement, both military and the police play in violence, and community resistance.

Chapter Three is an investigation of the intersection of memory and violence in public space. The connection between commemorative spaces and different types of violence is explored. This study does not simply focus on racial violence against African Americans, but probes the deeper questions about what America’s citizens consider a national tragedy and how it has come to terms with its violent past.
Chapter Four, Five, and Six present case studies that explore the events that transpired in Wilmington, North Carolina, Springfield, Illinois, and Tulsa, Oklahoma. The case studies were determined primarily by two factors: geography and motives for violence. Geographically, these cities are located in the South, North, and the Midwest. The spark that ignited racial violence dealt squarely with voter suppression, labor conflicts, and accusation of sexual assault.

The final chapter provides an analysis of the commonalities in the occurrences of the racial violence. Moreover it offers a discussion of themes that are present in other cities that have commemorated their sites. Ultimately, this chapter serves a potential framework for cities that are interested in creating memorials for their cities.
CHAPTER 2: THE NADIR IN AMERICAN HISTORY

The Civil War left residual effects that created resentment and hatred that affected not only the upper echelon of European American society, but after the Emancipation Proclamation, it positioned African Americans in the same legal station as poorer European Americans. Reconstruction politics was an outgrowth of the resentment that European Americans felt after the Civil War, primarily due to the equal status the former enslaved possessed. After 1865, Reconstruction was instituted to transform American society from one that depended chiefly on the enslaved labor of African Americans to the full integration of all citizens.

The historiography that has defined the Reconstruction era for much of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries falls into three main categorizations: The Dunning School, Revisionist, and Post-Revisionist. The first of these, that of the Dunning school, named after historian William Dunning, can perhaps be summarized best by Dunning’s quote stating that “the white South genuinely accepted the reality of military defeat, stood ready to do justice to the emancipated slaves, and desired above all a quick reintegration into the fabric of national life.”16 Essentially, what Dunning and others have stated here is that African Americans were seen as child-like and incapable of exercising the rights of freedom.

By the 1920s and 30s, historians began to critique the scholarship that had dominated Reconstruction since 1901. These historians analyzed the role politics and economics played in the subordination of Southern rights.17 In 1935, W.E.B. DuBois published Black Reconstruction, which examined the relationship of capital and labor in the battle for control of the South. DuBois argued for the

17 Foner, xx
first time for the centrality of African Americans in the history of Reconstruction politics.18

In the 50s and 60s, with the movement for Civil Rights in full swing, historians began to reinterpret the previous school. As an outgrowth from the questions asked in the 30 years prior, a different interpretation began to emerge. Revisionists emphasized the constitutional and educational changes. With the hopes of creating a Second Reconstruction, positive changes were highlighted and Radical Republicans praised for bringing about fundamental changes to the nation.

The post-Revisionists posited that Reconstruction was conservative and nonrevolutionary.19 Seen as a failure by historians, Reconstruction did not go far enough by Radical Republicans to achieve sweeping change.20 African Americans did not receive the social and educational promises made by the federal government. “Reconstruction was not merely a specific time period, but the beginning of an extended historical process; the adjustment of American society to the end of slavery.”21

Conceptualized in his book, The Negro in American Life and Thought, the Nadir, Rayford Logan, explores the erasure of political and social rights of African Americans by racist European American citizens.22 More specifically, he gives attention to the experiences of African Americans during each presidential term, in the media, and under the law. Reconstruction ended in 1877 and the

19 Foner, xxii.
21 Foner, xxvii.
South was interested in reinstating power to European Americans. Logan characterized the nadir as “A succession of weak presidents between 1877 and 1901 facilitated the consolidation of white supremacy in the South and Northern acceptance of victory.” The nadir in American history is ultimately described as the epoch of violence for African Americans that were shaped by extremely high rates of racial violence and lynching.

The Nadir, coined by Rayford Logan is a top-down approach to understanding the African-American experience from the presidential administration of Rutherford B. Hayes through Woodrow Wilson. Congressional activities, Supreme Court decisions, and the reporting of European American magazines and newspapers, all contributed to Logan’s analysis. While this time period does expose the duality in American society, it nevertheless frames the experiences of African Americans within the confines of often racist institutions and offices.

Raymond Gavins “perils and prospects” of African American Southern leadership is an indication of the atmosphere that was created by Plessy v Ferguson. The term “perils” refers to the tightening of the African American social and political spheres. “Prospects” on the other hand was a response to that tightening of opportunities in which an insular community developed that allowed African American business to thrive.

With the end of Reconstruction, most notably categorized as the Hayes-Tilden Compromise of 1877, the American government removed federal troops from the Southern region of the country. Gains made to secure racial equality were thwarted. Re-segregation occurred along with the systematic denial of

23 Logan, The Negro in American Life and Thought, 12.
voting rights for African American men. Most importantly, the same individuals that fought for “state rights” and participated in and benefited from the peculiar institution regained political power.

The end of reconstruction was a gradual process across the South that took the form of re-enfranchisement for ex Confederate soldiers and the systematic erasure of African American men from public life. The Ku Klux Klan, initially started in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee, and the White League, a cadre of conservative European American citizens, joined forces to suppress African American freedom. Intimidation tactics from both of these organizations led to rapid changes in the political landscape of Southern politics.

Although these groups were effective in terrorizing African American communities, there were strategic coalitions that were established to ensure African American concerns were heard. In Bennettsville, South Carolina, for instance, African American men faced the intimidation tactics head on and formed street patrols and secured weapons.25 The United States Supreme Court passed Plessy v. Ferguson in 1896, effectively segregating every level of society under the auspices of “separate but equal.” However the experiences of all Americans were not equal. In essence, the problem of the twentieth century as quoted by W.E.B. Dubois “is the color line.”26

By 1898, state constitutions effectively ostracized African American voices from the political arena. In Louisiana the number of African American men registered to vote in 1896 was 130,344. Two years after the state constitution was ratified the African American men on the registers was 5,320.27 While African

27 Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, 288.
Americas were experiencing racial terrorism on a national scale, many affluent European Americans were living during a time known as the Progressive Era. Marked by leaps in industry and defined by the notion of progress and upward mobility, the two groups were experiencing very different historical trajectories.

Like the reinstitution of Jim Crow the barriers created to halt African American political and social progress were numerous. De facto and de jure racism worked in tandem to circumscribe African American movement and freedom. Many of the political and social advances made during Radical Reconstruction were systematically abolished by the start of World War I. The Great Migration was a function of economic, social, and political conditions of the South for African Americans. Wages and the boll weevil epidemic in 1915 and 1916 positioned Northern industry an extremely attractive alternative.

Although a number of factors contributed to the systematic attack on newly arrived workers, the level to which racial violence is explored can be divided into six major categories: voting, labor, accusations of sexual assault, community agency, and law enforcement (police and military violence). These reasons are by no means exclusive; but lend themselves to a larger historical question about the socio-racial climate of the period.

**Voting**

Voting for African American men (African American women did not get the right to vote until the passage 19th Amendment) was extremely dangerous. During the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, although African American men had secured the right to vote with the passage of the fifteenth amendment in 1870, suppression of the vote was the primary reason responsible for the systematic attack on African Americans.
After the Civil War and with the passage of the fifteenth amendment African American men were more politically active in southern politics and were voted into offices. This shift in political power created legislation favorable to equality for both African Americans and poor European Americans. An upsurge in political activity coupled with the rise in the African American politicians created a violent reaction among European American citizens not interested in equal rights for all people.

Fused with the political restlessness of Southern European Americans and the removal of federal troops from the new structured American Southern, African Americans were left to defend and protect newly acquired rights from communities that considered them property less than 15 years before. Deadly clashes were a frequent reminder that although the status of African American had changed on paper, the climate of racial violence hurled toward African Americans was more fatal as ever.

The creation of organizations during this period tackled issues related to

Figure 3: Map of Racial Violence: Voting

*Does not represent the totality of racial violence in U.S.

28 For more on the massacre read Thomas Holt’s *Black over White: Negro Political Leadership in South Carolina during Reconstruction.* (University of Illinois Press, 1979).
voting rights and equal protection under the law. The National Association for the Advancement Colored People founded in 1909 formed around the premise of attacking discrimination through utilizing the court system to balance the playing field. The National Association for Colored Women, founded in 1896, although not able to benefit from the gains made for voting rights, nevertheless advocated for the full rights of citizenship for African American men.

**Labor**

Competition between industries that supported the WWI effort and the opportunity to escape overt Jim Crow tactics created an influx of African Americans workers into major cities in the North. Policies that openly bolstered the economic positions of European Americans and simultaneously exploited the labor of African Americans were the norm.

With the rise of industrialization, America experienced the first wave of migration of African American from the South to the North. The Great Migration
was a product of the shift in the national economy from agricultural to industrial jobs. This of course, attracted a number of African American interested in escaping the oppressive, terrorist climate of the South. Although the North was no haven for African American, it offered the opportunity for employment outside of sharecropping and the possible escape to the rising convict lease system that flourished in the United States.29

Racial violence increasingly occurred with the influx of African American to major cities. Equal opportunities in employment, housing, and political representation frequently resulted in violent clashes between African Americans and European American citizens.

**Accusations of Sexual Assault**

The protection of European American womanhood was an all-too typical excuse utilized to attack African American community and was the primary reason behind many lynchings. European American newspapers often over-reported cases of sexual assaults, subsequently calling into question American notions of manhood and chivalry. Conversely, this notion of the protection of women was only extended to one group and non-European women in general and African American women in particular were excluded from European American men “guardianship.” It is worth noting that these factors often worked in conjunction with those interested in suppressing the political autonomy of African Americans.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett was the first to critically analyze and assert that the use of lynching was directly correlated with the accusation of sexual assault of European American women by an African American men. Wells-Barnet

concluded that many of the accusation were false, especially since many of the women recanted statements and the truth was not given an opportunity to be presented.\textsuperscript{30} An established pattern of accusation, lynching, and racial violence was the norm.

European American press all to frequently inflated stories of sexual assaults that ultimately contributed to the angst that eventually ended in racial violence. Additionally the fear of African American crime and miscegenation were over reported and also served as a catalyst for the attacks directed toward African American communities. In the case of Atlanta, Georgia voting and labor were contributing factors to the event, however the continued reporting of sexual assault eventually culminated in mass anti-African American violence in 1906.

September 22nd marked the beginning of a four-day incident of racial

violence against a middle class African American community. The end of the four-day killing spree resulted in the deaths of approximately 40 African American and 2 European Americans.\(^3\) False reporting between two newspapers led to a mob of over 10,000 young, mostly poor European American men attacking any African American in sight.

To be clear, this is not to say that all accusations of sexual assault were false. However, when a comparison of the number of racially motivated incidents caused by the accusation of sexual assault by an African American man to the number of violent events caused by sexual assault of an African American women, it becomes all the more relevant to discuss the ways in which law is applied by the state and local mobs.

**Resistance**

African American resistance is categorized as the attempt to create

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economic, social, and political opportunities in spite of the confines of European American supremacy. In the cases highlighted attacks were directed towards African American institutions and homes in an effort to undermine economic achievement. While many of the violent episodes discussed take place in African American communities, here the attacks were deliberate, whether events took place between individuals are fabricated stories.

In 1919, Elaine Arkansas serves an example of a community that banded together to combat European American efforts to thwart their independence. With the formation of the Progressive Farmers and Household Union of America (PFU) the all-African American organization made an official declaration to the landowners that they were prepared to disassemble the peonage system in the county. Although the exact details of the case are unclear, there is a consensus that the precipitating event took place at a meeting of the PFU.\footnote{Jan Voogd, Race Riots and Resistance: The Red Summer of 1919. (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 47.} After the shooting on both sides subsided for the day, members of the PFU began to discuss protective measures from the mob. The very next day European American participants gathered again and began to terrorize African Americans in the county.

African Americans were attacked, imprisoned, and murdered. Federal troops were called in to prevent further destruction of human life and property. By the end of the day, businesses, churches, organizations, and homes were destroyed in and around Elaine. There has not been an official number given for the number of businesses destroyed or the people murdered, however a some historians have estimated more than 200 people were killed.\footnote{For deeper discussion about Elaine, Arkansas, See Stockley Grif, Blood in Their Eyes: The Elaine Race Massacre of 1919. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2001).}
Law Enforcement

Violence associated with the presence of soldiers and police officers sent to end anti-African American terrorism, periodically participated in the events.

Understanding the role of law enforcement is an important component in understanding racially motivated incidents. In these cases, the military or police periodically exacerbated and participated the destruction of African American communities. However, the contributions of law enforcement to violence were not always in support of racist European American citizens.

Participation in violent events by law enforcement can be generally divided into two main categories, African American and European American law enforcement participants. The role of African American law enforcement is explored here with a case from Houston, Texas. Conversely, European American members of law enforcement that participated in the events never fought in support of African American citizens.
In 1917, the Twenty-fourth United States Infantry, an all African American company of 156 members arrived in Houston, Texas. Upon their arrival, members of the infantry experienced racial discrimination from its citizens when in the city. The soldiers expected equal treatment from European American Houstonians based not on race, but their service for the country. Frustrated with the lack of respect and Jim Crow era policies, the infantry grew increasingly tired of the anti-African American harassment.

A few days shy of a month since the infantry arrived, August 23rd marked the turning point in the relationship between the European American citizens and the men of the Twenty-Fourth. An officer was attacked by police officers and the infantry decided that the attack was unjustified, the group marched into the city armed to demand the release of the officer. At the end of the event four African American soldiers were killed and fifteen citizens attempting to stop the soldiers were killed as well. The event ended with hanging of nineteen soldiers and sixty-three with life sentences.

Red Summer

Since several instances of violence occurred during the Red Summer of 1919 it deserves a discussion. The summer was marked by an overwhelming majority of instances of racial violence. Not all events were related to the labor conflict, but definitely were precipitated by Northern migration by African Americans. Four common themes permeate the extremely tumultuous and racially violent year.

1. The recent massive recruitment of black labor from rural areas of the Deep South during wartime, which more than doubled the black population in a few short years, albeit to only 4.1 percent of the total by 1920

2. The rapid demobilization of white and black soldiers from the armed forces after the war, which brought heightened competition between returning servicemen and black war workers (and the subsequent displacement of blacks from their newly gained industrial jobs)

3. A new militancy among black former servicemen, who understandably resented being “demoted” in the labor market after having served their country in war

4. An economic downturn immediately after the war, in which labor strive and fears of joblessness combined to make white ethnic labor more militant and blacks less accepting of their reduced status

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It is important to note that these events overlapped and intersected with many of the anti-African American violent episodes in previous years. While the Red Summer may be discussed in many texts as one isolated year of racial unrest, a longer view of race-based violent history would suggest that 1919 was a continuation of racial violence supported by deep-seeded racism.
CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC HISTORY, COMMEMORATION, AND VIOLENCE

Given the history of American society, with its contradictory messages of liberty and freedom, melded with slavery and oppression, it is only fitting that there be some form of disagreement about the interpretation of sites where these issues are highlighted. Perhaps, what is most interesting about the necessity to discuss “uncomfortable history,” are the ways in which those stories have been written about, interpreted, and subsequently commemorated in cities that have experienced racial violence.

Contested terrains that occupy a position within the American historical narrative can be easily dismissed as divisive or not worthy of study most ostensibly because of the disagreement behind the causes that precipitated the event. In the case of racial violence exercised against African Americans from the late 19th century well into the 20th, racist European American citizens systematically created an environment that prohibited the growth of viable and safe communities. Unfortunately, racially violent episodes are not expressed on the landscape as often as they occurred.

Historical shame is one interpretation of the oversight concerning events that transpired eventually created a municipal environment that would rather ignore its past than dedicate funds to creating a more cohesive community that discusses is true history. In fact, many of the cities that experienced racial violence have opted to deliver a more uncomplicated rendition of the its past and not recognize, formally or informally, the magnitude of the event in the city’s history.

One might attempt to decipher memorials as a place without meaning to a particular community since commemorative spaces are constructed representations of the past. However this would be further from the truth.
Memorials have the ability to be simultaneously revered and contested spaces as a larger narrative of an event. Moreover, they have the ability to center the conversation about race and space on the creation of a more tangible articulated representation of American history. The communal centering that occurs is a form of intergenerational transmission of memories.

Three principles operate simultaneously when deconstructing the nuances of collective memory and representing them in public space. First, the past is still relevant and has a presence on contemporary phenomena. Second, memory is systematized and situational. Finally, “collective memories perform some form of culture work for those in the present.”

Remembering the past is an active, constructive process. Monuments serve as commemorative reminders of events that explore the heroic accomplishments of the nations past or serve as cautionary tales of what, we as a nation, do not want to repeat. Since the past is continually recreated through reimagining of the landscape, it is no wonder the allocation of space has been such a contentious debate.

Memorials not only occupy a space within a community, but contain temporal specificity. The commemoration of the event is a reminder for members that an event not only occurred but serves as a reminder of what was capable. Cities that have a history of racial violence will have to remember a period when some of its citizens were well aware of the possibility of violence that would be carried out if a social line were crossed. It also harkens to a time where these events could be determined by public opinion and justice meted out according to

the decision of a few.

Before exploring how contested spaces is extremely political, it is first necessary to exam what is present on the landscape. The level to which these often planned incidents of terrorism is represented openly as a part of municipal memory is crucial. What hopefully is not lost in the discussions of racial violence is the culture that precipitated the event. In every instance of racial violence, there was an underlying assumption that African Americans were not viewed as equal citizens, so any attempt to exercise the right to vote, the right to work, or the right to love was seen as the ultimate attack on European American values. As such, lynchings and other forms of killings went unpunished because the
community agreed with the behavior.

**Cultural Landscapes of Violence**

The dominant narrative of American history dictates that events that recreate and this idea of American democracy and freedom seem to experience more popularity when it comes to national efforts of commemoration. Particular versions of history have been expressed predominantly to reinforce the image of the land of liberty. However, when the surface of the land is scratched the hypocrisy of it all becomes extremely visible.

In the case of Hamburg, South Carolina the battle for public space was even more contentious. July 4, 1876, marked the beginning of European aggression toward African American social equality that eventually spread to other parts of South Carolina. 39 While an all-African American militia company was parading in the main street, two European American men approached the group and demanded that the group move so the buggy could pass. The group eventually let the two men pass and later both group scheduled a hearing before the court about the incident.

On July 8th the two European American men arrived at the hearing with the local rifle club and demanded that the African American militia company relinquish their weapons and apologize. The militia refused and fighting ensued for five hours. During that time, more European American rifle clubs were called-in for reinforcement and by the end of the day approximately thirty African Americans were captured. Five were executed and the remaining twenty five were told to run and were then shot. 40

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An obelisk, erected in 1916 to commemorate the racial violence in the city, is met with an ever-increasing scorn. Seven individuals died in this conflict, six African American and one European American. Thomas McKie Meriwether monument is the only reminder to the public why the massacre was significant. Unfortunately, the other causalities have not been recognized formally by the city (See Figure 8).

“He accepted death and found forever the grateful remembrance of all who know high and generous service in the maintain of those civic and social institutions which men and women of his race had struggled through the centuries to establish in South Carolina”

War Memorials

The memorialization and subsequent commemoration of violence is articulated clearly in the form of war monuments. These indicators of American historical memory through commemoration communicate to the viewer the importance of patriotism. Every war that Americans have fought and either has been victorious or defeated is expressed on the nations landscape in some manner. Nevertheless these spaces were violence is upheld and lauded is important when viewing its connection to patriotism.

Memorials dedicated to patriotism also yield a fruitful discussion on the type of violence that can be glorified and expressed. Moreover the level to which a victory has occurred is of little consequence. Americans have seemed to make a

42 Located on the marker.

42
declaration to its citizens what it valorizes. Moreover, the absence of certain type of violent events on the American landscape is telling as well.

War memorials offer a glimpse into the valorization of certain acts of violence. Although, the sacredness of these memorials can most notably be seen on the National Mall, commemorations frequently occur across the United States. The Tomb the Unknown Solider regularly reinforces the notion of “noble violence” or the idea that violence and death in support of the country should be recognized and commemorated at the highest level.

How has the field of historic preservation and dealt with this period of

Figure 10: Silent Protest March in New York City to bring attention to violence in East St. Louis, IL, 1917: N.A.A.C.P.

history? It has not. The foundation of the preservation movement is extremely conservative. However, the field has wholeheartedly accepted the demise of
viewing history from only one perspective. There are a number of monuments erected to glorify acts that bolster patriotic fervor, yet the monuments that exposes the atrocities that we have committed against other countries and ourselves are all but absent. Regrettably, the support for these events does not stop there. All too often there has been this ahistorical valorization of great men that have served the country in some capacity while destroying communities of individuals that do not represent him.

Dead-rich-white guy (DRWG) theory appears to be a largely supported and espoused by preservationist professional alike. Unfortunately, the field hast yet to ask the question that moves the field beyond that simple statement. What stories are not present in this panacea of DRWG history? What environment created the opportunity for only one story to be adequately and completely told to the American public? Furthermore, what can be done to generate a different narrative about race, place, and public commemoration?

Commemorative sites enrich American cultural understanding. These sites have the ability to challenge notions of a history that illustrate a negative period. Concurrently, these sites also force the community to come to terms with that history and discuss events openly and honestly. A clearly articulated version of the past presented on the landscape lends itself to a more truthful society.

**Intangible Heritage**

Perhaps what is most interesting about the process of commemoration and the carving out of public space is the discussion of intangible heritage. Not as easily measurable as its tangible counterpart, intangible heritage plays a major role in communities that have not commemorated instances of racial violence. The conversation about heritage took place in 1992 during the UNESCO World
Heritage conference.

The final report produced from the convention gives a detailed description of intangible cultural heritage as
“the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.44

While the idea of intangible heritage has been an accepted heritage management strategy internationally it has not been utilized as much in America. One example can be seen in the city of East St. Louis, Illinois.

In the early 20th century African Americans began what we later be labeled the Great Migration. Industrial opportunities, coupled with the start of WWI in 1914, drew millions from the Southern United States to the North and Midwest. Shortly after World War I, soldiers returned to a society where African Americans were present in positions that had been once dominated by European American men. The confluence of newly arrived African Americans and returning European American soldiers created social and economic conflict that eventually led to racial violence in East St. Louis.

The event initially started two months before the actual large-scale destruction. Two labor unions appeared at a city council meeting on May 28th to demand the halt of African American migration from the South.45 Additionally, WWI created a demand for war-related commodities. Salaries were also higher in

44 Definition from the 2003 UNESCO Convention on intangible cultural heritage.
45 Elliot M. Rudwick Race Riot in East St. Louis, July 2, 1917. (Carbondale: University of Illinois Press, 1982) 27.
the North than the South, due to the increased number of factory work. During the years leading up to the war, unions began to organize strikes to increase wages for members. African American workers were put at odds over this organizing, either stand with a union that would not allow their entry or be seen as a strike breaker and provide for the family.

In the events leading up to the racial violence in East St. Louis there was an increased demand for workers in the industrial sector of the economy. Moreover, the military and demand for war supplies contributed significantly to the need to increase the labor pool. In 1916, the Aluminum Ore Company in East St. Louis consisted of all European Americans. It was not until the fall of that same year that the management decided to bring in African American workers to bust up the efforts of the newly formed unions.

Metalworking, railroad and meatpacking industries were the driving force behind the economy in the city. These companies also made a regular practice of recruiting African Americans from the South and providing incentives such as transportation costs and relocation fees for the trouble. The constant influx had a negative effect on the relationships between newly arrived African Americans and European Americans that resided in the city prior to the Great Migration.

Altercations began in May with displaced European American workers attacking African American strikebreakers. This violence eventually bled over into neighborhoods and businesses of African Americans. National Guard protection was called in to prevent further destruction of property, since local police officers participated openly in large-scale terrorism.

After a month of small squabbles between African Americans and European Americans, the major event came to head on July 2. A group of European American young men drove through an African American
neighborhood, yelling and shooting into a crowd of innocent bystanders. Shortly after the aggressors left the area, a patrol car drove through the neighborhood and a group of African Americans fired and killed two police officers.

The word that the African American community opened fire on police officers spread quickly and European American workers and policies officers descended on the neighborhood. There has not been an accurate count on the number of murders, but more than seven African Americans were lynched.

Ultimately, the goals of European Americans citizens involved in the event were achieved and approximately 6,000 African Americans forced out of East St. Louis. Later that month a silent march organized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.) was held in New York City (Figure 9). Thousands of protestors were in attendance carrying signs to bring attention to the atrocity that had occurred in East St. Louis.

There has been some discussion regarding a marker for the event, however the East. St. Louis massacre is not commemorated. Because there is not a tangible evidence of racial violence, one would probably think that the community was not interested in preserving this part of their history. That would be far from the truth.

Freedom Trails 2 Legacies of Hope is an organization supported by the State of Illinois to preserve, enhance and promote historic sites pertaining to African American heritage in the State of Illinois through research, collection, interpretation, education, information dissemination, product development and linkage of these trails/sites and experiences in a systematic order allowing for tourism, cultural and economic development opportunities, thereby improving the quality of life for both residents and visitors.46

On July 4, 2004, the organization hosted the inaugural event for the
46 http://www.freedomtrails2legacies.org/profile-vision.htm
commemoration of the East St. Louis massacre. While the first event had a small turn out, the second year was much larger and outreach was conducted to provide elementary school children an introduction to an event that was completely missing from their textbooks.

Fontbonne University, in conjunction with the Missouri History Museum hosted a conference entitled, “Collective Memory in St. Louis” from October 21-23, 2011. This event examined the history of St. Louis as well as gave discussion to the racial violence that occurred in East St. Louis. The event was attended and well received by academics, practitioners in the preservation field, and community members.

Here an example of intangible heritage plays out for the East St. Louis community and contributes to the transmission of the story to a younger and diverse audience. By the 1972 UNESCO convention standards of intangible heritage, East St. Louis meets the qualifications. Buildings and homes were annihilated and there is no marker or trail program that offers interpretation or at least highlight the areas where violence took place.

The question then becomes what is the best way to preserve this history, according to UNESCO guidelines, intangible cultural heritage should be “identified, documented, research, preserved, protected, promoted, enhanced, and transmitted through formal and non formal education.” Unfortunately, the United States has yet to really catch up to the preservation practices internationally.

East St. Louis provides and example of an area that has had numerous articles and books published about the history of the city, but not necessarily have the backing of the city for construction. The State of Illinois, although seemingly

47 http://www.fontbonne.edu/infocenter/mission/memory_symposium/
interested in the commemoration of the events, through the Freedom Trails 2 Legacies of Hope program, there has not been a commission or a full study to discover the full events of the episode.

While it appears that East St. Louis has the makings of a city that is in the cusp of officially recognizing its history, it has yet to take the step to create a commission or a commemorative event that does not wax and wane depending on the political leadership of the city at the time.
CHAPTER 4: WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA (1898)

Voting for African American after the end of Reconstruction was an extremely dangerous task. At stake were the rights and privileges afforded to European American citizens to live, work, and travel without constant harassment from other groups. Post-reconstruction politics mandated that the status quo be reinstituted through different avenues. With the withdrawal of federal troops and the support for the reengineering of Southern society waning, African American men were increasingly barred from voting.\textsuperscript{48} As such, the Democratic “redeemer” governments were able to win elections in southern states. In North Carolina, the Red Shirts utilized a successful strategy to restore the status quo.

African American participation in the realm of politics and social life undoubtedly contributed to the growing frustration of European American Democrats. Utilizing the Republican Party as a vehicle for the enfranchisement, African Americans gravitated to the party of Lincoln. The reengineering of the political landscape resulted in the violent battle between Democrats that insisted that the status quo be maintained and African Americans and others that were uncomfortable with change.

Event

Wilmington, North Carolina underwent a dramatic change in its history with the creation of the Fusion party. Of course the election displaced many of the Democratic officials that had a policy of “white supremacy”. The Democrats upset with the election outcome created a campaign to win back political power

and place African American into submission, by November 10, the frustration had reached a head.

The Democratic Party, disillusioned with the gains made by African Americans during the previous years created a three-prong approach to winning the election of 1898. The lead strategist in this effort Furnifold Simmons created the Write, Speak and Ride campaign to galvanize the European American men vote. European American men interested in the plan utilized their talents to further the cause. Those that worked in the newspaper industry were charged with producing literature for the campaign. Orators were given the task of giving speeches to audiences also disaffected by the gains made in 1898. Those associated with the groups such as Red Shirts or Rough Riders, were given the responsibility of terrorizing African American voters and European American Republican voters through murder.49

First reports of sexual assault of European American women at the hands African American men were circulated. The party utilized and article by Rebecca Felton calling for European American men take up arms to protect European American women against unwanted sexual advances. Newspapers circulated and increased number of reports of sexual assault during this time as well. Moreover propaganda began to emerge about the level of unemployment.50 The blame for the loss of jobs was placed squarely on the shoulders of African American men.

Alex Manly, the editor of the *Wilmington Record*, used his pen to combat many of the claims made by other newspapers. As the only African American


newspaper in the city, Manly challenged the view of other newspapers and orators on their belief about the inherent malevolence of African American men.\textsuperscript{51} He asserted that consensual interracial relationships occurred quite frequently and noted that the “rape allegations” were used only when it concerned African American men and European American women.

Shortly after the newspaper a battle, the election was decided and the Democrats victorious. The newly elected party quickly repealed the gains for equality that had been made under the Fusionists leadership. Moreover they

called for the closing of the *Wilmington Record* and Alex Manly permanent departure from the city.

New resolutions that curtailed African American progress were presented to the Committee of Colored Citizens on November 9th. By November 10th an organized group of European American men burned Manly’s building and then moved to the African American section of town to continue to “realignment” of Wilmington political and social life. Next, the Republican administrators were forced to resign their posts and replaced with Democrats.

African Americans and some Republicans appealed to federal authority to disarm the mob and restore order in the city, but were ignored. By the end of the massacre supporters of the new administration forced many prominent African American citizens, along with some European Americans Republicans, out of the city. Official numbers for those killed were never collected by the new administration. North Carolina began to pass more legislation to restrict the rights of African Americans and poorer European Americans. Streetcars were segregated and the institution of the “grandfather clause” to effect. No indictments were ever made. National pressure was placed on the McKinley to act on the atrocities committed in Wilmington, but similar to other leaders and presidents during the nadir, he remained silent. At the end of the violence, at least 60 African Americans were murdered, although the official record remains silent on the number of deaths.52

While this case study was chosen primarily because of the political nature of the even, the reorganization of society was an important aspect. The events leading up to the violence were largely caused by the editorials that were published before around the same time. The editorials promulgated the idea that

African American men posed a threat to poor rural European American women.

The patriarchal nature of many of the citizen that lived in Wilmington was to protect European American women, but not African American women from assault at the hands of men. Fully understanding this contradiction, a group of African American women came out publicly and supported Alex Manly, issuing a statement that his newspaper was “the one medium that stood up for our rights when others have forsaken us.”

Glenda Gilmore also discusses the role in violence waged against African American women during the Wilmington riot in 1898. During one particular incident in the city a European American woman shoved an African American woman in the street while passing on the sidewalk. Not to be outdone, the African American woman began attacking her assailant with an umbrella. The fight between these two women was the product of racial tension in an already volatile community.

Commemorative Response

Recognition for events of racial violence can proceed in a number of ways, most ostensibly through public sculpture or memorial. Wilmington, unlike many cities that experienced an event of destruction, had a literary work to highlight the massacre. Charles Chestnut in 1901, permanently commemorated, albeit a somewhat fictionalized version, the experiences from the perspective of an African American man. While the event is immortalized in the literature, it

54 Ibid, 90.
does not have the ability to provide a tangible representation of the political coup d’état.

In 1996 the 1898 Foundation was organized by a group of concerned citizens to commemorate the acts of violence and to improve interracial communication in the city. Pressuring the city to act, the 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission was established by the General Assembly to “develop a historical record of the event and to assess the economic impact of the riot on African Americans locally and across the region and state.” To this end, a mission statement was developed and a series of conversations were held to discuss the impact that the Wilmington coup had on the city. Moreover, questions about the absence of any discussions of the racial violence that occurred were also on the series of task.

During the commissioning process for the monument, sixty-six applications were received by the 1898 Foundation to design the monument was Ayokunle Odeleye, a prominent sculpture that was commissioned for other projects such as “In the Pursuit of Growth and Achievement” for City of Richmond, Virginia and “The Guide” for the City of Baltimore, Maryland. Odeleye’s vision for the site was to incorporate a connection to Africa and water to engage the viewer in reflection of the event.

The sculpture consists of six bronze paddles that represent the journey to the next life and the role water plays in West African traditional religions (Figure 10). Located at the intersection of North Front Street and North Third Street, where the violence took place, the monument pays homage to African Americans that murdered during the massacre. The monument was erected on November 8, 2008 and provided a

56 http://www.history.ncdcr.gov/1898-wrrc/whoweare.htm
57 http://library.uncw.edu/web/collections/1898Foundation/1898-thememorial.html
visible representation for a moment in history that had largely been forgotten
and neglected. The erection of the commemoration undoubtedly speaks to a
community of citizens interested in preserving its history. Moreover the city has
taken the steps to create a website detailing the events that transpired.

**Conclusion**

The monument serves as a testament to a community that was interested
in preserving a watershed moment in its history. The 1898 Foundation served as
an example of community-led preservation efforts, which is the hallmark of the
preservation movement. Creating a coalition of community members that were
concerned with the commemoration of the city’s past was an excellent decision
for the future management of the site.

Wilmington and the state of North Carolina sent a clear message that it
was a city that is open to discussing “difficult” history. While the initial attempt to
get recognition for the atrocity that transpired in the city, local and state officials
eventually succumbed to community support. Here, similar to the preservation
field at large, the power of grassroots activism should not be overlooked.
CHAPTER 5: SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS (1908)

In the case of Springfield, similar to other episodes of racial violence, there was not one particular reason that determined the outcome of the event. Resistance to African American voting, coupled with the inflated accusations of sexual assault by European American newspapers drove the attacks experienced in the city. Here, in addition to claims of sexual assault, there was an overall attack on African American communal progress and leaders were singled out for murder.

The causes of many of the racially motivated events were expressions of fear of a changing society. Major factors that contributed to this ludicrous fear was racism, miscegenation, and racial equality. Unfortunately this racially anxiety manifested itself on a consistent basis in murder and destruction in African American communities.

**Event**

August 14, 1908 served as a tipping point for European American anxiety on the accusation of sexual assault in the city. That afternoon, a crowd of European Americans gathered outside of the court house to lynch an African American man accused of sexually assaulting a European American woman, George Richardson. The crowd also called for the release of Joe James, and African American transient worker migrating from the South, accused of killing a European American railroad worker.

Identified by his voice alone by Nellie Hallam, George Richardson and Joe James were moved out of town by the police to another city to avoid the lynch mob that they correctly predicted would form after the accusations. Upset with
the missed opportunity exact retribution on the two men, the mob burned a business of a wealthy European man because of his involvement in the removal of Richardson and James from town.

The mob turned its gaze to the predominately business district for African Americans. The Levee was the center of business district and hub for political activity for African Americans in the city. Ultimately this section gained a reputation for this activity and eventually was targeted because of European American scorn.58 This contempt was completely justified, in the eyes of the mob, to halt expressions of equality or prosperity from African Americans.

Once the mob destroyed the Levee, they moved to a poor African American

community called the Badlands. This area was primarily known for vice and sex across the color line, which was seen as an intolerable transgression against European American supremacy. After the mob successfully destroyed the African American community the crowd dispersed.

Unfortunately, the group reassembled the next day and attempted to overtake the city’s arsenal. By that time the city had called in support from state troopers and the crowd was pushed back. Not to be deterred in their quest for violence, the mob then targeted an elderly African American man that was married to a European American woman. The combination of his marriage, coupled with his prosperous business endeavors was enough for the mob to lynch its victim.

To escape the tyranny exacted by a mob, largely consisting of individuals that lived in state of Illinois, not Southerners as initially suggested, many African Americans left the city to avoid the terrorists. The mob systematically attacked two groups of African Americans, unskilled laborers and business owners. After two days of violence, two African American men were hung and four European Americans were killed.

Roberta Senechal de la Roche has written two books that provide and excellent analysis of the Springfield massacre. Senechal highlights an important factor that has not received as much attention in racial violence literature, European American disunity. In her text she highlights the divide that existed between poor and wealthy European American citizens. She argues that many of the European Americans that owned property resented the mob that essentially burned down their property. The idea of European American disunity occupies a

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60 Ibid, 131.
61 Ibid, 10.
larger space in the history of racial violence than has been explored.

**Commemorative Response**

Inhabitants of the city easily forgot about the racial violence that plagued the city and yet lauded the city as the home of President Abraham Lincoln. In 1947, Springfield churches banded together to create the Race Relations Committee by the Springfield Council of Churches. In meetings the discussion on the continuation of racial violence and the absence of African Americans in Springfield history was a primary discussion.

The commemoration process continues into records that can be accessed

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by the public to remember the experience. In 1973, the Illinois historical society collected oral histories and local stories from individuals that lived through the events of 1908. The project was complete by 1976 and the transcripts, along with audio for some of the interviews, are available for viewing online. The files from the historical society were eventually transferred to the University of Illinois at Springfield under the title, “Memoirs of the Springfield Race Riot, 1908.”

In 1992, Mayor Ossie Langfelder appointed a committee to study the conflict of 1908 and its aftermath. After the study was complete, the 1908 Historical Events Marker Committee installed eight markers in key areas associated with violent events. The walking tour, completed in 1994, directs the audience to different locations and offers short description about the site’s history.

On the private sector side of activism, the Memorial 1908, Inc. was an organization established to provide headstones for the citizens that were killed during the incident. Springfield, Ohio has established a successful connection between its “difficult” past and its tourism industry. The Springfield memorial was dedicated in 2009 to highlight the atrocious events that transpired in 1908.

The sculpture was designed by prominent public artist, Preston Jackson, and erected in Union Square Park (Figure 11). This area was formerly the epicenter of the violence in 1908. Situated across from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum, the area is highly trafficked and the memorial is visible by tourists and residents alike. Unlike the Battle of Liberty Place, the Illinois Capital Development Board to the City of Springfield funded the memorial. Moreover,

64 http://www.uis.edu/archives/riot/riotmemoirs.htm
65 Wiesenhafer, 72
the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is responsible for the maintenance of the site.

The Tourism Board for the State of Illinois established a self-guided walking tour to nine historic sites associated with the event. Each stop highlights actions that contributed to the murder and demolition of buildings in the area emphasized by a marker. In addition to the self-guided tour (Appendix C), the site has been listed on the Board’s “African American History & Heritage Destinations,” raising it to the level of Bronzeville or New Philadelphia in the state’s African American Heritage Trail.

**Conclusion**

Establishing public-private partnerships was key for the commemoration of the anti-African American violence that took place in Springfield. Here again the role of grass-roots activism helped further the cause towards the recognition of a site that would not exist, but for the insistence of the community. Storing the oral history collected at a major university was also an excellent strategy to ensure that the voices from the event will never be lost to history.

In terms of the maintenance and stewardship of the site, Springfield has something to offer city’s interested in preserving a tragic part of history. Connecting the memorial to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library was an excellent idea because it gave the site a platform to have an exhibit dedicated to the causes and effects of the 1908 murders entitled “Something So Horrible: The Springfield Race Riot of 1908.”
Rumors of sexual assault of European American women by African American men were a constant threat to racial violence in cities across the nation. It is interesting, during Enslavement the calls for the sexual assault of European American women by African American men was all but none existent. Only after emancipation did the cry for abuse began to be a pervasive problem in the minds of larger society.

The thinking about the sexual nature of African Americans, both men and women, was that they were inherently more sexual and licentious and subsequently could not control their sexual urges. This of course, in the minds of some European Americans made the rape of African American women permissible and in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century created an uncontrollable impulse for African American men.

Event

Monday, May 30, 1921 marked the beginning of one of the most racially motivated violent incident in American history. Although relatively unknown, it is by far the most notorious presented in the study. The number of businesses and property destroyed in Greenwood, predominantly African American, exceeded 1,000. While there have been attempts to capture the exact number of casualties and loss of property, the numbers, similar to many instances of racial violence, were underreported or ignored.

“Black Wall Street,” the name given to represent the Main Street of the Greenwood district was, similar most of the United States, segregated. In spite of the racist policies enacted to support the suppression of African Americans, a
financially independent network of mutually supportive businesses was created in the neighborhood.\textsuperscript{67}

To demarcate an area in the city that created a community in spite of racist policies surrounding the community. In this area, successful business, law firms, and other service industries thrived. In the afternoon of May 30, Sarah Page was in an elevator in a hotel when she asserted that Dick Rowland attacked her.

Exaggerated reporting of the incident increased the already emboldened European-American rioters. What actually transpired in the elevator was never proven, but by the time newspaper ran the story, many of the facts had been convoluted. Rowland was arrested and held in the city jail. Soon after the \textit{Tulsa Tribune} issued an editorial that read, “Nab Negro for Attacking Girl In an Elevator.” That night a crowd of African American citizens began to gather outside of the jail to protect Rowland from the potential lynch mob.\textsuperscript{68} Rightly so, African American citizens had learned two years earlier that a mob could form very quickly and exact violence without retribution. Moreover, there were plenty of examples across the South that served as examples of what could happen when crowds went unchecked.

Frustrated by the fact the crowd was not able to punish Rowland the mob dispersed. Unfortunately instead of going home many rioters headed toward the African American section of town. African American citizens were attacked by the mob if they were found standing around the Greenwood area.\textsuperscript{69} The commercial district of the Greenwood area, once a bustling area of financial stability during


\textsuperscript{68} James Hirsch, \textit{Riot and Rebellion: The Tulsa Race Ware and its Legacy}. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002), 86

\textsuperscript{69} Ellsworth, 92.
the age of Jim Crow, was destroyed. European American citizens of the city were seeking an opportunity to destroy African American progress.

Looting and murder continued for three days until the National Guard was called in to halt the destruction of the area. The arrests that were made were from African American community. Survivors were marched at gunpoint to Convention Hall when the numbers of arrest exceed the capacity of the jail.\textsuperscript{70} National Guard reinforcements were called in to prevent the crowd and local policemen from murdering more innocent people.

By June 2, after several days of violence between the African-American

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid, 108.
and Euro-American citizens of Tulsa. Homes and businesses were annihilated in the northern section of the city. After the destruction, Tulsa’s African Americans population fought to have their homes and institutions rebuilt by the city but were unsuccessful. Of course this was not an isolated event, during the early 1900’s a number of cities were destroyed due to racial violence around the country and Tulsa serves as an example of a successful African American community that was devastated because of racial fears and hatred.

Soon after, local newspapers removed articles from its archives and government officials refused to discuss the incident. The intentional erasure of the event from the landscape and from individuals interested in discussing the tragedy that occurred in Black Wall Street created a void that was not field until the construction of a monument 90 years later.

**Commemorative Response**

While the causes of the racial uprising in Tulsa have been extensively explored, the issue of commemoration and recognition of the events has not received as much attention as it deserves. Major cities that share the same story of Tulsa have little to no historical conscience when dealing with these events. Although given much exposure in mass media, the issue of violence and inequalities appear to be off limits in American history.

Fast forward 90 years and the area is still the most economically underdeveloped area of the city. Moreover, the commemoration of the event known as the “Tulsa Race Riot” is poorly designed at best. The main plaque to recognize the event only identifies the individuals who contributed to the construction of the monument. In this case, the group of people that were most affected by this racial violence were marginalized in their own story.

71 Ibid, 198.
Located in the Greenwood District of the city, the Black Wall Street Memorial was originally designed in black marble but due to budgetary constraints is a granite slab. On one side of the memorial, survivors of the event were listed and on the other side a listing of individuals and community organizations that contributed to its construction. It is worth noting that the City of Tulsa did not allocate money to erect the monument.

The commemorative process was caught between a city that was interested in moving past a difficulty part of its history and subsequently did not advocate any money in discussing this part of its history. An effort not led by the City of Tulsa, the Black Wall Street monument was erected to feature prominently on a landscape that had been destroyed by terrorism and bigotry.

In 2008, the City of Tulsa and with support from the Oklahoma legislature undertook efforts to design a park that committed itself to discussing racial violence that not only shed a glaring light on the history of the city but positioned itself to engage in conversation about disparity and unequal treatment under the law.

The John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park is the second commemoration in the city to recognize the events that transpired in 1921. Primarily touted as a catalyst for economic development in the Greenwood district, the park is connected to Tulsa’s minor league baseball field, ONEOK (Figure 12).

**Conclusion**

Tulsa, Oklahoma, while initially obfuscating the violence that transpired in the city, surprisingly is the most commemorated city in the United States that discusses anti-African American violence. With the construction of the ONEOK

Ibid, 222.
Park, in the historic Greenwood District of the city, Tulsa has taken visible steps toward reconciling its past with its present.

Connecting the site to goals of economic development for the North Tulsa area is essential to 1) attracting a larger audience to the site 2) making a municipal statement about the role the massacre played in the city’s history. Moreover the city follows the pattern of both Wilmington and Springfield, with the creation of a commission to research and highlight the history of Black Wall Street
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The implications of the study far exceed tangible expression of violence on the American landscape. Rather, it offers a commitment to historical interpretation that spans the end of Reconstruction through Jim Crow era. Ultimately it serves as a lens from which to view one of America’s chapters that continue to repeat itself every generation.

After analyzing a number of racially violent incidents, patterns emerge that highlight the reason behind the events. Six themes permeate racially violent situations between the 1876 and 1923. These events often are interrelated but nevertheless provide a deeper discussion into the events that served as a barometer for race relations in the 19th and 20th century.

1. Racial violence high propensity to occur during the summer
2. Racial propaganda was an integral component to instances of violence
3. European Americans initiated racially motivated violence against African Americans
4. Participation of local law enforcement in racially violent event
5. Racial violence was spatially confined to African American neighborhoods
6. Areas of commerce within those communities were targets of destruction

While the patterns that emerged from racial violence seem to be very clear and well documented, the infrastructure in place to create a successful interpretation program are not as easily identified. Pulling from the studies on Wilmington, Springfield, and Tulsa, some lessons about commemoration are present.
1. Commemorative efforts led by African American communities that were interested in preserving the event.
2. The construction of memorials was connected to a larger idea about economic development for the community
3. Formation of state commissions to study event
4. Financial support from local and state partners
5. Build partnership with local university to
6. Monuments placed in neighborhood of destruction

When commemorative efforts are community lead, as was the case in the Wilmington example, there is a larger base of support for the project. What is known about the commemorative efforts of Wilmington, Springfield, and Tulsa is that the monuments were an outgrowth of public interests. This grass roots level organizing worked to acknowledge a past that a city would probably rather forget. The community-centered approach to acknowledging “difficult” history serves to initiate a conversation about race and commemoration but also to expand the audience in historic preservation and public interpretation professions.

From this community-led effort, organizations were created to provide oversight and direction for the construction of the new commemoration. These groups identified the need to connect the memorial to economic development in the area. Interestingly enough, and prime for study, is the economic recovery or lack there of, of African American neighborhoods that experienced racial violence. Nevertheless, the 1898 Foundation (Wilmington) explicitly connected the role the memorial could play in economic revitalization of the area. Connecting the tourism industry with areas that have less of an opportunity to create connections with sites not in the area are a key component of a successful
Idea for construction ranged from reconciliation to the official remembrance of the tragic event. However, one common theme that was present in every final plan was the connection between the memorial and economic development. With the construction of the new minor league baseball stadium, Tulsa was successful in connecting its memorial park to a new revenue stream for the city and state. Furthermore, situating the commemoration next to the park ensured that the site would receive the necessary attention to shed light on this part of its city’s history.

The formation of state commissions approaches the study of racially motivated violence from various angles. Academic papers were usually published inside commission reports and presentations by local community members and scholars expanded the conversation to a larger audience. The State of North Carolina legislatively authorized the study to conduct a thorough analysis of the event and to offer treatment of the event at a larger level. Here, the state prioritized how significant this event was in its state’s history. It is worth noting, that all of these commissions made the findings of their research readily available for public viewing. Transparency with monument planning was essential for all of the case studies, especially since recognition of the event probably would not have occurred with the urging of community leaders.

Financially, these memorials would not have been possible without the support of state and local governmental agencies. Springfield serves as an important case study when determining the best strategy to incorporate governmental organizations into the funding and planning process. The city was able to successfully incorporate the needs of community groups by involving members in the beginning of the process. As such, the conversation about the
design and final location was informed by both parties, ultimately creating a situation with community support and financial backing from the municipality.

Springfield, Illinois is the only city that connected its research efforts to a local university. Here, the relationship built between the commission and the university proved to be advantageous with the creation of the oral history project. Of course the survivors of the Wilmington incident are deceased and there are less than 10 survivors left in the Tulsa massacre, but creating a project to capture these voices are invaluable. Luckily, the level of attention of foresight that was given to this project is phenomenal. Sixty-six years after the incident, a large-scale collection of voices was compiled to give a complete picture of the events that transpired.

In both Wilmington and Tulsa case studies the memorial was constructed in the area of violence. As seen in a number of studies, establishing a connection between the event and the community it directly affected is essential. For example, when a racially violent episode is not highlighted in school curriculum, having a memorial in the location where the event took place anchors the monument in space. Additionally, it has the potential to create a community dialogue, establish a connection between the area’s history, and a display of public art in the neighborhood.

American history is not linear or orderly and adding multiple stories into the narrative will only enrich the historical monument. To determine that the unequal treatment by one group of people towards another group would somehow not be represented on the contemporary landscape is extremely dangerous. The field of historic preservation must grapple with this fundamental reality or continue to call for diversity in a racially homogenous room.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Central to this study is the understanding of what commemorative responses are visible on the American landscape. The next step is the management of these resources in a way that establishes a connection to tell a larger story of racial violence in America and allows for a sustainable model for discussion. National and international models have the potential to serve the monuments purpose.

Instituting a new model to grapple with violent history that America has perpetrated against its citizens as well as those abroad is integral to creating a dialogue around tragedies. Giving a site the designation as a national tragedy would bolster its representation both in America and abroad. Here the country can take an official stance on what is and is not a tragedy.

Viewing memorials dedicated to scenes of racial violence as a cultural resource, the question becomes, how should we manage these zones of remembrance. The interpretative strategies that have the possibility of employment are numerous. In terms of national or international bodies to manage these resources. The National Park Service, founded 1916, could serve as an entity that could “manage” the ongoing commemoration surrounding the national significance of the subject. If these sites can be viewed as trail, similar to the Trail of Tears or the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail. These sites communicate a larger narrative to the audience about the importance of the event.

Another organization that has the potential and capacity to manage a project of this magnitude is the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Created in 1999 as a network of sites “dedicated to remembering past struggles for justice and addressing their contemporary legacies,” ICSC is an excellent
candidate for management.

Discussing the ways in which violent memorials is depend on the landscape. The absence of is more telling then the presence of these commemorative responses. American history is by no means uncomplicated or linear. In fact the recognition of violence other than the war memorials deepens the understanding of violence at the civic and regional level. It illustrates the unequal, terroristic realities of certain Americans toward others. Moreover, it creates a counter narrative about the implications of a complicated history. Past racial violence has the opportunity to tell another type of story.

Monitoring and measuring the number of visitors is key to understanding the level of success a monument experiences. Monuments give voice to an event that a community has come together and decided should be commemorated in some shape or form. After all, if a monument never draws visitors, then the voice of racial violence that is given by creating a visible reminder of a violent past is rendered mute.

Alternatively tool for measurement is the incorporation of the monument and the violence that it represents to be incorporated into the school curriculum. The likelihood that the topic is discussed is probably linked to the presence of a monument on a city’s landscape. If the city has historical tours, the stop should probably include the monument. Moreover a more honest discussion of the nation’s past will undoubtedly yield a more honest conversation about the state of race relations.

Commemorating sites where violence has taken place ultimately begins a conversation that is all too often ignored, in academia and larger society, race and inequality. While these events may be “difficult” at first to discuss, by not shying from the country’s history, it has the potential to situate these events within a
larger context and ensure that history is as diverse as its participants.

The ways in which cities that have chosen to come to terms with a history that is clearly plagued with violence and disorder can be utilized as a ‘best practices’ guide. There is not only room for a deeper, more nuanced look about race, heritage, and commemoration, but a huge void that necessitates some form of conversation. Ultimately, if this study can serve as a catalyst for municipal conversations about recognizing and memorializing racially violent situation, then perhaps a more candid discussion about race in this country can begin.
APPENDIX: A
# Total Number of Race Riots

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Hamburg, South Carolina*</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Millen, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>Ellenton, South Carolina</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>New London, Connecticut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Wilmington, North Carolina*</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Bisbee, Arizona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Lake City, South Carolina</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Port Arthur, Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>New Orleans, Louisiana</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Norfolk, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>New York City, New York</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Chicago, Illinois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Evansville, Indiana</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Syracuse, New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Springfield, Ohio</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Lexington, Nebraska</td>
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<td>1906</td>
<td>Greensburg, Indiana</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Mulberry, Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Chattanooga, Tennessee</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>New York City, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Brownsville, Texas</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Laurens Country, Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Little Rock, Arkansas</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Springfield, Illinois*</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Elaine, Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>East St. Louis, Illinois</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Gary, Indiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Chester, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Donora, Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Houston, Texas</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Hubbard, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Corbin, Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Washington, D.C.</td>
<td>1919</td>
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<td>Omaha, Nebraska</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Bogalusa, Louisiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Charleston, South Carolina</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Ocoee, Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Longview, Texas</td>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Tulsa, Oklahoma*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Knoxville, Tennessee</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Rosewood, Florida *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Memorials to racial violence
State-by-State of Race Riots

Arkansas
Little Rock (1906)
Elaine (1919)

Arizona
Bisbee (1919)

Connecticut
New London (1919)

Delaware
Wilmington (1919)

District of Columbia
Washington (1919)

Florida
Mulberry (1919)
Rosewood (1923)

Georgia
Atlanta (1906)
Millen (1919)

Illinois
Springfield (1908)
East St. Louis (1917)
Chicago (1919)

Indiana
Evansville (1903)
Greensburg (1906)
Gary (1919)

Kentucky
Corbin (1919)

Louisiana
New Orleans (1900)
Bogalusa (1919)

Maryland
Baltimore (1919)

Nebraska
Omaha (1919)
Lexington (1919)

New York
New York City (1900)
Syracuse (1919)
New York City (1919)

North Carolina
Wilmington (1898)

Ohio
Springfield (1904)
Hubbard (1919)

Oklahoma
Tulsa (1921)

Pennsylvania
Chester (1917)
Philadelphia (1918)
Donora (1919)

South Carolina
Hamburg (1876)
Ellenton (1876)
Lake City (1898)
Charleston (1919)

Tennessee
Chattanooga (1906)
Knoxville (1919)

Texas
Brownsville
Houston
Longview
Port Arthur

Virginia
Norfolk (1919)
Memorials
dedicated to racial violence
APPENDIX: B
APPENDIX: C
Springfield, Illinois
RACE RIOT
Of 1908
Get ready to embark on a historic and emotion-filled journey through the events that have become known as "the Springfield Race Riot of 1908."

Join us as we go back in time and explore the occurrences leading up to those two sweltering days in August of 1908 and the birth of the NAACP.
Springfield’s population in 1908 totaled about 47,000, with approximately 5.5% of those black. Although this low percentage did not facilitate a large uprising against the black population here, relations were becoming more strained in large cities such as Chicago and New York where blacks were competing with whites in the same job market. Riots had occurred in the North as early as the first half of the 1800s, but news coverage remained relatively quiet and the violence seemed to be contained in the North...until now.

On August 14, 1908, tension filled the air as two black men sat in the county jail, accused of unrelated sexual assault and murder crimes against whites. A large white crowd had gathered outside the jail, wanting to take matters in their own hands, chanting for vigilante justice.

Sensing the eminent danger for the two prisoners, police secretly took them out through the back door and put them on a train to a jail 60 miles away. Learning that they had been tricked and that the prisoners were gone, the now-angry mob erupted in violence, destroying buildings, looting, and eventually lynching two prominent members of the black community. The rampage continued until Governor Charles Deneen called in the Illinois National Guard to control the situation.

People across the nation were shocked by racial riots and it was bitter irony that one had occurred in Springfield, Illinois, the hometown of Abraham Lincoln. Activists believed that if it could happen in Springfield, it could happen anywhere.
Map of the 1908 Race Riot

The entire story of the Springfield Race Riot of 1908 is told in a series of markers placed along the path of the destruction in downtown Springfield. Walk the route of one of Springfield’s most disturbing historical events that prompted a great national civil rights victory.
seventh and jefferson — old county jail site

It was here the white mob congregated on August 14, 1908, demanding the release of George Richardson and Joe James, two black prisoners being held on counts of crimes against whites. Richardson was accused of raping Mabel Hallam, a white woman, and James was accused of the murder of Clergy Ballard, a white man. The county sheriff, with the help of Harry Loper, a white restaurant owner, secretly transported the prisoners to Bloomington, Illinois. The realization of this escape ignited the Race Riots.

223 south fifth — loper’s restaurant

The owner of Loper’s Restaurant, Harry Loper, assisted Sheriff Werner in the removal of George Richardson and Joe James from the County Jail. The riot escalated as the mob, outraged by Loper’s assistance in the prisoners’ transport, demolished his restaurant and destroyed his car that had been used to move the prisoners.

The first fatality of the riot, Louis Johnson, was a patron at Loper’s Restaurant. He was killed by a rioter’s bullet.

seventh and washington street — (the levee) business district

Still enraged, the rioters moved to a small black business district, breaking windows and doors, stealing or destroying merchandise, and wrecking furniture and equipment. By the time the mob finished looting this area, fifteen black and several Jewish businesses had been vandalized, destroying several blocks of businesses. Fishman’s Pawn Shop, the first Jewish store attacked in this area, turned out to be methodically chosen. The mob obtained weapons from this store. The rioters then moved north toward the black residential neighborhoods known as the “Badlands.”
eleventh and Madison — scott burton’s lynching

Around 2:00 a.m. on August 15, 1908, rioters came to the home of Scott Burton. The black barber tried to escape, but was attacked and beaten unconscious. The mob then paraded him from his porch to Twelfth and Madison and hanged him from a tree in front of a saloon. Burton’s body became the symbol of the mob’s hatred of blacks and was riddled by bullets until the militia came and put a stop to the destruction of his body.

This lynching occurred in a location known as the “Badlands.” This area suffered serious damage including the destruction of 40 black homes and businesses.

fourth and monroe — payne’s hardware

After taking the day to cool off, the mob reassembled around 7:00 p.m. and walked to Payne’s Hardware Store for a length of clothesline rope. This rope was intended to be used to hang William Donnegan, an elderly, retired black shoemaker.

second and monroe — state arsenal site

In the daylight of August 15, 1908, while the mob was temporarily quiet, two-to-three thousand black residents took this opportunity to flee Springfield, many never to return. By this time, up to five thousand Illinois National Guard troops were brought in to restore order to the capital. They took up residence at the State Arsenal, which in turn served as a safe haven for many black families.

The rioters had intended to attack the State Arsenal, but decided against it upon the realization of the National Guard militia’s presence. Frustrated, they turned toward William Donnegan’s residence.
Spring and Edwards — site of Edwards School and William Donnegan’s lynching

A result of his powerful political connections and wealth as a black man, the elderly William Donnegan was taken from his home by the mob and dragged across the street to Edwards School. The rioters slashed Donnegan’s throat and were in the process of hanging him in front of the school when the militia approached. The mob fled while the militia rushed Donnegan to St. John’s Hospital, where he died the next day. This was the last mob action of the riot.

Adams between fifth and sixth streets — Sangamon County courthouse site

After the August 1908 Race Riot, conclusion was sought at this site, including:

- Joe James, a black man, was tried and convicted for the murder of Clergy Ballard. Despite the fact that James was 18 years old and, as a minor, not subject to the death penalty, he was executed on October 23, 1908.
- During the Grand Jury investigation of the alleged rape of Mabel Hallam, a white woman, by George Richardson, a black man. Mrs. Hallam admitted that the accusation had been fabricated. Consequently, Richardson was released.
- In August of 1908, a special Grand Jury returned 107 indictments against nearly 80 white riot suspects on charges ranging from malicious mischief to murder. The trials that followed resulted in only one conviction — petty larceny.
- Some of the riot victims are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery and the Mechanicsburg Cemetery. These burial sites have been marked to signify each victim’s role in the Race Riot events.

The race riot of 1908 was the catalyst that led to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
commemorating a tragedy | THE PRESTON JACKSON SCULPTURE

In the riots' aftermath, two chimneys stood resolutely amid the burnt out ruins. The iconic nature of this image informs the work of a new sculpture commissioned by the City of Springfield, State of Illinois and the Springfield NAACP. Created by nationally known sculptor, Preston Jackson, commemorated in early 2009, it stands amidst the downtown sites of the city's historic outbreak of civil injustice. In remembrance of the 100th anniversary of the 1908 Springfield Race Riots, the sculpture provides historic perspective and encourages visitors to consider the impact of the event on society today, and its meaning for our future. (Union Square Park – North Sixth Street)

SPRINGFIELD CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Timothy J. Davlin
MAYOR

109 North Seventh Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701
217-789-2360 | 800-545-7300 | Fax 217-544-8711

www.visit-springfieldillinois.com

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ILLINOIS. MILE AFTER MAGNIFICENT MILE.
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