

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

Oklahoma HUMANITIES

SUMMER 2012

LOOKING BACK, PUSHING FORWARD
CONVERSATIONS ON RACE

Reconciliation

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Oklahoma HUMANITIES

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ON THE COVER

La Maison des Esclaves (Slave House); nearest settlement: Gorée Isle, off the coast of Dakar, Senegal. The yellow-painted section is a balcony, where the slave-holding family could look out over the Atlantic. Directly below it is a “door of no return,” where slaves were loaded on ships bound for the New World. Photo by Doug Henderson, story on page 6.



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Portrait of Dr. John Hope Franklin, by artist Everett Raymond Kinstler, dedicated at the Oklahoma State Capitol in February 2012. An Oklahoma native, Franklin became one of the most important American historians of the twentieth century. He served on the NAACP Legal Defense Fund team, led by Thurgood Marshall, that helped develop the case for *Brown v. Board of Education*, a Supreme Court decision that marked the end of segregation in public schools. Franklin received the Charles Frankel Prize from National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 1993. President Bill Clinton awarded him with the nation's highest honor, the Medal of Freedom, in 1995. Image courtesy the State Capitol Preservation Commission and Oklahoma Arts Council. © State of Oklahoma and the artist, 2011.

SPECIAL EDITION: RECONCILIATION

Looking Back, Pushing Forward—Conversations on Race

For the first time ever, our entire issue is devoted to a single subject—racial reconciliation. Four of our six authors were presenters at the 2011 John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation symposium, funded in part by a grant from OHC. Read more about our partnership with the symposium, and why we think this dialogue is so important, in Ann Neal's letter on page 5.

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From the Executive Director
ANN THOMPSON

I recently visited the D.C. offices of Oklahoma’s seven congressional delegates as part of an annual advocacy day called Humanities on the Hill. The purpose is to advocate for continued funding of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). State humanities councils act as local affiliates for NEH, making sure federal dollars are spent in meaningful ways that serve local citizens. Each council receives an operating support grant from NEH to fund that work. Without it, this magazine, grants for local community projects, and the host of other programs you’ve come to expect from us would cease to exist.

As you can imagine, when it comes to money, the mood on the Hill is “uncertainty.” We were greeted warmly and attentively by our representatives and their aides; but the inevitable question they posed is this: Why should the federal government fund humanities programming? Congress answered that question in 1965. Founding legislation for the NEH and the National Endowment for the Arts stated, “It is necessary and appropriate for the Federal Government to complement, assist, and add to the programs for the advancement of the humanities and the arts by local, state, regional, and private agencies and their organizations.”

Federal dollars “complement, assist, and add to” programs across our state. The power of this public/private partnership is simple math: for every federal dollar OHC received last year, local communities matched it with \$5.60. Our work and that of local communities (who rely on OHC programming) isn’t only for the public good—it *is* the public good. By bringing Oklahomans together to discuss books and ideas; by enhancing curriculum for K-12 students and teachers; by connecting the general public with the wealth of knowledge held by our state scholars (through lectures, exhibits, film festivals, and more), our work provides lifelong learning and an informed citizenry. *That* is why public funding of the humanities is not only necessary, it is more important than ever.

LETTERS

INFORMED STUDENTS

Thank you for Allen D. Hertzke’s excellent article on religious liberty in the summer 2011 issue of *Oklahoma HUMANITIES*. In the best tradition of the humanities, he weaves together an examination of history with pertinent literary and constitutional texts to cast light on one of the most contentious issues of our time. My students, with whom I have shared Professor Hertzke’s concise and insightful essay, are better informed about the legal and policy issues in contemporary church-state debate because of this article. —Daniel L. Dreisbach, professor, American University, Washington, D.C.

RELIGION V. REGULATION

I enjoyed reading about “Politics and the Pulpit” [Summer 2011], but our Founding Fathers did not see a need for freedom from religion on the part of government, except at the national level since many of the states had established religions. Our Founding Fathers and Mothers were very religious and simply did not want Congress [to] establish a religion [or] to prohibit the free exercise thereof, so the clear intent was for the citizens of each state to be free to exercise their religion however they want to, free from Congressional regulation. —Brad Baker, Sperry

CLASS IN SESSION

Thank you for sharing your Winter 2012 issue of *Oklahoma HUMANITIES* magazine with my students. The excellent articles regarding this election year are beneficial in understanding politics in our state and nation. In addition to their political science studies, [students] have the opportunity to read your quality publication and be exposed to your organization’s goals. —Carolyn Burkes, Teacher, Classen School of Advanced Studies

LEAVE A LEGACY

By making a gift provision in your will or trust—often referred to as a planned gift—you can defer a contribution, relieve the tax burden on your estate and, in some cases, retain an income stream during your lifetime, while still creating a lasting legacy to benefit the Oklahoma Humanities Council. For information, contact Traci Jinkens, OHC Marketing & Development Director: (405) 235-0280 or traci@okhumanities.org.

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The Oklahoma Humanities Council invites nominations for candidates to serve on its Board of Trustees. Nominations should be mailed to OHC by June 1, 2012, at: 428 W. California Avenue, Suite 270, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73102. Include a vita and letter of nomination that emphasizes the candidate's strengths in the following areas: dedication to the promotion of statewide programming in humanities disciplines; experience in fundraising; and willingness to attend three meetings per year and serve on various committees. Nominees from throughout the state are especially welcome.



From the OHC Board of Trustees
ANN NEAL, CHAIR

In 2011, the Oklahoma Humanities Council awarded \$162,480 in grants to organizations throughout our state. These grants supported reading and discussion programs, museum exhibits, a Native American story conference, an online encyclopedia, scholar research, teacher institutes, and programs for K-12 students. Awarding grants to nonprofit partners struggling to create and maintain humanities programming is an important part of OHC's work.

This special edition of our magazine demonstrates just how pivotal these grants are to our state. Many of the authors in this issue were presenters at the 2011 symposium sponsored by the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation, an event funded in part—for three years running—by a grant from OHC. Named for the famed historian and native Oklahoman, Dr. John Hope Franklin, the Center and its annual symposium explore the divisions of race that still exist in our country and encourage the volunteers, scholars, and community organizations working to heal those scars and move us forward. People from across the country come together to share strategy and research—and in this magazine, we're sharing just a small portion of that dialogue with you. As you will see, OHC grants are supporting work that will have far-reaching impact on the civil discourse of our state and our nation.

The genesis for the Center was recognition that there are long-lasting repercussions from the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot. Little mentioned—by Tulsans or history textbooks—the Riot leveled thirty-five city blocks known as the Greenwood District or "The Negro Wall Street." Many people were killed, hundreds were left destitute and homeless, and the legacy continues today.

This year's JHF Center symposium will explore reconciliation and its political dynamics. The keynote speaker is the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Rajmohan Gandhi. For information, turn to our calendar of events on page 30. It's just one of the scores of community-driven, nation-building projects funded by OHC.

DISCOVER THE REAL
GEORGE WASHINGTON
NEW VIEWS FROM MOUNT VERNON

an exhibition made possible by the generous support of
The Donald W. Reynolds Foundation



JUNE 24 – SEPTEMBER 23, 2012
Local support from the Grace and Franklin Bernsen Foundation

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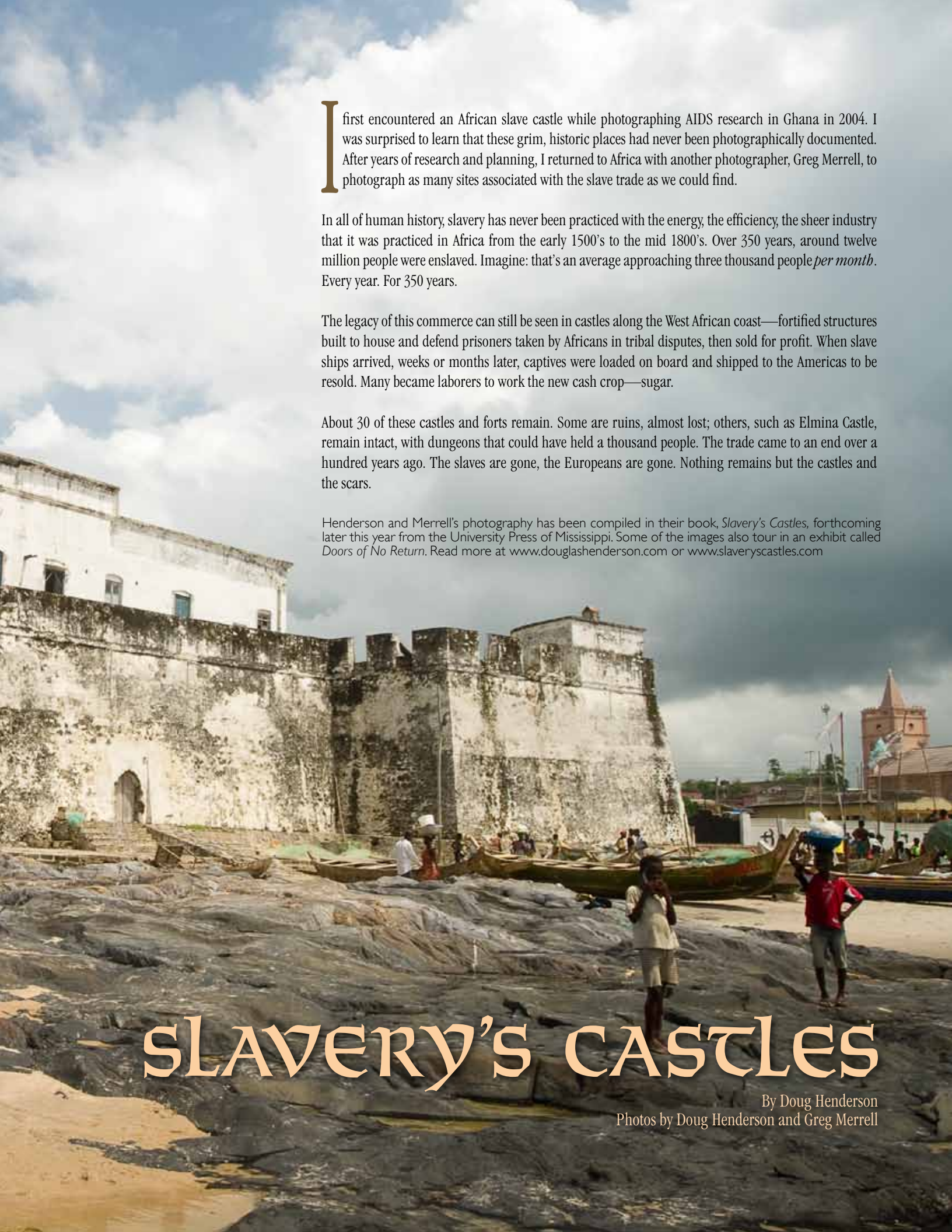
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Send your letters and opinions to the Editor at:
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subject line of your message. We look forward to hearing from you.



Ft. William, Anomabu
Photo by Doug Henderson



I first encountered an African slave castle while photographing AIDS research in Ghana in 2004. I was surprised to learn that these grim, historic places had never been photographically documented. After years of research and planning, I returned to Africa with another photographer, Greg Merrell, to photograph as many sites associated with the slave trade as we could find.

In all of human history, slavery has never been practiced with the energy, the efficiency, the sheer industry that it was practiced in Africa from the early 1500's to the mid 1800's. Over 350 years, around twelve million people were enslaved. Imagine: that's an average approaching three thousand people *per month*. Every year. For 350 years.

The legacy of this commerce can still be seen in castles along the West African coast—fortified structures built to house and defend prisoners taken by Africans in tribal disputes, then sold for profit. When slave ships arrived, weeks or months later, captives were loaded on board and shipped to the Americas to be resold. Many became laborers to work the new cash crop—sugar.

About 30 of these castles and forts remain. Some are ruins, almost lost; others, such as Elmina Castle, remain intact, with dungeons that could have held a thousand people. The trade came to an end over a hundred years ago. The slaves are gone, the Europeans are gone. Nothing remains but the castles and the scars.

Henderson and Merrell's photography has been compiled in their book, *Slavery's Castles*, forthcoming later this year from the University Press of Mississippi. Some of the images also tour in an exhibit called *Doors of No Return*. Read more at www.douglashenderson.com or www.slaveryscastles.com

SLAVERY'S CASTLES

By Doug Henderson
Photos by Doug Henderson and Greg Merrell



—Doug Henderson

Captives attempting to escape or resist were condemned to this cell and left to starve to death.



—Doug Henderson

A young girl sweeps leaves away in the courtyard of Fort Amsterdam, Abandze



—Greg Merrill

Junk cannons, “weapons of mass destruction” of another time, are scattered near many castles and forts today.

The floor was ... spongy; rubbery. Sort of like the fatigue mats workers stand on in a factory. But this was the packed dirt floor of a dungeon in Elmina Castle in Africa. Why would it be rubbery? I put my camera aside, knelt down, and touched the floor. It dawned on me that this was not mere dirt; it was the amalgam of blood, sweat, tears, skin cells, and waste shed by thousands of captives during hundreds of years of the African slave trade. I was kneeling on sacred ground. —Doug Henderson, Slavery’s Castles



—Doug Henderson

Elmina Castle. Of all the ancient military structures along the coast of West Africa, the Ghanaians refer to only two as Castles: Elmina and Cape Coast. They are massive: in exteriors, in dungeons, and in the sheer numbers of slaves they could process. The name Elmina (The Mines) refers to the gold mines that lured Europeans to colonize Africa.

MAKING PEACE WITH THE PAST

By Sharon Leslie Morgan and Thomas Norman DeWolf

A “healing journey” to confront the issues of race and prejudice

“The past is our definition. We may strive, with good reason, to escape it, or to escape what is bad in it, but we will escape it only by adding something better to it.” —WENDELL BERRY, author of *The Hidden Wound*

To speak honestly about America’s past is to open a virtual Pandora’s Box of historic malfeasance. Our nation has a long history of egregious behavior. It began with the genocide and forced removal of indigenous peoples and evolved through an economy built upon the enslavement of Africans. There have been continuous, deliberate debasements: waves of terror, eugenic cleansings, lynching, riots, internments, and many other forms of oppression and discrimination. Inequity and mistrust along racial lines remains systemic in our society. The scars are deep, leading thoughtful people to wonder, *Can we ever succeed in “adding something better” to our past? Can we heal and find peace?*

It is against this backdrop that we decided to drag one of America’s skeletons out of the closet and confront it. Our goal was to address the historic wound inflicted by slavery and racism, a “scab” Americans pick at but have never committed to fully heal. In May 2011, we set out on a road trip as part of a larger “healing journey”—a black woman and a white man; a descendant of slaves and a descendant of slave traders. Together, we traveled more than six thousand miles, through twenty-one states, over four weeks. Our objective was to explore historic American sites through a specific lens: to learn how we each feel about race, how it has affected our lives and the American narrative; to understand the view from “the other side”; and to ponder how we can move beyond the legacy of slavery.

Many have claimed that the United States is a “melting pot” of diverse cultures, melded and merged into one big, integrated family—a narrative that paints an idyllic picture but ignores reality. Most people don’t have firsthand experience with the transformative historical events that inform the society in which we live today. They were neither slaves nor slaveholders. They do not grasp the magnitude of horror associated with that economic system. They were not beaten during civil rights marches and thus may not fully appreciate the value of voting rights, much less their right to sit anywhere on a bus or train, to drink water from a fountain that isn’t labeled “white” or “colored.” They can go anywhere and do anything they please, whenever they please.

In spite of these achieved equalities, racism is alive and well. Schools, neighborhoods, and churches are as segregated as ever. Health disparities along racial lines remain significant. African American people are over-represented in prisons and under-represented in colleges and corporate boardrooms. Even with an African American president in the White House, equanimity remains illusive.

Oklahoma was one of the states we visited on our circuitous itinerary. Sharon’s ancestor, Owen Gavin, lived here in the early twentieth century. Born into

slavery in Mississippi in 1859, Owen packed up his family sometime around 1902 and trundled them off to Oklahoma where he undoubtedly had hopes of a better life. At that time, Oklahoma was viewed as a mecca for black people. From 1865 to 1920, African Americans established more than fifty settlements and towns—more than any other state. Owen Gavin responded to that call of self-determination. In 1910, the U.S. Census recorded his living in Bales Township, Pottawatomie County, with his wife, Julia, and several of their children. A peaceful man, his highest ambition was to be left alone to farm and raise his family.

By 1912, a destitute Owen was in Iowa—dead. After receiving a notice from the overseer of the poor that ordered him to leave the county, he shared his last dollar with his children and then blew his brains out with a shotgun. What the newspaper obituary does not detail is the horror Owen and his family were subjected to in Oklahoma. One of his daughters told of repeated attacks by “Night Riders,” during one of which her sister was violated with her father and brothers forced to watch at gunpoint.

Over the course of his fifty-three-year lifetime, Owen endured the indignities of being enslaved, terrorized, and uprooted, all because he was black and poor. His children scattered, most of them passing for either white or Native American in order to avoid a similar fate. His is but one story that illustrates the legacy of slavery and racism in America.

On our journey, we encountered many similar stories, historical records, landmarks, and other evidence of terror and oppression committed against



Sharon Morgan and Thomas DeWolf are the authors of *Gather at the Table: The Healing Journey of a Daughter of Slavery and a Son of the Slave Trade* forthcoming from Beacon Press, October 2012. DeWolf is also the author of *Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in U.S. History* (Beacon Press, 2008).

—Kristin Little



Owen Gavin Family in Oklahoma.
Courtesy Sharon Morgan

people because of their race. In Tulsa, we walked along the streets of the Greenwood District, site of the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, perhaps the single worst incident of racial violence in American history. Standing in the area once known as “Black Wall Street,” we felt the weight of history that has not been healed: On May 30, 1921, a black man named Dick Rowland entered an elevator in the Drexel Building operated by a white woman, Sarah Page. What happened next is known only to Rowland and Page. One version is that the elevator jerked and they stumbled into each other; another is that Rowland stepped on Page’s foot, she lost her balance, and Rowland reached out to prevent her from falling. What *is* known is that Page screamed. Rowland ran out of the elevator and was accused of a sexual attack. White people wanted to lynch him. Black people prepared to defend him. In less than twenty-four hours, rampaging whites burned the entire black section of town to the ground, killing hundreds and leaving thousands homeless.

As we walked along Greenwood Avenue, we stopped to read the bronze markers embedded in the sidewalks which identify every building that was destroyed during the riot. Inside the Greenwood Cultural Center, we stood before a wall of photos of survivors and read quotes of their memories of that devastating day. In the face of so much injustice and inequity, what does reconciliation entail?

For three quarters of a century, the story of the Tulsa riot was buried, left out of history books, classrooms, and community conversations. It wasn’t until 1997 that the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Race Riot of 1921 was formed. The John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation was established in 2007 to fulfill the Commission’s recommendations to build a memorial. The JHF Center expanded the idea of a memorial and has since opened John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park and initiated an annual symposium, bringing scholars and community partners from across the country to reflect on issues of race and justice and to foster the work of reconciliation. We were honored to participate in the Center’s second annual “Reconciliation in America” symposium.

Our journey together is one in which we committed to “live” a healing model developed at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. EMU is a world leader in conflict resolution with programs like: the Summer Peacebuilding Institute, attended by many people from war-ravaged countries; Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR), which addresses harm by seeking to understand how trauma is passed from generation to generation; and Coming to the Table, which examines

the legacies of slavery and ongoing racism by helping descendants of slaves and slaveholders to meet and come to terms with their shared history. These programs operate on the premise that, by choosing to break out of destructive cycles of violence—of victimhood and aggression—people can build healthier relationships and communities.

A major component of EMU programming is “restorative justice,” a peace-building approach that involves dialogue, accountability, and cooperation. Slavery and racism are violations. Violations create obligations. The central obligation is to repair harm and relationships. As applied within Coming to the Table, the goal is to begin a healing process that takes into account the harms of slavery. The process starts with understanding how this legacy has impacted us all. The biggest challenge, frankly, is finding ways for white people to understand and acknowledge this reality.

We all live within the shadow of racism. It has been passed down organically from parents, teachers, politicians, and others who cling to a distorted image of American history—one informed by, and articulated from, a worldview rooted in white privilege. These biases and prejudices are so hard-wired that most of us have no idea how automatically they kick in and how enduring they are. The only way we will ever come to terms with the truth is for people of all ages to be more fully educated in the history and legacies of our nation and its institutions.

Making peace with the past is a huge challenge—yet it is something we all must do. Transformation begins in the hearts and minds of individuals but cannot end there. It must radiate outward until it permeates the institutions and systems that have kept racism embedded in our culture.

The Tulsa YWCA is an institution that is making strides in its organization and activities. The group is dedicated to eliminating racism through two programs: “Witnessing Whiteness” for white people and “Mosaic” for people of color. Both programs bring people together to talk openly and honestly about issues of race. Why two separate groups? Facilitators found that, to work in meaningful ways, participants needed to deal with individual baggage when confronting racial issues. Meeting first in “affinity” groups elicits the most meaningful participation. Once the program is completed, participants are more willing to cross the racial divide and work together. According to Mana Tahei, Director of Racial Justice, “We’re having conversations that we never would have had before. We’ve given ourselves permission to go into things that no workplace encourages and it’s changing the way we operate . . . There are difficult moments when we realize, *It’s hard getting here*, but it’s worth it.”

Our journey showed us just how hard—and worthwhile—such efforts can be. We had moments of discomfort and fear, but found that the unopened closet is scarier than any skeleton lurking behind the door. We began to understand just how deeply imbedded our own personal prejudices are and what a huge act of will it takes to break out of entrenched mindsets. Our belief is that change starts in small ways—within ourselves—and then ripples outward, like a pebble tossed into a pond.

If we aspire to live in an enlightened society that serves the needs of all, we must confront the past, understand its impact on our lives today, and employ its lessons so that the systemic infection of racism can finally and truly be healed. 🌱



A History Long Forgotten

Intersections of Race in Early America
By Arwin D. Smallwood

For centuries America has attempted to simplify discussions of race into three broad categories: Native American, African American, and white. But a significant number of Americans have never seen themselves as belonging to only one race. They embrace and celebrate an identity that blends these cultures. In the 2010 U.S. Census, over nine million people identified themselves as multiracial—the majority sharing some *combination* of Native-American, African-American, or Caucasian heritage.

It is a historical fact that millions of Americans that identify themselves as “black” or “white” have some Native American ancestry. Native Americans, too, have intermixed—between tribal nations and with other races—resulting in a diverse lineage. We are a nation of *mixed* peoples and have been for hundreds of years. This truth is little known and little accepted, both socially and politically. For example, many Native American tribes are litigating who, and who is not, a member—who may receive tribal services or vote in tribal elections. This is just one of many issues of race relations our country has dealt with, despite our pride in “equality for all.” The stakes can be high and dialogue is necessary. Understanding our history is a good first step to understanding each other.

FIRST CONTACT: WHEN RACE MEETS RACE

The origins, history, and impact of Africans and Europeans on Native Americans, particularly those of the Northeastern and Southeastern

Arwin D. Smallwood is Associate Professor of History at the University of Memphis. His research focuses on African-American, Native-American, and Early American history and the meshing of cultures during that era. His published works include *The Atlas of African-American History and Politics* and *Bertie County: An Eastern Carolina History*. Dr. Smallwood’s many fellowships and awards include, among others: a National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant; The John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library Fellowship; the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Fellowship; and the Gilder Lehrman Fellowship.

Map of early Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland. Courtesy Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division. Inset: Spanish map depicting present-day Florida and lands to the east. Courtesy Rick Hill (Tuscarora, Beaver Clan)

Woodlands, began with first contact and early exploration by Europeans. The Spanish were the first to have a major impact on Native peoples of the western hemisphere. As Jack D. Forbes described in his landmark work *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*, Africans and Natives of the Americas were first brought together in large numbers when Columbus and the Spanish took thousands of Caribbean Natives back to Spain as slaves. These Native peoples were mixed with Spaniards and Africans (both slaves and free citizens). In Spain, Portugal, and parts of Western Europe, mixing between Europeans, Sephardic Jews, Moors, Muslims, West Africans, and Christians had been taking place since at least 650 A.D. In the Old World, contact between these groups brought wealth, knowledge—and mixed races.

From 1521 to 1607, tens of thousands of these Native peoples were enslaved with Africans in Europe or on sugar, tobacco, and coffee plantations in the Americas. These peoples sometimes willingly, sometimes through force, intermarried or intermixed with each other and their white owners (the Spanish and Portuguese) throughout the Caribbean and North and South America, creating a mind-boggling array of mixtures and terms to define them. Thus, many Africans and Natives of the Americas became mixed-blood, bi-racial (Native and black) and tri-racial (Native, black, and white) peoples.

In the late 1600s, mixed-race people in most of the thirteen colonies were classified as Mulatto, which could be a person of Indian and white lineage, Indian and African lineage, African and white lineage, or any combination of the three. Once classified as Mulatto or black, poor whites and white indentured servants who intermarried with Indians, Africans, and mixed-bloods eventually were classified as “Negro” and were mandated with their descendants by law to be slaves for the rest of their natural lives. To avoid this fate, many mixed people moved to the frontier and mixed further with what were then powerful Indian nations in the Northeastern and Southeastern Woodlands.

The Tuscarora were one of the first Northeastern Native American tribes to adopt whites and Africans. They began to mix with them as early as 1586, when they absorbed over 300 West Africans, Carib Indians, Muslims, Sephardic Jews, Moors, and Turks left in North Carolina by the English privateer Sir Francis Drake. A year later, they absorbed white colonists



By the end of the 1800s, mixed peoples inhabited much of the Southeastern and Northeastern Woodlands, including the Peoria Indians, the last of which is pictured here. Courtesy Peoria Public Library and Cullom Davis Library Special Collections, Bradley University, Peoria, IL

brought to Roanoke Island by explorer John White. In Northeastern Native communities, mixed-bloods were adopted to replace tribal members lost in wars and to disease. Once adopted, they became one with the tribes and children they had with Native women were seen as full members. As early as the 1600s, there were mixed-race Indians throughout present-day Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. Tribes such as the Powhatans, Delawares, Nanticokes, and Tuscaroras mixed with former indentured servants (black and white) and runaway slaves. Many of their offspring called themselves “Black Dutch” or “Protégée” to denote in later years that, although they were of mixed race, they were descendants of free blacks, people brought to Virginia by the Dutch in 1619 to work as cheap labor on tobacco plantations. Virginia encouraged free blacks who were former indentured servants to live on its eastern shore and the Roanoke River to serve as buffers between Indians and white settlements.

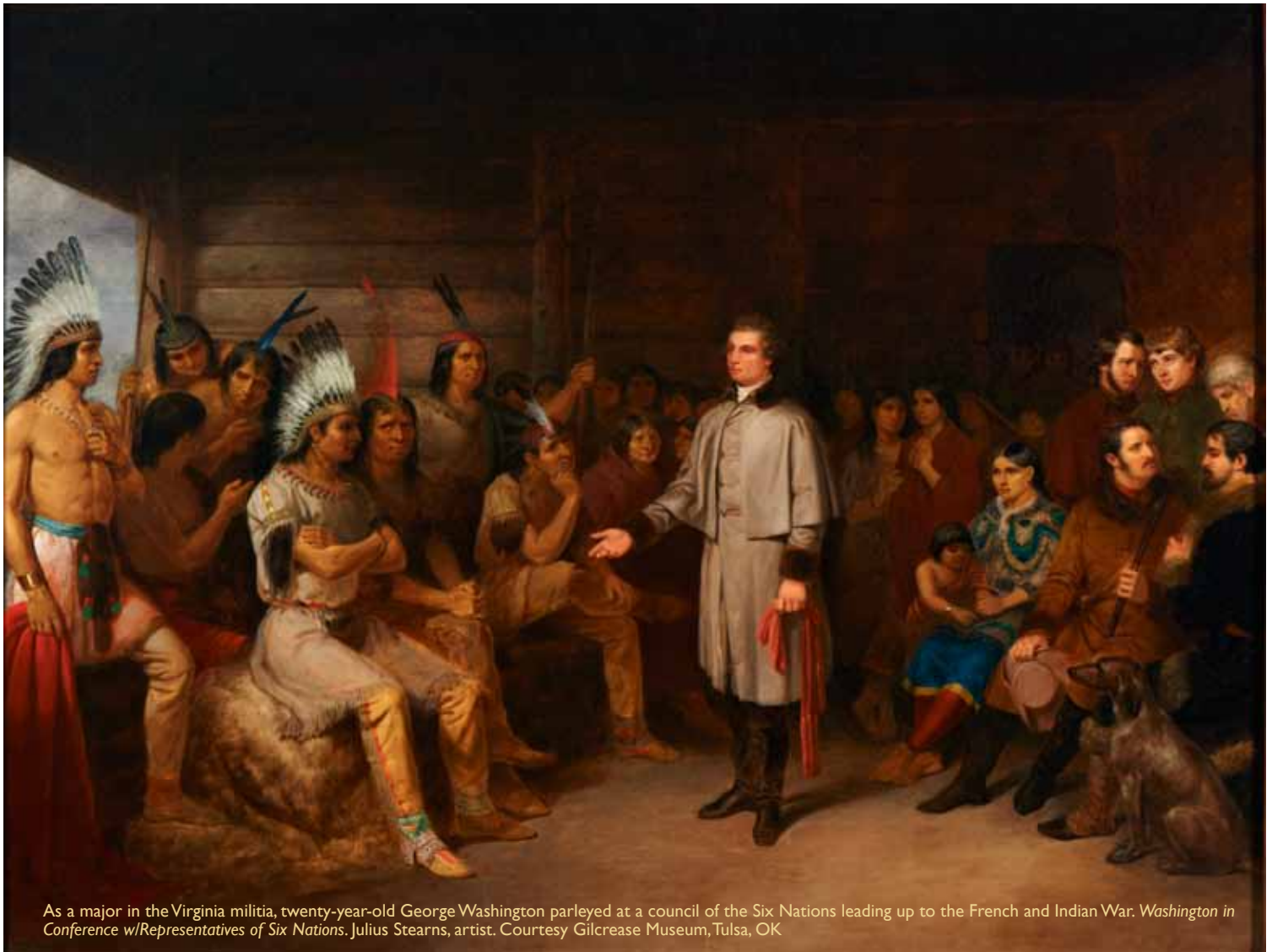
By the 1600s, the Dutch, French, English, and Swedes began to compete with the Spanish for control of sugar islands in the Caribbean, and for trade footholds on the North American Atlantic coast. As Allan Gally notes in his book *The Native American Slave Trade*, when the English arrived in South Carolina in 1670 and began trading in Native American slaves, they found willing partners among Southeastern tribes. Subsequently, tens of thousands of North American Indians were sold into slavery. Some Southeastern Indians (particularly the Cherokee, Creeks, Catawba, Yamasee, and Westos) became slaver traders in exchange for European-manufactured guns, knives, and axes.

DIVIDING NATIONS, COMMINGLING PEOPLES

A huge divide opened between Northeastern and Southeastern tribes over slavery following the Tuscarora War from 1711 to 1713. Although the Tuscarora fought against the Colonies of North and South Carolina and their expansion into Indian lands, the war also involved Southeastern Indian allies who had become heavily involved in and dependent on slaving. The war represented far more than what we traditionally think of as simply an Indian/white conflict over land. It altered the racial and political landscape of what would become the eastern United States. Even before the establishment of U.S. boundaries between the free North and slaveholding South, Northeastern and Southeastern Indians divided the continent into pro-slavery and anti-slavery regions.

In 1715, whites dealing in the Native American slave trade were killed by Southeastern tribes, ending the practice of enslaving Natives. However, Southeastern Indians expanded their involvement in the African Slave Trade, serving as slave catchers and slave holders. From the end of the Tuscarora War, sharp differences remained between Northeastern and Southeastern tribes over African slavery and mixed Indian-African, Indian-African-white peoples. So intense was the warfare between the two groups that the King of England authorized William Byrd of Virginia in 1728 to draw a dividing line on what became the North Carolina/Virginia, Tennessee/Kentucky border. This line separated Northeastern tribes from Southeastern tribes, and non-slaving Indians from slaving Indians.

Southeastern tribes captured and returned runaway African, Indian, and mixed slaves. They also began to practice slavery, amassing thousands of African and mixed-race slaves by the time of Indian Removal in the 1830s. By 1835, at least ten percent of the Cherokee Nation was black slaves.



As a major in the Virginia militia, twenty-year-old George Washington parleyed at a council of the Six Nations leading up to the French and Indian War. *Washington in Conference w/Representatives of Six Nations*. Julius Stearns, artist. Courtesy Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK

The practice was not without conflict among Southeastern tribes. Many full-blood Indians believed that slavery was inconsistent with their traditional ways. Part-white Indians disagreed and were unwilling to give up African slavery. The conflicts led to civil wars in some nations. Many mixed-blood tribal members separated from their nations before and during Indian removal in the 1830s, choosing to live in the swamps and mountains of their ancestral homes instead of moving to Indian Territory.

Even before their removal to Oklahoma, many Southeastern Woodland Indians, including the Cherokee, Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws, and Seminoles (subsequently known as the Five Civilized Tribes), mixed with the African slaves they held, with whites, and with other Native nations. In North Carolina and Virginia, anthropologists note that regional tribes (including Algonquians, Iroquois, and Siouan peoples) were genetically similar before first contact with Europeans, most likely due to the taking and adoption of each other's women and children. Culturally, however, each group was distinct, having its own language, foods, political system, and cultural traditions. These societal systems and folkways—not genetics—are what held these tribes together.

The Iroquois Confederacy (including Mohawks, Oneidas, Cayugas, Onondagas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras, also known as the Six Nations)

avoided enslaving other Natives, mostly due to their involvement with the fur trade which kept them supplied with guns, powder, lead, knives, and axes. From the 1670s, these Northeastern Indians often refused to return runaway slaves from the Colonies, instead choosing to intermix with them and with a host of maroon communities (independent settlements made up of runaway slaves). By the start of the Civil War, mixed-blooded (Indian,



The term *mulatto* was often used to describe mixed-race Indian-black and Indian-black-white, slaves. *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register*, Weds. 12/17/1794. No. 101, Vo. XLVII. Courtesy Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK

black, and white) communities could be documented in nearly every state on the Eastern Seaboard from Georgia to Massachusetts. Northeastern Indians also developed friendly relations with Quakers, Moravians, The Society for the Proclamation of the Gospel, and other antislavery groups. At Quaker and Moravian missions among these tribes, Indians, Africans, and whites lived, worked, and worshiped together, died and were buried together in church cemeteries. Even today, in places like Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, these Moravian cemeteries still remain as a testament to their positive attitudes concerning race.

From the time of first contact with Europeans to the American Revolution, over ninety-five percent of all blacks in this country lived on the South Atlantic coast. Most were moved to the Deep South to clear land and work cotton plantations between 1783 and 1861; therefore, nearly the entire black population (except for then-recent arrivals from West Africa) would have had some Native mixture. From the South, these blacks spread to the Northeast, Midwest, and Far West throughout the early twentieth century. As a result of Indian and African slaving, anthropologists were aware as early as 1890 that the majority of blacks on the East Coast and in the Gulf of Mexico were mixed with Native Americans. These are the reasons that Native-African ancestry is common across America today.

By the time of the Civil War in 1861, 200 years of slavery and racial mixing had had a profound impact on everyone in the Eastern United States. Members of the Six Nations and their mixed-blood kin in New York, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Virginia, and North Carolina sided with the Union. The Six Nations and their allies had become so mixed that, even though they could document their Native ancestry, many were forced to fight with U. S. Colored troops. Most of the Southeastern Nations sided with the Confederacy—a controversial choice, for many had kin who were part black.

By the time Englishman John White and his landing party arrived in Jamestown, Virginia, tens of thousands of Native peoples had been enslaved and mixed with whites, Africans, and other Native Americans. *Captain John and Party Landing at Jamestown, May 14, 1607.* John Mix Stanley, artist. Courtesy Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK

Centuries of history show how American Indians and enslaved Africans became mixed, how their peoples and cultures became blended. In the modern community of Indian Woods in Bertie County, North Carolina (established in 1717 as a Tuscarora reservation), many African Americans today possess this mixed heritage. Communities like Indian Woods are scattered all over the Northeastern and Southeastern United States. These people may have lost the name of their nation, their Native language, and tribal traditions and customs, but the blood mixtures and ancestry remain. They are a microcosm and the United States is a macrocosm of this phenomenon.

EMBRACING A COMPLEX HERITAGE

The merging of culture and blood among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans is clear when we take the time to examine the early history of our country. Our history is not unlike that of the rest of the Western Hemisphere, where peoples like those of Brazil readily embrace their mixed heritage. But because of race-based slavery, Jim Crow laws, segregation, Indian Removal, acculturation, and other exclusionary measures, many of our ancestors were forced to deny a mixed-race heritage. Those that could, often identified themselves as “white” to survive. Others, who appeared to have some mixture of black races, were forced to identify themselves as “Colored” or “black.” As a result, today, a significant number of mixed-race people identify with tribes and other groups but cannot readily document a connection to them.

If we are to fully understand and appreciate what it means to be Native American, African American, or American we must fully understand and acknowledge the relationship between Indians, Africans, and Europeans over the past 500 years. Explaining how we came to be and acknowledging the role of mixed-race people in America’s evolution will help us deal more sensitively with modern conflicts over ethnicity and identity—and, in time, embrace the *whole* of our rich, diverse heritage. ☺



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ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2011



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The Oklahoma Humanities Council is an independent, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote meaningful public engagement with the humanities—disciplines such as history, literature, film studies, art criticism, and ethics. As the state partner for the National Endowment for the Humanities, OHC brings people together through community grants, Smithsonian traveling exhibits, teacher institutes, reading and discussion forums, *Oklahoma HUMANITIES* magazine, and more.

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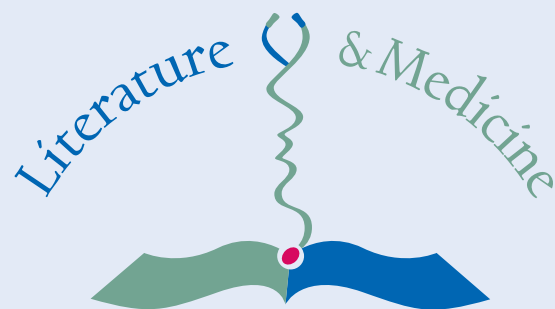
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humanities at the heart of health care

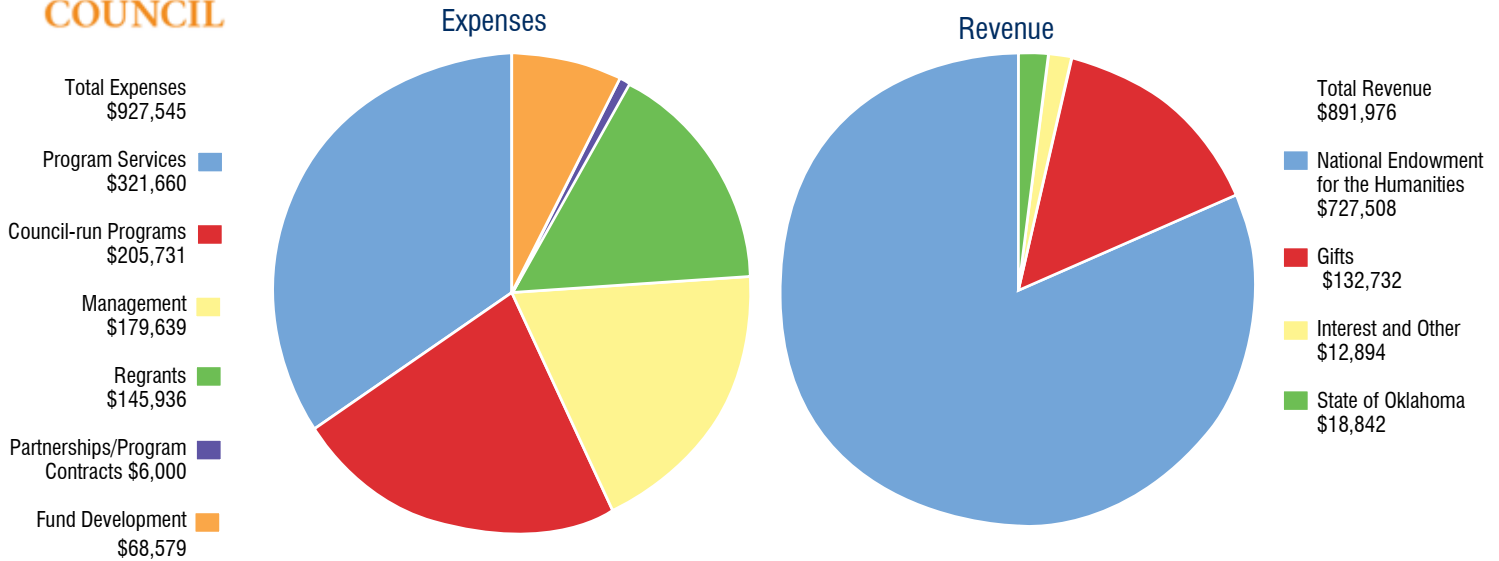
Picture this: A cross section of health care professionals seated around a hospital conference table—doctors, nurses, technicians, administrators, clergy, social workers . . . They come from a variety of hospital, home health care, hospice, and public health settings. The common denominator is the reading material in their hands and the program that brings them together—Literature and Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care.

The Oklahoma Humanities Council (OHC) launched the award-winning reading and discussion program at Mercy Health Center last summer. The national program, created by the Maine Humanities Council, encourages participants to connect their professional lives with the broader scope of human experience. That connection is facilitated with scholar-led discussions on a variety of literature. Though the program is the first of its kind in Oklahoma, other states are reporting overwhelmingly positive outcomes. Participants report deeper empathy for patients and fellow staff, better communication skills, and greater job satisfaction. A total of 26 states are currently hosting the program.

To find out how your health care institution can participate, contact OHC at (405) 235-0280.



SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING OCTOBER 31, 2011



Note: These figures are from the audited financial statements for the time period of November 1, 2010 through October 31, 2011. For a complete listing of grants awarded, visit: www.okhumanities.org/grants

WHAT OUR AUDIENCES HAVE TO SAY:

Let's Talk about It, Oklahoma!

Very thankful I have this opportunity.

—Participant, McAlester Public Library

Our county is lucky to have this program.

—Participant, Davis Public Library

Major Grants

Thank you for bringing this exhibit. What a treat!

—Participant, Allen True's West, National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum

Contributes greatly to language documentation and revitalization in Oklahoma.

—Participant, 39th Annual Symposium on the American Indian, Northeastern State University

Opportunity Grants

I loved the program! We should have similar programs every year.

—Participant, Watonga Reads in Celebration, Watonga Public Library

I would encourage more people and youth to be more involved with these programs.

—Participant, Pearl S. Buck: A Good Life, Northwestern State University, Enid Campus

This was a superb program. I'd like to see more like it as an ongoing event.

—Participant, D. C. Minner and the Dusk Til Dawn Blues Fest, Muskogee

WHY I GIVE TO OHC

I've spent my adult life teaching how the sonnets of Petrarch yielded the great flowering of poetry of the Elizabethan age, and how Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* fits into the development of the novel. These are questions on which I might carry a bit of credibility. But money? Few would think, "Hey, I'll ask an English teacher about money." Yet, I have learned a little about giving and value.

In an era when American democracy depends on ideas and civic engagement, our public sector rarely steps up to fund humanities when other pressing needs (health, science, technology, global development) call for funding. A few years ago, a college buddy explained his strategy for giving money. (He has made a lot of it and is very generous in giving it away.) Over coffee, I learned something new about money. *Smart money.*

When my friend wants to support a project, he looks for

impact. Is it drawing partners? He analyzes whether his seed money can make a difference, rather than being merely "icing on the cake." He wants to know if his money will be leveraged or matched to create more capacity. *Impact. Partnership. Leverage.* These are his guidelines for making smart money gifts.

Those features apply when giving to OHC programs and endowments. *Impact:* OHC grants help communities fund things that matter to them—at a local level. *Partnership:* Getting an OHC program means that a community—small or large—has agreed to build public and private partnerships. *Leverage:* OHC partnership keeps projects accountable for private funding and in-kind donations to leverage support for maximum effectiveness. Your dollar is often matched by other private donations and funding from the NEH.

I give to OHC because I love the humanities projects we support; but I rest easy knowing that my gifts, however large or small, are smart money.

To make a secured gift, contact the Council at (405) 235-0280 or visit: www.okhumanities.org/donate



Dr. Scott LaMascus, OHC Board of Trustees Director, Honors Program, Oklahoma Christian Univ.



OKLAHOMA HUMANITIES
AWARDS

HONORING EXCELLENCE IN THE HUMANITIES

OHC honored six awardees at the annual Oklahoma Humanities Awards on March 22 at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City. Their achievements demonstrate how the humanities help Oklahomans understand the human experience and expand our world view. We congratulate each of these recipients!



Dr. Alvin O. Turner received OHC's highest honor, the Oklahoma Humanities Award, for his record of teaching, writing, and dedication to public humanities programming.



A Tapestry Tour of Five Historic Sites in Southwest Oklahoma was recognized as Outstanding OHC Project, an award that honors public programming made possible by an OHC program or grant.



Rector Johnson Middle School in Broken Bow was honored with the Humanities in Education Award for the creation of the H³ (History Happens Here) Time Travelers Book Club, which uses literature to awaken students' interest in history.



Dr. Bill Corbett was honored with the Public Humanities Award for his dedication to providing outstanding public programming across the state.



Dr. Catherine Webster received the Community Leadership Award for the development and coordination of French cultural and educational programming for children and adults through *Alliance Française of Oklahoma City*.

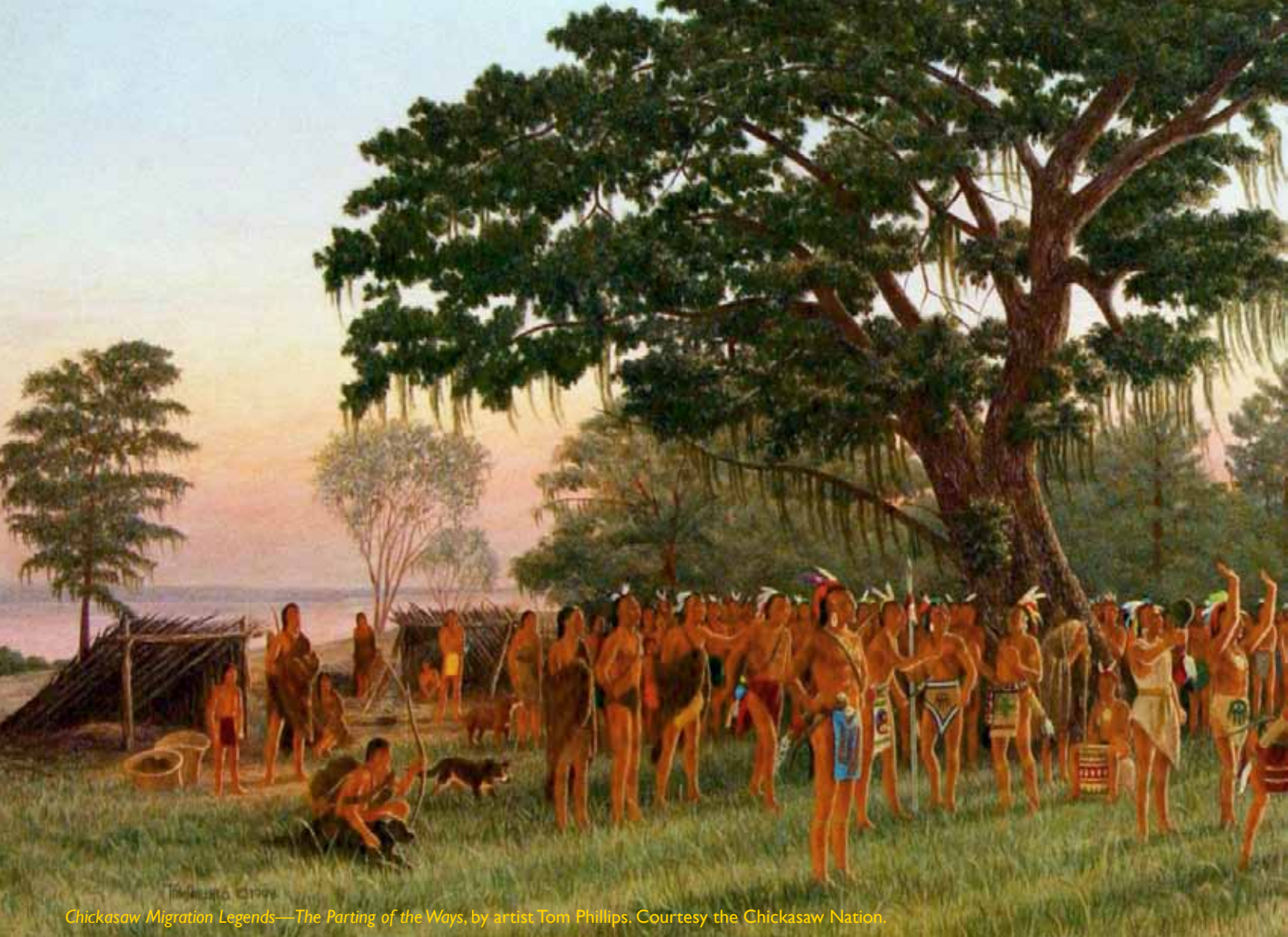


The *Oklahoma Gazette* received the Community Support Award for its years of sustained support of cultural programming across Oklahoma.



Call For Nominations

Nomination forms and guidelines for the 2013 Oklahoma Humanities Awards are posted on the OHC website: www.okhumanities.org. Deadline for nominations is September 1, 2012.



Chickasaw Migration Legends—*The Parting of the Ways*, by artist Tom Phillips. Courtesy the Chickasaw Nation.

Some wounds in American history simply cut too deep. The difficult and tumultuous relationship between the United States and the Chickasaw Nation is certainly one of those wounds. But perhaps some hope for future healing can be drawn from a deeper understanding of the injustices in our past.

Today, in an era when attempts at racial reconciliation and solidarity seem fruitless in producing lasting change, we do well to re-examine and glean from the cooperative, interracial relationships in Mississippi mission churches of the early nineteenth century. These communities included whites, African Americans, and Native Americans, and were later carried from Mississippi into Oklahoma.

Prior to Chickasaw removal and throughout occupation of reservations in Oklahoma, Christian missionary men and women worked alongside and cultivated relationships with their indigenous neighbors. This was not

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merely a bi-racial interaction; enslaved African Americans belonging to the Chickasaw were also vital members of these tri-racial, ecclesiastical communities—*ecclesiastical* as in *the life of the church*. What these relationships reveal are human beings from various racial, cultural, and religious backgrounds struggling to communicate, to know one another, and to make some sense of their changing worlds. In many ways, it was not unlike our twenty-first-century efforts to overcome divisions of race, religion, and culture. Studying the experiences of these mission communities can help us navigate the multiracial dimensions of our national identity.

The bulk of what some historians write regarding antebellum missionaries among American Indians reads like a who's who of imperialist domination. In those accounts, missionaries lived among tribes simply to proselytize Christianity, to acculturate and indoctrinate with a westernized, highly individualistic view of education and religion. In the process, Native peoples were robbed of their own religious traditions, their children stolen and sent to boarding schools away from the bosom of community and kinship—all in an effort to make them, culturally speaking, more “civilized.”

No doubt, these practices occurred and indeed were injustices. But are we getting the whole story?



Hope for Racial Healing

Rethinking Christian Missions among the Chickasaw

Models for hope can be found in our past

By Otis W. Pickett

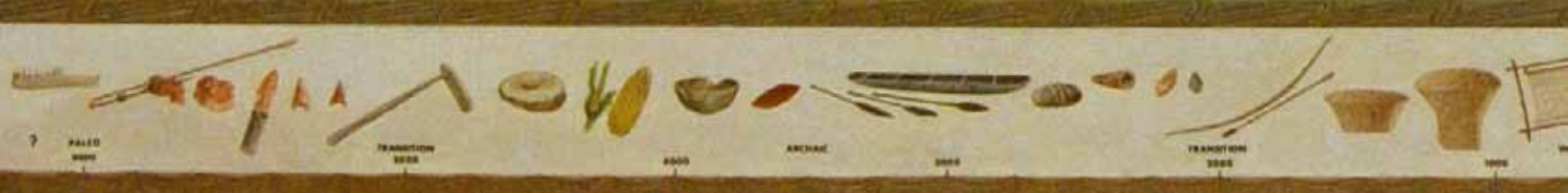
It is easy to write off missionaries as little more than well-meaning imperialists, but a closer inspection reveals relationships of immense complexity. To believe that missionary activity was only to conquer, subdue, and acculturate is perhaps a bit reductionist. Indeed, this somewhat myopic position weakens our understanding of antebellum U.S. history, of Native American agency, of interracial relationships, of church history, and of missionaries themselves. More importantly, this narrow view robs us of hope for future racial reconciliation, a hope which can trace its roots in surprisingly harmonious, interracial missionary communities that once fostered not only fellowship but also ecclesiastical *equality*—equality of races in church membership and in theological understanding of their position before God.

Missionaries to Native tribes sacrificed much. They suffered limited career opportunities, familial isolation, and cultural ostracism, acting, in some cases, as the only white advocates and mediators of Native American rights with government agents. Missionaries occupied a difficult and tenuous middle ground. They were often torn between loyalty to the state and concern for the people they served. Historian Ernest Trice Thompson described their commitment, noting that they

... renounced titles and estates to engage in the work; most of them were of finished scholarship and refined habits ... They

faced all manner of privation merely for the sake of making some portion of the world a better place in which to live, or to improve the condition of a fellow mortal, no matter how unworthy the latter may have been considered in the esteem of mankind (*Presbyterian Missions in the Southern United States*, 1934).

The life of one such missionary, Thomas C. Stuart, reveals a highly conflicted individual, motivated by deep religious and theological conviction. Stuart possessed an uncharacteristic regard for the condition of Native Americans (compared to prevalent racial biases of nineteenth-century Southern whites), especially in regard to ecclesiastical equality and educational opportunity. Reverend Stuart was one of the earliest Presbyterian missionaries in Mississippi. Sent by the Synod of South Carolina in 1820, Stuart established the Monroe Mission and ministered among the Chickasaw Indians of Northeast Mississippi for much of his life. By 1830 he had a church membership of over one hundred Native Americans, African Americans, and whites (*Father Stuart and the Monroe Mission*, 1927, E.T. Winston, editor. *Note*: The volume Winston edited includes church session records, Stuart's letters and memoirs, and interviews with individuals who knew Stuart. It has secondary narrative regarding the Chickasaw, the Monroe Mission, and the nearby town of Pontotoc. Subsequent references in quotation marks are from Winston unless otherwise identified.).



Stuart arrived in the Chickasaw Nation on the eve of a council to elect Ishtehotopa, the last principal chief (a position Europeans dubbed as “king”) in Mississippi prior to removal. Historian C.W. Grafton writes, “Here they found a very different feeling between the races and especially between these races and the whites” (*History of Presbyterianism in Mississippi*, 1927). According to Grafton, the Chickasaw considered the English to be strong allies; they ate with them, intermarried, and fought battles together. As a result, Stuart found the Chickasaw already accustomed to the English language, to interactions with whites, and the ideas of Christianity. On June 22, 1820, the Chickasaw council granted Stuart permission to stay and a site was chosen for a new church. Stuart, Ishtehotopa, and several Chickasaw representatives signed a formal agreement, thus beginning the missionary work of “Father” T.C. Stuart among the Chickasaw Nation.

There were originally eight members of the Monroe Mission (Stuart, his wife, and a few families from South Carolina), which was named after James Monroe, then President of the United States. One witness of the old Monroe Church reported, “It was a diminutive room 16 x 16, built of small poles” and had a “dirt and stick chimney and a large open fireplace, where, in the winter, the worshippers warmed their frost-bitten fingers.” The families built houses, started a self-sustaining farm, founded a school, and preached to the Chickasaws using an interpreter.

Throughout the mid to late 1820s, the church grew to twelve times its original size. Ecclesiastical distinctions based on race or color seemed to be nonexistent in Stuart’s missionary model. One acquaintance recalled, “He earned the appreciation of all, regardless of color or condition or creed.” Likewise, early church records showed a racially diverse membership of twenty-nine whites, sixty-nine African Americans, and twenty-five Native Americans.

In churches across the South, slaves, as a rule, were not given membership and were relegated to separate seating during the worship service. They were added to church rolls under their master’s household; for instance, as “Sam, servant of Mr. Legare.” In a clear departure from this practice, Stuart admitted African Americans and Native Americans as full members.

Mission churches were sometimes places of ecclesiastical equality, education, and could even allow for development of ecclesiastical leadership. The

unique interaction of races at the Monroe Mission was evident in leadership positions for some African Americans. As noted by historian George Howe, Stuart described one such black woman, Dinah, as an integral part of his work: “Being a native of the country, [she] spoke the Chickasaw language fluently; and having the confidence of the Indians, I employed her as my interpreter, for several years in preaching the gospel to them” (*History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina*, 1870).

For Stuart to employ an African American woman in a place of such prominence was no doubt unusual; but the isolated nature of mission work allowed missionaries the freedom to maneuver cultural and racial expectations of the period. The church admitted Dinah as a full member and “after a careful examination the session felt satisfied with her Christian experience, and accordingly admitted her to the privileges of the household of faith.” Church records of August 3, 1823, show that Stuart baptized Dinah’s children, Chloe, William, and Lucy.

The first Native American to become a member of the Monroe church was Tennessee Bynum. Described in the session records as “a native,” she joined on December 4, 1824, along with Esther, “a black woman belonging to Mrs. Colbert.” Two years later, Molly Colbert of the elite, mixed-blood Colbert family joined the church. Mixed-blood or mixed-race Chickasaws typically had ancestors who intermarried with English officers, soldiers, or settlers, giving them political influence and wealth, which they invested in land and slaves. Molly Colbert’s membership was significant in that full membership in a Presbyterian church carried several privileges. Members could serve on committees and had full ecclesiastical rights to vote on church business. Male members could be nominated for leadership positions, such as elder or deacon.

William Colbert, a mixed-race Chickasaw, was the first male Chickasaw admitted to membership. He joined on September 29, 1827. According to Howe, Colbert was “a scholar in the school and on the 5th of April, 1834 was elected and ordained a ruling elder in [the] Church.” The appointment was significant. An elder not only ruled over the congregation but also presided over church discipline cases—a major reason why African American and Native American elders seldom served in Presbyterian churches in the Southeast until long after the Civil War. The fact that a “Native” (albeit mixed-



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Detail, *Chickasaw Migration Legends—The Parting of the Ways*, by Tom Phillips

race) had such a prominent role in the Monroe church displayed Stuart's notions of ecclesiastical equality in stark contrast to broader societal attitudes about race throughout the antebellum South.

Various acquaintances of "Father" Stuart attested to his animated and affable reminiscences of his time with Native Americans. Others mentioned that he "never lost interest in his Indian converts, and frequently visited them in their western home" (*The Presbyterian Work in Mississippi*, 1927, Fred R. Graves, editor). After the removal of the Chickasaw Nation in 1839, Stuart forded rivers and traveled across country with his daughter, Mary Jane, to visit them in Oklahoma. Remembered fondly as a kindhearted man, Stuart was liked by whites, Native Americans, and African Americans.

Stuart died in Tupelo, Mississippi, in 1883. He was buried in the Pontotoc cemetery, undoubtedly because "in 1852, a government deed conveyed the ground to the 'Chickasaws and their white friends forever as public burying ground.'" His epitaph appropriately reads, "For many years a missionary to the Chickasaw Indians."

Chickasaw historian William Hiemstra discusses the inclusive attitudes of such clergymen, stating, "It is evident that the missionaries never considered the Choctaws and Chickasaws to be members of an inferior race. The curriculum maintained by the various schools reveals that the Indian was regarded as one who had not received opportunities for cultural advancement; in no case was the Indian believed to have been born with inferior mentality" ("Presbyterian Missions among the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians, 1845-1862," 1947).

Historian Arminta Scott Spalding points to similar relationships between missionaries and the people of the Choctaw Nation. In her 1974 dissertation on Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury, she notes that missionaries "devoted their lives, tirelessly and sacrificially, under extreme hardship and with no personal gain to themselves." Spalding asserts the motivational, as well as ministerial, role of these clergymen: "Seeds sown by dedicated missionaries were nourished in the minds of the Choctaw people and matured into a harvest of educated leaders and citizens." Spalding further argues that the principles and experiences gained from mission schools "became fundamental components of the social, political, and economic institutions of the Choctaw Nation and the State of Oklahoma."

Thus, history shows that distinctions along racial lines were not as prevalent in these mission churches as we might have thought. It is true that some missionaries were consumed by a zealous pursuit of acculturation that robbed many Native Americans of indigenous cultures and practices. But it is also true that, over time and through the development of human relationships, there were personal transformations, in the minds of many missionaries, to see Native Americans no longer as heathens but as friends and ecclesiastical equals. According to Spalding, there was a deep concern among some white missionaries for the wellbeing of the Choctaw and Chickasaw and for their "ultimate good."

In the Spring of 2011, I had the great honor of presenting some of this research at the annual symposium of the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation in Tulsa, Oklahoma, entitled: "Hope and Healing: Black, White and Native American." It was an inspiring and uplifting time that gave me continued hope in the dreams of men like Martin Luther King, Jr., John Hope Franklin, and John Perkins, who thought that real change in America's racial landscape was possible. The John Hope Franklin Center is a shining beacon in an often dim discourse on racial reconciliation in the United States. Important dialogue and respectful interaction occurred at the conference. But I was left asking myself how we could take that dialogue and experience into our homes, into our communities, and share it with larger audiences.

Perhaps we can begin by walking through and dealing with a horrific past. We should not gloss over our history or neglect to repair its offenses; but we should also look to the past for examples of *positive* interactions that give us hope, cause us to pause, to begin the work toward a genuine and lasting reconciliation. We need to look at history and expose its problems, but also claim and celebrate moments of peaceful co-existence as touchstones that can lead us forward.

Perhaps the life of T.C. Stuart, while no doubt paternalistic and deeply flawed, could, in some way, provide a historical model for twenty-first-century respect for our fellow man. We have to find hope for racial healing somewhere. While looking to the future and working in the present, let us not forget our shared past. ☺



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Righting the Wrongs of History

Reparations
and the
1921 Tulsa Race Riot

By Hannibal B. Johnson Images Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” —DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (adapted from Theodore Parker, c. 1850)

Tulsa, “The Oil Capital of the World,” shone brightly at the dawn of the twentieth century. Black gold oozed from the soil of Indian Territory. J. Paul Getty. Thomas Gilcrease. Waite Phillips. They were among the men extracting fabulous fortunes from Oklahoma crude and living on Tulsa time.

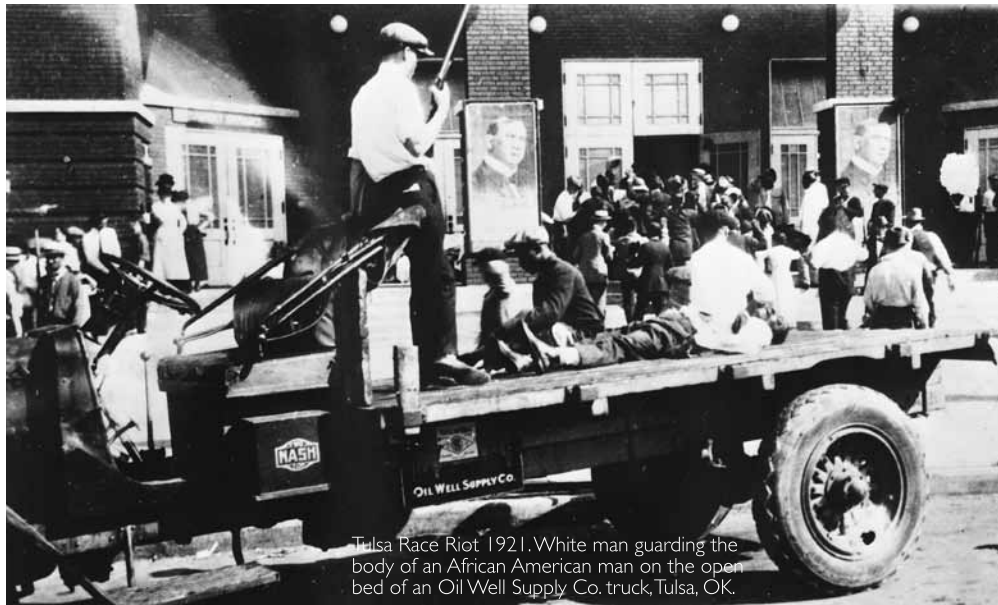
As Tulsa’s wealth and stature grew, so, too, did political, economic, and, particularly, race-based, tensions. The formative years of this segregated city coincided with the low point of American race relations—a period marked by widespread denial of black civil rights and anti-black violence.

Even amidst this “backlash,” Tulsa’s African American community, the Greenwood District, thrived. Greenwood pioneers parlayed segregation into a closed-market system that defied Jim Crow’s fundamental premise: African-American incompetence and inferiority. An insular service economy developed as African Americans engaged one another in business. Dubbed the “Negro Wall Street,” the area attracted visionaries from across America.

The success of the Greenwood District could scarcely be tolerated, let alone embraced, by the larger white community. African-American success increased consternation and friction. Black World War I veterans, having tasted true freedom on foreign soil, returned with heightened expectations, less inclined to suffer race-based indignities in silence. Valor and sacrifice in battle earned them respect—or so they thought. America had not yet changed, and Tulsa proved no exception.

The physical intimidation of racial oppression in the United States at that time is almost unfathomable today. It was open season on African Americans. In 1919, more than two dozen major race-based disturbances, labeled “race riots,” flared across America. In 1921, “the year of the Riot,” white vigilantes lynched some 57 African Americans. Despite these atrocities, the U.S. Senate thrice failed to pass measures to make lynching a federal offense.

In Tulsa, a seemingly random encounter between two teenagers, one white, the other black, was the catalyst for an event euphemistically dubbed “The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot” (the Riot). The *alleged* assault on seventeen-year-old Sarah Page by nineteen-year-old Dick Rowland triggered unprecedented civil unrest. Page ultimately recanted her initial claims and refused to press charges against Rowland; but news of the incident had taken on a life of its own. Fueled by sensational reporting by *The Tulsa Tribune* and a racially hostile climate, mob rule held sway.



Tulsa Race Riot 1921. White man guarding the body of an African American man on the open bed of an Oil Well Supply Co. truck, Tulsa, OK.

Authorities arrested Rowland. A white mob threatened to lynch him. A small group of black men, determined to protect the teen, marched to the courthouse where Sheriff McCulloch held Rowland. Asked to retreat and assured of the young man’s safety, Rowland’s would-be protectors left the premises. But lynch talk persisted. Still concerned

about Rowland, a second group of black men, a few dozen in number, proceeded to the courthouse. They exchanged words with the swelling group of white men gathered on the courthouse lawn. A gun discharged. The Riot was on.

Soon, thousands of weapon-wielding white men crossed over the Frisco tracks, invading the Greenwood District, intent upon wreaking havoc. Some law enforcement officers stood idly by. Others deputized white hoodlums, in effect, giving them license to plunder and pillage the City’s “Negro quarter.” Despite pockets of resistance from overmatched black men, chaos, carnage, and catastrophe ensued.

Sixteen hours of volcanic violence left little unscathed. Roving gangs set fire to homes and businesses, reducing them to charred rubble, and threatened Tulsa firefighters with their lives if they attempted to extinguish the flames. They killed and maimed: scores of men, women, and children, mostly black, lay dead, dying, and wounded in what looked like a theatre of war. The

Excerpts from Events of the Tulsa Disaster
An eye-witness account of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot

By Mrs. Mary E. Jones Parrish, as published in 1923

The evening being a pleasant one, my little girl had not retired, but was watching the people from the window. Occasionally she would call to me, "Mother, look at the cars full of people." I would reply, "Baby, do not disturb me, I want to read." Finally she said, "Mother, I see men with guns."

I am told that this little bunch of brave and loyal Black men who were willing to give their lives, if necessary, for the sake of a fellow man, marched up to the jail where there were already over 500 white men gathered, and that this number was soon swelled to over a thousand. Someone fired a stray shot and, to use the expression of General Grant, "All hell broke loose."

Someone on the street cried out, "Look, they are burning Cincinnati!" On looking we beheld columns of smoke and fire and by this we knew that the enemy was surging quickly upon Greenwood.

Looking south out of the window of what then was the Woods Building, we saw car loads of men with rifles unloading up near the granary ...

People were seen to flee from their burning homes, some with babes in their arms and leading crying and excited children by the hand; others, old and feeble, all fleeing to safety. Yet, seemingly, I could not leave. I walked as one in a horrible dream.

I took my little girl by the hand and fled out of the west door on Greenwood. I did not take time to get a hat for myself or baby, but started out north on Greenwood, running amidst showers of bullets from the machine gun located in the granary and from men who were quickly surrounding our district.

I felt that it was suicide to remain in the building, for it would surely be destroyed and death in the street was preferred, for we expected to be shot down at any moment ...

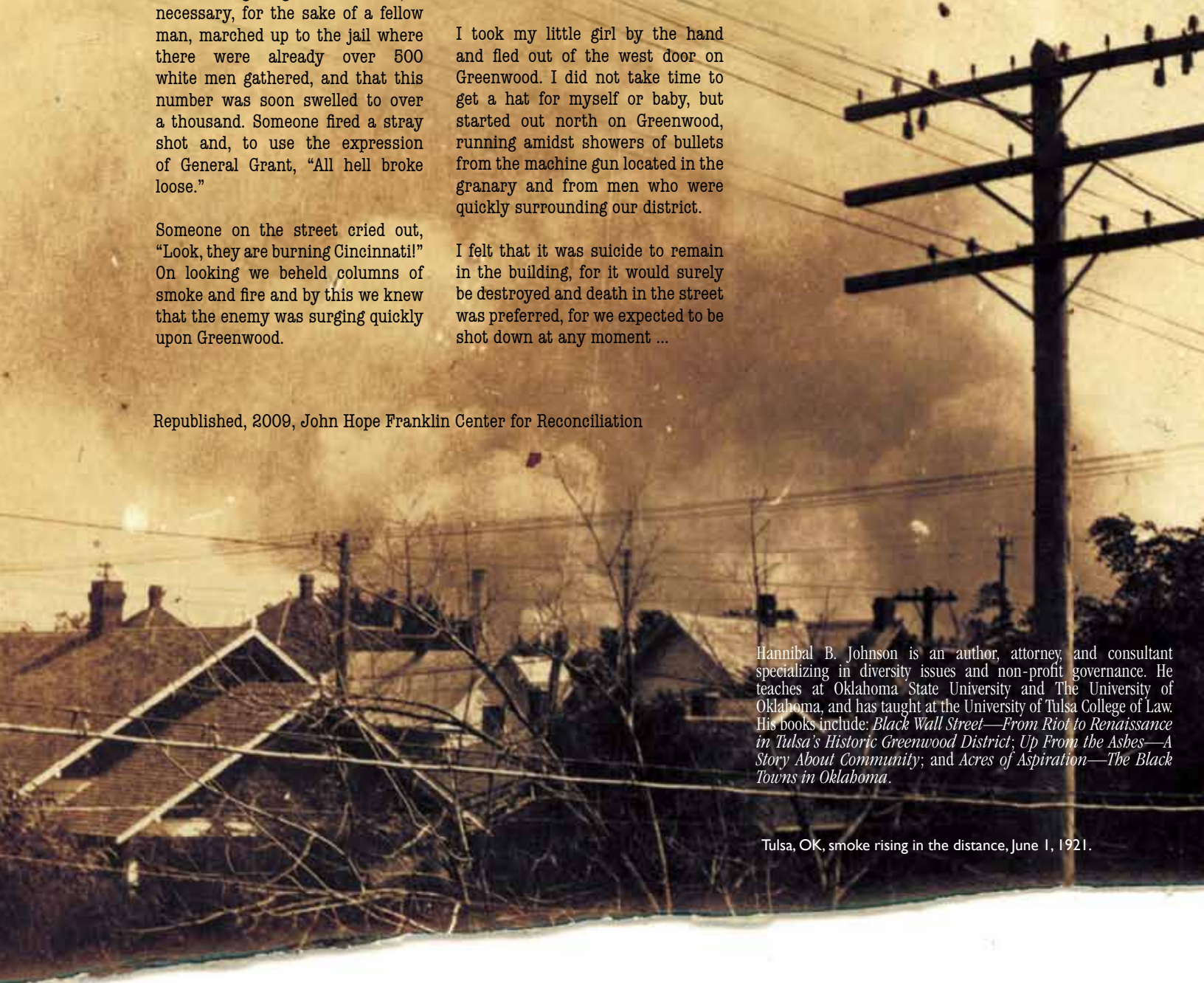
We caught up with other people fleeing in the same direction ... On and on we went toward the section line, the crowd growing larger and larger. The question on every lip when a newcomer from town would arrive was, "How far had they burned when you left town?"

Altho we were over thirteen miles from Tulsa we could, at about 10 P.M., see the smoke rising from the ruins.

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Tulsa, OK, smoke rising in the distance, June 1, 1921.



unmitigated violence forced hundreds of black Tulsans into homelessness, destitution, and despair. The breadth and brutality took an emotional toll palpable even today.

A few brave souls in Tulsa's white community showed remarkable compassion. Individuals and churches offered shelter and comfort. The American Red Cross earned the moniker "Angels of Mercy" by providing food, shelter, and clothing and, just as importantly, reaffirming the humanity of Tulsa's marginalized black citizens.

Many soldiered on after the Riot and a rapidly resurgent Greenwood District peaked in the 1940s. In the end, though, America's black entrepreneurial mecca, could not survive. Integration, urban renewal, and the aging of its pioneers led to decline in the 1960s. Twenty years later, a renaissance transformed the area into a mix of cultural and educational entities, including the Greenwood Cultural Center, OSU-Tulsa, Langston University-Tulsa, ONEOK Field, and John Hope Franklin Reconciliation Park. A smattering of small businesses and two Riot-era black churches are reminders of bygone days.

THE SILENT DIVIDE

Despite its significance, some Tulsans, even more Oklahomans, and most Americans remain oblivious to this watershed event. For decades, Tulsa's Riot, the worst incident of civil unrest of its kind in American history, remained shrouded in mystery, cloaked in secrecy, and draped in conjecture. Few spoke openly of the Riot's horrors. Why? Some blame a "conspiracy of silence." Something far less sinister may have been at work: white Tulsans felt some mix of embarrassment, shame, and guilt. Some black Tulsans feared additional violence; others refused to burden their children with information that might limit their aspirations. Still others likely suffered post-traumatic stress, rendering them unwilling or unable to relive the Riot through its retelling.

One clear and lasting effect of that decades-long silence has been a persistent gulf of distrust between Tulsa's black and white communities. Not talking about the Riot allowed unhealed wounds to fester. The chasm still lingers, marginally diminished but no less real.

In recent years, Tulsans have begun to grapple with this terrible human tragedy. Almost a century removed, the specter of the Riot looms large. How do we heal our haunting history? How do we atone for the damage inflicted so long ago? How do we restore trust and move toward reconciliation? Our answers to these critical questions will determine whether we narrow existing racial gaps or allow the great abyss of color-based distrust to span future generations.

THE CASE FOR REPARATIONS

Providing reparations—making amends—is essential to reconciliation. Reparations serve specific objectives, namely: to acknowledge an injustice; to apologize and make retribution (make amends); to educate the community; to deter future occurrence of the injustice; and to clarify human rights. Proponents understand that restorative justice, the "make whole" aspiration behind reparations, cannot be literally realized. Lives, once lost, cannot be resuscitated. Minds, once traumatized, cannot be eased. Economic momentum, once blunted, cannot be fully recaptured. Some fear that

debating reparations, let alone offering them, opens a Pandora's Box best left buried and forgotten. *Where will it end?* they ask. Nonetheless, absent reparations, grievances magnify and multiply; present-day healing cannot occur.

To address the issue of reparations, in 1997 the Oklahoma Legislature authorized the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 to investigate and evaluate the Riot and make recommendations. The eleven-member, bi-racial Commission's sometimes-contentious deliberations drew worldwide media attention and prompted a groundswell of public interest in Tulsa's community dynamics—how the City has dealt with its past, and the impact of that past on Tulsa's present and future.

In 2001, the Commission issued its award-winning Riot Commission Report. Among its recommendations were various types of reparations, in priority order: payments to living survivors and to descendants of those who suffered property damage during the Riot; a scholarship fund; business tax incentives for the Greenwood District; and a memorial. The case for reparations outlined in the report were not random; they rested on specific criteria: compelling, documented evidence of government complicity at the city and, arguably, the state level; identifiable Riot victims and their heirs; a defined geographic community adversely affected by the Riot (*i.e.*, the Greenwood District); measurable or estimable economic losses attributable to the Riot; and a thorough record of the people, places, and events associated with the Riot.

MONEY MYOPIA

Talk of Riot reparations drew swift and vocal opposition, attributable, in part, to lack of knowledge about the Riot and an unnecessarily narrow construction of the word "reparations." Though fairly broad in scope, the Commission's recommendations exalted monetary payments to first-priority status. Cash reparations, the most contentious of its list of five, drew particular attention. The Commission's "seal of approval" for cash reparations emboldened organizations like the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, which saw it as precedent for broader monetary reparations for slavery. Sensing controversy, early media coverage of the debate dwarfed coverage of alternative modes of making amends. This near-exclusive focus drowned out discussion of broader philosophical definitions of and rationale for reparations.

Critics failed to acknowledge the scope of damage wrought by the Riot (and its lasting effects) and discounted the need for reparations. Proponents unwittingly fueled resistance by focusing on cash payments as *the* essential, if not quintessential, form of reparations. A high-profile lawsuit further coalesced media attention. In February 2003, galvanized by the Riot Commission Report, a coterie of national, star-caliber attorneys joined forces with local legal talent in filing *Alexander v. Governor of State of Oklahoma*, a money damages lawsuit on behalf of Riot survivors and their descendants against the City of Tulsa and the State of Oklahoma. On March 22, 2004, a Tulsa federal district court dismissed the case, holding that the two-year statute of limitations barred all claims. A federal court of appeals sustained the dismissal, and the United States Supreme Court declined to review the case, thus ending the push for court-mandated monetary Riot reparations.

Some argued the Riot lawsuit deepened racial fissures in the City and State, if only temporarily. Critics perceived the litigation as having been instigated by outside rabble-rousers and claimed it stymied organic, community-based initiatives to memorialize the Riot and promote reconciliation. The experience raised two compelling questions: Is litigation, as opposed to, say, legislation or conciliation, a viable approach to securing reparations? Are cash payments the only acceptable form of reparations?

Litigation was, arguably, counterproductive, particularly if the ultimate aim is *community* reconciliation. Litigation, by its very nature, leads to adversarial relations, not the rational dialogue needed for reconciliation. Moreover, securing monetary damages in courts of law for events like the Riot (and there were many such events in the early twentieth century) would require a sort of national reckoning. Courts would have to open our history to examine the effects of racism, then acknowledge injustices and prescribe remedies. Decisions in such cases would affect not just individuals, but cities, counties, states, and even the federal government. Is the judiciary equipped to carry out this kind of re-examination of our past and, assuming it is, how likely is it to do so?

EXPANDING CONVERSATION

Of late, the conversation has broadened. Data gathered and compiled by Chad V. Johnson, Ph.D., his University of Oklahoma colleagues, and community partners suggest widespread support for reparations of some sort. The ambitious community-wide survey investigated knowledge of the Riot and attitudes about race relations in Tulsa. Two-thousand respondents engaged in the process. By overwhelming margins, respondents agreed: the Riot adversely affected social and economic dynamics in Tulsa; the Riot story has not been adequately shared; all Tulsans should know about the Riot; the Riot should be taught as part of public school curriculum; and race relations in Tulsa rank only as poor to fair, and amelioration will require dialogue and other programs or actions. Locally, most citizens support a variety of reparation measures. Monetary reparations, however, appear to be less important and more contentious.

Other approaches to making amends exist, forms more likely to be accepted and implemented by broad community consensus—for example, the Commission's recommendation for a Riot memorial. Both the City of Tulsa and the State of Oklahoma have embraced a passel of non-monetary reparations without labeling them as such and without formally admitting culpability for Riot-related offenses. Former Tulsa Mayors M. Susan Savage and Kathy Taylor offered public apologies for the Riot during their respective tenures. The Oklahoma Legislature created several vehicles to address the Riot Commission's recommendations: the Tulsa Race Riot Memorial Reconciliation Design Committee (out of which emerged the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation, charged with creating a Riot-related memorial); the Greenwood Area Redevelopment Authority (charged with reinvigorating businesses in the Greenwood District); and the Tulsa Reconciliation Education and Scholarship Program (charged with creating education scholarships tied to Riot remembrance). The Oklahoma Legislature also awarded medals of distinction to several Riot survivors in a 2001 State Capitol ceremony.

But the Commission's recommendations did not include perhaps the single most powerful and enduring mode of reparations imaginable: curriculum

reform. The generation-spanning potential of education to transform race relations in Tulsa and beyond is enormous. Like Holocaust curricula, the idea behind Riot curricula is straightforward: it is imperative to examine our past so that we may learn from it. To paraphrase Maya Angelou: *Our history, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived; but, if faced with courage, it need not be lived again.*

No matter what else we may do, we will not be whole unless and until we own our past, process it, and integrate its lessons into our present and our vision for the future. Teaching and learning are essential to this process.

Educational reparations have been pursued. The Tulsa City Council passed a Riot-related resolution in 2008 supporting curriculum to ensure the Riot is adequately covered as an historical event. Similarly, the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation is working with Tulsa Public Schools to make curricular materials on the Riot widely available to educators. Progress is being made.

Despite these limited advances, the need for curriculum reform remains urgent. The Riot appears on a list of the State's Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) topics about which students *should* know something. But these measures are aspirational, with no effective means for evaluation. The inclusion of Riot history in textbooks remains scattershot and shallow. Moreover, textbook inclusion alone does not guarantee the teaching of that material. Infusing Riot history, systematically, in the core curriculum so that Oklahoma students *will*, not *may*, be exposed to it is a necessary step forward.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

A thoughtful, vigorous, and productive dialogue on reparations requires an understanding of the promise, possibilities, and parameters of these ameliorative measures. Most Tulsans agree that reparations are essential if we are to triumph over our tragic past. Indeed, we have begun making amends. Striking the appropriate balance—creating the right mix of measures that will help us heal our history—remains a challenge. So, too, does following through on our good intentions.

When considering reparations, we are left with a question of morality and justice: As a civilized society, what actions must we take to salve the wounds of our own making? We accept the benefits that accrue across generations. We must likewise accept the burdens. If amends are to be made, if injustices are to be remedied, if wrongs are to be righted, the ultimate responsibility rests upon each of our shoulders. ☹️





Reconciling Myself to The Body's Lessons

By Faith Adiele

*Is identity on the inside or the outside?
Taking ownership of a mixed-race culture*

My official “coming out” as The Black Girl in my school occurred in third grade, when I debuted Chief Kamiakin Elementary School’s first Afro. Our town of Sunnyside, Washington, had never witnessed such a display. Originally formed as a Christian cooperative community on a few of the six million acres of land that Chief Kamiakin (of the Yakama tribe) and other Native chiefs were forced to relinquish to the U.S. government, the town had embraced its isolation, the ring of hills a deterrent to new ideas and new hairstyles. By the time my mother returned to the family farm in the early ’70s with me in tow, Sunnyside was a village consisting roughly of 4,500 Anglo farm owners, 1,500 Latino farm workers, one Asian family, one “Negro” family (according to the U.S. Census Distribution of the Negro Population), and me, product of an absent Nigerian father and Nordic-American mother.

Before The Afro, comments on my difference were limited to the usual playground interrogations (*Where’s your real mom?*) and the occasional racist taunt by someone who failed to recognize me as the child of the indeed real, strict, fearless, junior high school teacher Mrs. Adiele. I occupied a special status, somewhere between town mascot and village idiot: *Yes, she’s odd. She doesn’t have a father or go to church. Her entire family is a different color than she is, but she’s ours.* Despite coming in a Black Body, I sounded and behaved pretty much like everyone else. Without knowing it, I was “passing.” Until Mom blew my cover.

My mother had been conducting serious social anthropology—for my sake. She’d been watching Black culture from afar, studying Black Bodies for clues. Each month, *Ebony* and *Jet* and, later, *Essence* made the long journey from New York City to Sunnyside. Each month we tore off the brown paper wrappers and ran our fingers over the glossy covers, as if Blackness could be read like Braille: *Diana Ross as Billie Holiday; Black Colleges & Cheerleaders; Most Influential Blacks.* We weren’t exactly sure what it all meant, but it was clear that another America, strewn with “Black is Beautiful” banners, existed somewhere over the hills. Nine years old, Mom decided, was old enough for me to apply for citizenship. One Sunday, she burst into my bedroom waving a photo spread of the mod, brilliantly-costumed, halo-haired Sly and the Family Stone. “How would you like an Afro?” she trilled. “It’s what they’re wearing now in all the magazines!”

After some coaxing, I settled before the mirror and felt the plastic hair pick climb my scalp and draw out, stopping in mid-air. Little did we realize that this simple gesture was equivalent to drawing a line in the sand. It certainly didn’t feel like a “style,” but by aligning myself with the Jackson 5 rather than David Cassidy, I had chosen Black over White, which Sunnyside would take as a betrayal, a declaration of war.

The reaction began benignly with the collective intake of breath when I walked into class on Monday, escalated to notes passed in class (*So did you stick your finger in a light socket?*) and catcalls on the playground, but ended without grave mishap. By day’s end, a few older kids approached and requested permission to touch The Afro. This too seemed benign, the first one, two, three, five, ten years I stood motionless, a stranger’s hands in my hair.

After The Afro, however, now that I’d become Officially Black, there was no going back. Suddenly the lessons I was learning seemed critical to my survival. Over dinner I learned that my mother had been thrown off the farm for dating a Black man and having a mixed child. I learned that ours was an international family, with international responsibilities. I learned that education was paramount to both my parents. They had risked much to become the first in their respective families to graduate from college and had dedicated their lives to educating others—my father in post-colonial Africa, my mother in rural America. I learned that I had work to do.

At Chief Kamiakin Elementary, and then Lincoln Middle School, I learned something different.

I learned what not to expect from the few folks of color: The glossy-maned Chicana friend at whose house I was told to keep quiet (*Her father was killed in a car accident by a Black driver, so her mother hates Blacks. You understand.*). The student teacher I adored for her long ebony hair and brown skin, who decided that, when I made a friendly comment that was too witty for what she believed a Black sixth-grader capable, I had “cursed her out.” Without being asked or told what I’d supposedly said, I was suspended from school.

I learned what to expect from the principal who wouldn't believe that my best friend, the white daughter of a doctor, could have been the ringleader when we sneaked off campus to the drive-in. Though she admitted it proudly, he punished me alone. She, he took aside, warning that as I got older my True Black Nature would emerge. Did she really want to continue to associate with me?

A few months later, my best friend and my rival (the one Asian girl), having found a book that referred to Blacks as shadows and spooks, issued the challenge: *Shun The Shadow!* I arrived at school to find friends who wouldn't speak to me, classmates who refused to pass my desperate notes begging for info, an entire lunchroom "saving" seats, and me, The Shadow, standing alone.

College, my prayed-for escape, was a quick and dirty lesson in the *politics*, not just appearance, of The Body: I could choose either to align myself with Black Liberation, a male project, or with Feminism, a white project. Neither group wanted to hear about the other, and no one wanted to hear about my being mixed race. It was like being asked to amputate my arm or leg, my mother or my father. Not surprisingly, I failed.

Next stop: Asia. It was not until I stood alone as the only Black, Western nun in a Buddhist temple, by erasing The Body's social markers (shaving my post-Afro hair, trading my street clothes for white robes) that I recovered my identity and reconciled myself to this body in its entirety. Now, I use my biracial, multicultural identity—this body, inside and out—to help those I teach find their own connections to the world.

My first career was running a social justice center that trained college students to work with communities around the globe. We were a multicultural collective making decisions by consensus—no easy feat when negotiating different ethnicities, nationalities, first languages, socio-economic classes, religions, and genders/orientations. Time and again, I found myself relying on storytelling. I started to realize that personal narrative is how we explain who we are and what matters to us. Eventually I moved storytelling into my current career as author, lecturer, and writing teacher.

When teaching multicultural literature, I ask students to create an inventory of common images about a group or region, posing it as a way to understand the worlds their characters and readers inhabit, as well as the challenges of writing about a particular community or topic. In the process of immersing themselves in "the other," students begin to question, critique, correct.

When teaching and writing personal narrative—that is, the exploration of the self in the world—I ask students to consider: *Where do your stories connect to and illuminate the human experience?* I ask them to list their identity markers and social roles, to determine which ones enhance their writing and which ones don't feature at all, and why. I have the class choose a shared, public event about which each person will write. When read aloud, the different versions create a collective text, demonstrating how an individual's position and subjectivity inform and add to a nation's reality.

So despite the fact that, in academe, The Afro continues to be read as "biased" (code for Being Black or "gives-bad-grades-to-anyone-who-doesn't-agree-with-her-politics") with an "agenda" (assigning texts that represent the world's actual demographics); despite the number of colleagues who tell me how difficult it is for them to find tenure-track jobs because they're "just ordinary white"; despite the fact I can't seem to find those places apparently swimming in tenured Afros; with each breakthrough I witness, each email report that students are sharing their work and supporting each other, each letter testifying to

personal change, Chief Kamiakin Elementary School's first Afro stands a little less lonely. A little more reconciled. A little more hopeful. ☺



Faith modeling an outfit that her father sent from Nigeria

Faith Adiele is Distinguished Visiting Writer at Mills College, Oakland, California. She is currently working on *Twins*, a memoir to complete the story of *My Journey Home*, a PBS documentary she wrote and narrated about her Nigerian/Nordic heritage. She is the author of *Meeting Faith*, winner of the PEN Beyond Margins Award for Best Memoir, and co-editor of *Coming of Age Around the World: A Multicultural Anthology*. <http://adiele.com>



Finnish Family (left to right): Mummi Lempi (grandmother), Tāti Rauha (elderly aunt), and Faith sitting in her mother's lap



Faith with her cousin, Barbie, and friends (sisters) whose parents ran a bakery in town



Having her eyebrows and head shaved was part of the ceremony in Faith's ordination as a Buddhist nun

CALENDAR

Don't miss these outstanding events supported by OHC grants. You can find hundreds of cultural activities on our website: www.okhumanities.org/calendar.

EXHIBIT

BFGoodrich—Full Circle in Miami

Exhibit runs through August
Dobson Museum
110 A St. Southwest, Miami
Information: 918/542-8895



Image: A row of LeTourneau tires. From the estate of Orrick Sparlin, courtesy Ottawa County Historical Society.

Historical objects and images address the history of BFGoodrich and how the company and its employees changed Miami. It's not just about a plant that made tires—it's about forty years of Miami's history.

SYMPOSIUM

The Politics of Reconciliation

May 30-June 1
Hyatt Regency, Tulsa
Info: 918/295-5009
www.jhfcenter.org



“The Politics of Reconciliation” is the theme for the annual Reconciliation in America Symposium, sponsored by the John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation. Rajmohan Gandhi (grandson of Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi), international scholar on reconciliation, will be the keynote speaker. The keynote address and Mayors’ Town Hall panel on May 31 are free and open to the public. Scholars and practitioners from across the country will present concurrent workshops, exploring current research and community projects that address the political dynamics of reconciliation in America. Funded in part by OHC and the *We the People* initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

EXHIBIT

Key Ingredients: America by Food

The Smithsonian exhibit *Key Ingredients: America by Food* is traveling the state. Exhibit themes examine the influences of culture, ethnicity, landscape, and tradition on foodways across our country.



Waynoka

Waynoka Air Rail Museum
1386 Cleveland, Harvey House
(580) 824-0795
April 28-June 9



Collinsville

Collinsville Public Library
1223 W. Main • (918) 596-2840
June 16-August 3

Key Ingredients is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Support provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities; Beaver Express Service; and SONIC, America's Drive-In.

2012 OKLAHOMA CHAUTAUQUA

Behind the Screen: Hollywood's Impact on American Culture June 5-9, Tulsa • June 12-16, Lawton • June 19-23, Enid



John Anderson portrays William Faulkner (1897-1962): Nobel Prize-winning author who also worked as a screenwriter for three major studios. He sold the screen rights and adapted many of his novels for film.



Ethel Waters portrays Ilene Evans (1896-1977): The darling of black vaudeville whose rendition of “Stormy Weather” at the Cotton Club helped propel her to stardom on Broadway, in film, and as the first African-American female recording artist.



Charles Everett Pace portrays Gordon Parks (1912-2006): The first African-American staff photographer for *Life* magazine and first black artist to produce and direct a major Hollywood film, *The Learning Tree*, 1969.



Doug Mishler portrays Jack Warner (1892-1978): Major motion picture producer, one of four Polish-Jewish brothers who grew a one-projector-and-theater business to become the powerhouse studio of Warner Bros.



Bill Worley portrays Bob Hope (1903-2003): Beloved entertainer whose love of vaudeville influenced his long career in stage musical comedy, motion pictures, radio, television, and live appearances for American armed forces around the world.

In the late 1930s through 1960s, Hollywood made a big impact on American society, culture, and ideals. Chautauqua characters will relate how the industry and actors dealt with racial barriers, anti-Semitism, morality, the Red Scare, and tensions between art and commerce. Programs are free and open to the public. Info: Contact the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa at: (918) 584-3333 or www.okchautauqua.org. Oklahoma Chautauqua is a partnership of OHC and the Arts & Humanities Council of Tulsa.



—Doug Henderson

End Notes From the Editor *Carla Walker*

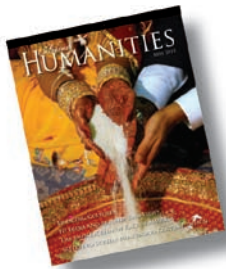
We leave you with a last look at another Doug Henderson image from *Slavery's Castles*. According to Doug, this may be Fort Dorothea, a strategic location for Africa's once-bustling slave trade. There is little left but ruins. Now, not even the locals remember it or know what happened there. Strangler figs are overtaking the crumbling rock walls. It is an image of hope: that one day slavery will be not only a distant memory but also that our efforts to heal racial divisions and learn from the injustices of the past will twine us together—that we might look to a future of peace and reconciliation.



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EXTRA!

Slavery's Castles

By Douglas Henderson | Published Summer 2012, Vol. V, Issue No. 2

About the Castles

From the 1600s to the early 1800s, European traders built castles along the coast of Africa to hold slaves until ships could transport them to markets in the New World. Through these grim, utilitarian structures, over 12 million people passed on their descent into slavery. These sites include about 30 forts or castles, several slave camps, and at least one slave market.

Slave castles are located along the coast of Ghana, most of them west of the capital city, Accra. The castle known as *La Maison des Esclaves* is in far West Africa, on Goree Island off the coast of Senegal. Another castle stands along the Gambia River in West Africa.

Map of Africa showing proximity of slave castles:

<http://www.douglashenderson.com/castles/proximity.htm>

Some of the castles are abandoned stone ruins with just a few walls standing; others are still in use as prisons. Several are now "guest houses"; for two dollars, you can spend the night. Osu Castle is the seat of Ghana's government. At least three slave castles are museums (in the African sense of the word "museum," which is just a few signs, some artifacts, and some small exhibits).

UNESCO, a part of the United Nations, has declared most of these sites as World Heritage Sites of immeasurable historical importance, and steps have been taken to preserve them. But the countries involved simply have no funding for that purpose. Even if they did, HIV/AIDS and a thousand other causes would rightly take financial priority over the historical preservation of these sites. And so, the sites continue to deteriorate.

Doors of No Return Exhibit

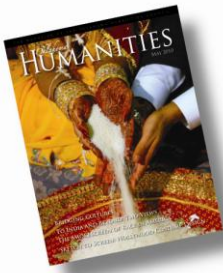
Twenty-three of the photographs from the *Slavery's Castles* book have been assembled into an art exhibit, *Doors of No Return*. The exhibit debuted in 2011 at the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma. John W. Franklin, Director of International Programs for the Smithsonian Institute, spoke at the opening.

View the exhibit online:

http://www.douglashenderson.com/slave_castle/

As a professional photographer, Douglas Henderson has over 20 years of experience. His work has been published in *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Newsweek Japan*, *The National Enquirer*, the *National Examiner* and others.

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EXTRA!

Making Peace with the Past

By Sharon Leslie Morgan and Thomas Norman DeWolf | Published Summer 2012, Vol. V, Issue No. 2

About the Authors

This study guide was developed by Sharon Leslie Morgan and Thomas Norman DeWolf, authors of *Gather at the Table: The Healing Journey of a Daughter of Slavery and a Son of the Slave Trade* (Beacon Press, October 2012) and “Making Peace with the Past,” an article for *Oklahoma HUMANITIES* magazine. **Reading this article is recommended in preparation for discussion.** DeWolf is also the author of *Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in U.S. History* (Beacon Press, 2008).

Gather at the Table introduces an approach to communicating about race that can lead to understanding, acknowledging, and healing racial wounds for individuals and communities. It chronicles how a black woman and a white man journey into the heartland of America to confront the traumatic legacy of slavery and how it contributes to the lingering racism that permeates society today.

One of Sharon’s ancestors was born into slavery and sought refuge in Oklahoma in the early 1900s by applying for recognition as a Choctaw Indian and moving to Pottawatomie County.

For Discussion

Crimes committed in 2011 and 2012 have brought an age-old problem to the fore. James Craig Anderson, an African-American car plant worker, was murdered in Jackson, Mississippi, by white youths who brutally beat him, then screamed “white power” before running him down with a pickup truck. In Florida, seventeen-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot to death by a neighborhood watch volunteer who appeared to be “profiling.” Soon after, five African-American people were gunned down by two white men in Tulsa. Three of them died. All of these incidents are believed to be racially-motivated crimes.

- Have you ever experienced prejudice or felt threatened because of your race?
- Have you ever felt privileged because of your race? Do you believe that “nothing like this could ever happen to me”?
- Have you ever felt disenfranchised because of your race? Do you believe that “something like this is *likely* to happen to me”?
- What would you do if you were confronted by violence because of your race?

From “Making Peace with the Past”: “Historians generally agree that American history is filled with paradox. One example is that the Founding Fathers spoke vehemently of freedom while brutally exterminating Native Americans and enslaving African people. To speak honestly about America’s past is to open a virtual Pandora’s Box of historic malfeasance. Our nation has a long history of egregious behavior. It began with the genocide and forced removal of indigenous peoples and evolved through an economy built upon the enslavement of Africans. There have been continuous, deliberate debasements: waves of terror, eugenic cleansings, lynching, riots, internments, and many other forms of oppression and discrimination. Inequity and mistrust along racial lines remains systemic in our society.”

- How much do you know about this aspect of American history?
- How do you resolve the paradox of the Founding Fathers in your mind?
- How would you have felt as a Native American witnessing the conquest of your native land?
- How would you have felt if you were kidnapped from your homeland and enslaved?

From “Making Peace with the Past”: “Many have claimed that the United States is a ‘melting pot’ of diverse cultures, melded and merged into one big, integrated family—a narrative that paints an idyllic picture but ignores reality. Most people don’t have firsthand experience with the transformative historical events that inform the society in which we live today. They were neither slaves nor slaveholders. They do not grasp the magnitude of horror associated with that economic system. They were not beaten during civil rights marches and thus may not fully appreciate the value of voting rights, much less their right to sit anywhere on a bus or train, to drink water from a fountain that isn’t labeled ‘white’ or ‘colored.’ They can go anywhere and do anything they please, whenever they please.”

- Do you think America is a “melting pot”? Why or why not?
- What do you know about the civil rights movement?
- Is there a difference between “civil rights” and “human rights”?

From “Making Peace with the Past”: “In spite of these achieved equalities, racism is alive and well. Schools, neighborhoods, and churches are as segregated as ever. Health disparities along racial lines remain significant. African American people are over-represented in prisons and under-represented in colleges and corporate boardrooms. Even with an African American president in the White House, equanimity remains elusive.”

- In what ways has America become a “post-racial” society (where race and racism are no longer barriers to success)? In what ways has it not?
- Do you know anyone who has been incarcerated?
- Have you seen evidence of racial disparities in your own life? In your community?

From “Making Peace with the Past”: “In Tulsa, we walked along the streets of the Greenwood District, site of the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921, perhaps the single worst incident of racial violence in American history. Standing in the area once known as ‘Black Wall Street,’ we felt the weight of history that has not been healed ... For three quarters of a century, the story of the Tulsa riot was buried, left out of history books, classrooms, and community conversations. It wasn’t until 1997 that the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Race Riot of 1921 was formed.”

- Why do you think the Tulsa Race Riot story was “buried”?
- If you are white, do you believe you would have stood up to your community—or would you have gone along with this act of terror?
- If you are black, how do you believe you would have responded?
- What does this story have to do with you, today?

From “Making Peace with the Past”: “We all live within the shadow of racism. It has been passed down organically from parents, teachers, politicians, and others who cling to a distorted image of American history—one informed by, and articulated from, a worldview rooted in white privilege. These biases and prejudices are so hard-wired that most of us have no idea how automatically they kick in and how enduring they are.”

- What are your personal feelings about race?
- What differences do you perceive in how people of color and white people approach issues of race?
- Do you have friends of races other than your own?
- How do your feelings about race affect your relationships with others?

From “Making Peace with the Past”: “Making peace with the past is a huge challenge—yet it is something we all must do. Transformation begins in the hearts and minds of individuals but cannot end there. It must radiate outward until it permeates the institutions and systems that have kept racism embedded in our culture.”

- Why is it necessary for people to “make peace with the past”?
- How should people go about making peace?
- What can we do today to make sure incidents of racially-motivated violence do not continue to occur?
- What will you personally do to contribute to making a change?

Further Reading

- Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*
- Charles Smith, Patricia Johnson, and the WGBH Series Research Team, *Africans in America: America’s Journey through Slavery*
- Thomas Norman DeWolf, *Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave Trading Dynasty in U.S. History*
- Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*
- Scott Elsworth with foreword by John Hope Franklin, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921*
- Alfred L. Brophy *Reconstructing the Dreamland, The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation*
- Kaolin, *Talking About Race: A Workbook About White People Fostering Racial Equality in Their Lives*
- (For Teachers) Allan Creighton and Paul Kivel, *Helping Teens Stop Violence, Build Community and Stand For Justice*

Suggested Viewing

- *Meeting David Wilson*
The filmmaker travels into his family’s past to find answers about America’s racial divide and discovers a plantation in North Carolina owned by a direct descendant of his family’s slave master who shares his name.
- *Before They Die*
A documentary about the survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot, who give voice to a little-known, tragic chapter of history.

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EXTRA!

A History Long Forgotten: Intersections of Race in Early America

By Arwin D. Smallwood | Published Summer 2012, Vol. V, Issue No. 2

For Discussion

1. Was the content of this article new information to you? What insights did you gain?
2. Does the article change your attitudes about race in America? If so, how?
3. The following options for race were listed on the 2010 U.S. Census. Based on your family genealogy and/or oral histories, how many of these options apply to you?

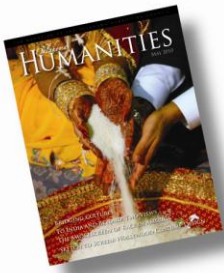
- Mexican, Mexican Amer., Chicano
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Black, African Amer., Negro
- Puerto Rican
- Cuban
- White
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Korean
- Japanese
- Vietnamese
- Asian Indian
- Other Asian
- Native Hawaiian
- Guamanian or Chamorro
- Samoan
- Other Pacific Islander
- Some other race

4. Why do you think the federal government collects these statistics?
5. Why do we place an importance on self-identifying with race?
6. Why do we embrace some of the outward expressions of other cultures (their foodways, folklore, art, festivals, etc.), but find it so difficult to accept and understand each other as peoples?
7. How do racial conflicts present themselves in present-day American society? How can we resolve these conflicts?

Further Reading

- Kathryn E. Holland Braund, "The Creek Indians, Blacks, and Slavery," *The Journal of Southern History* (November 1991): <http://voyager.dvc.edu/~mpowell/holland-braund.pdf>
- Jack D. Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples*
- Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717*
- Ariela Gross, "'Of Portuguese Origin': Litigating Identity and Citizenship among the 'Little Races' in Nineteenth-Century America," *Law and History Review* (Fall 2007): <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lhr/25.3/gross.html>
- Don Jordan and Michael Walsh, *White Cargo: The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America*
- Claudio Saunt, *Black, White, and Indian: Race and the Unmaking of an American Family*
- Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America*

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EXTRA!

Hope for Racial Healing: Rethinking Christian Missions among the Chickasaw

By Otis W. Pickett | Published Summer 2012, Vol. V, Issue No. 2

For Discussion

1. What parallels do you see between present-day society (and your community) and the challenges that missionaries and Native Americans faced in the early 19th century?
2. Do you think there are any valuable lessons we can learn from their example? Do you see ways that they succeeded or failed?
3. Is racism simply a white versus black issue? What other types of racism exist in this country?
4. Do you think racism is an issue that is limited to the South or Midwest?
5. What does racism ultimately boil down to? Is it fear? Our own insecurities about interacting with people different than ourselves? How can we solve these issues? (Discuss various avenues: a) getting to know one another; b) in the context of this article: worshipping together, eating together, caring for one another).

Further Reading

Peter Slade, *Open Friendship in a Closed Society: Mission Mississippi and a Theology of Friendship*

Resource Links

Brown University Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice

http://brown.edu/Research/Slavery_Justice/

Report on the University's historical relationship to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Website includes the Committee's report and links to a repository of historical documents, images of many of the documents, and links to curriculum on slavery in New England.

The South Will Rise Again

<http://vimeo.com/11076828>

Award-winning documentary on race and the symbols of racism

William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation

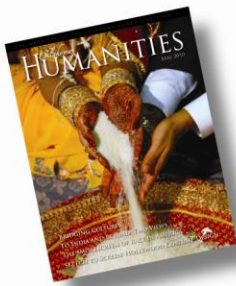
<http://www.winterinstitute.org/>

Includes civil rights resources, suggested reading, an oral history guide, and web links

Terry Keleher, "Jump Starting Racial Justice," YES! Magazine

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/columns/jump-starting-racial-justice>

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EXTRA!

Righting the Wrongs of History: Reparations and the 1921 Tulsa Race Riot

By Hannibal Johnson | Published Summer 2012, Vol. V, Issue No. 2

For Discussion

1. What is your definition of “community”?
2. What responsibility do schools and other organizations have to help bring communities together?
3. What role does respect play in creating a sense of community?
4. What is the role of the media in defining your community?
5. How do you define “justice”?
6. The word “reparations” means to repair or to make amends. What steps might your community take to repair or make amends for the damage done by a tragedy such as a riot or an event like the Trayvon Martin shooting?
7. How might knowing history help community members come together instead of grow apart?
8. What is your obligation to repair or make amends for damage done to your community by those who lived long before you?
9. What steps might you take to improve race relations in your community?
10. Are there differences other than race that could (or do) cause divisions in your community?

Resource Links

Greenwood Cultural Center

<http://www.greenwoodculturalcenter.com/>

Click on “Tulsa Race Riot” tab

Text and historical photographs outlining the history of “Black Wall Street” and the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921

Oklahoma Historical Society

Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture

Entry: Tulsa Race Riot

<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/T/TU013.html>

Entry: Greenwood District

<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/G/GR024.html>

Oklahoma Historical Society

The Final Report of the Oklahoma Commission to Study the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921

Downloadable PDF located on the “Oklahoma Resources” page:

<http://www.okhistory.org/research/okresources.php>

Tulsa City-County Library System

African-American Resource Center

Tulsa Race Riot of 1921

<http://www.tulsalibrary.org/aarc/riot/riot.php>

Bibliography, photographs, selected newspaper articles, and more

Tulsa Historical Society
<http://www.tulsahistory.org/learn/>
Online exhibits, videos, and photographs from Tulsa's history

Tulsa Race Riot Photographs
Developed by I. Marc Carlson
Librarian of Special Collections, University of Tulsa
<http://tulsaraceriot.omeka.net/about>

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