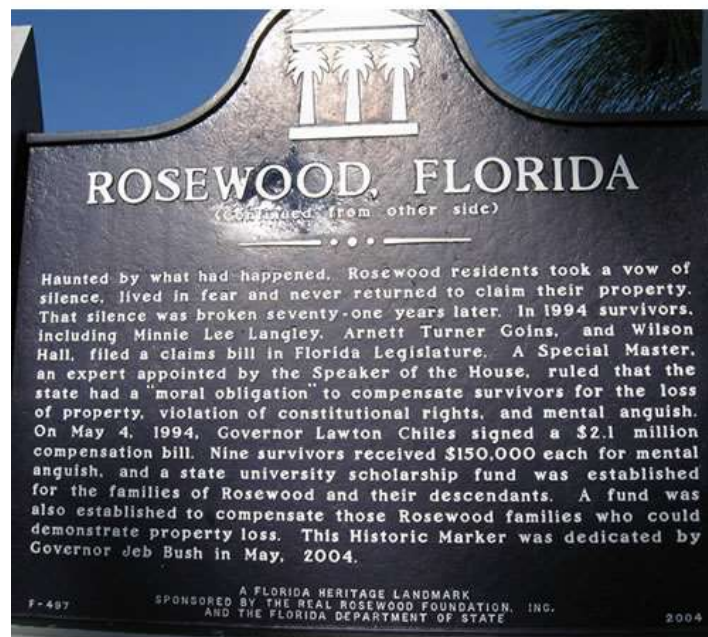
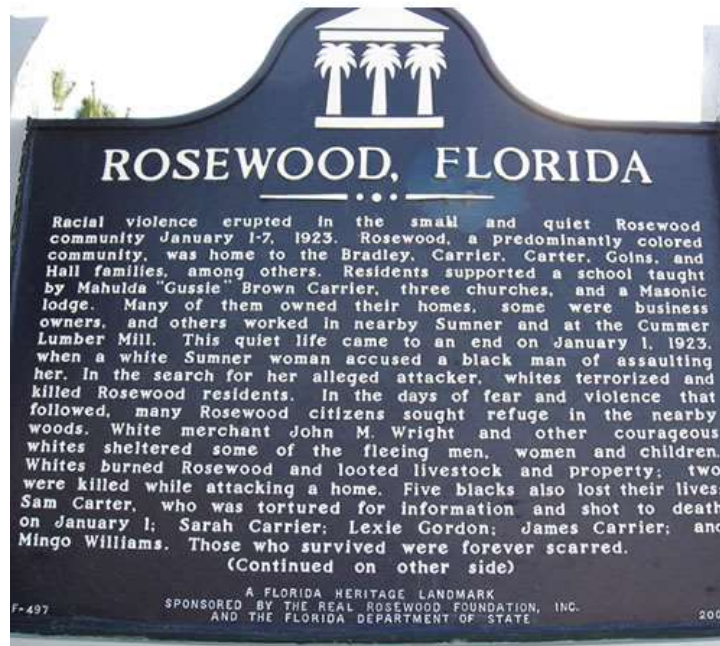


Rosewood: the town that disappeared

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing June 22, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the response to the George Floyd killing 



“Rosewood was a town where everyone’s house was painted. There were roses everywhere you walked. Lovely.”

“Although state and local authorities were aware of the violence, they made no arrests for the activities in Rosewood. The town was abandoned by black residents during the attacks. None ever returned.”

“Governor Jeb Bush in 2004 placed a plaque commemorating the massacre in front of John Wright’s general store, the only remaining structure from the Rosewood Massacre. This plaque was vandalized on at least one occasion when it was shot at from a passing car.”

Speaking of the need this morning to be anti-racist.

Thinking over my breakfast this morning about everyone being a little racist.

Imagining Juneteenth as the east-creeping sun set the backyard flowers gorgeously on fire this morning.

Some people in Gadfly’s orbit have volunteered they never before heard of Juneteenth or the 1921 Tulsa race massacre.

Gadfly’s had a great education. Gadfly taught African American literature as part of his American lit survey courses since the late 1960s.

But Tulsa and Juneteenth were not on his radar till about 2009.

When student Kristen Merlo chose to do the 1997 film **Rosewood** for his **Reel American History** project.

Rosewood was like Tulsa after Tulsa, like a spreading pandemic.

In 1923, in a month-long ravage, the town of Rosewood, Florida, was literally wiped off the map. It disappeared. One building left standing.

And so began Gadfly’s education in such doings as Tulsa and the phenomenon of Sundown Towns as Kristen and I researched the film.

You have been watching extended news clips about the Tulsa massacre. You may even have watched a video documentary on Tulsa.

If you want an excellent movie version of such events, I recommend *Rosewood* by African American filmmaker John Singleton. It's available on YouTube with the warning "This video may be inappropriate for some viewers."

Indeed.

In addition to, along with, or instead of watching, you'll find much interesting reading on the **Rosewood site**, including a **brief history**, and several student essays such as "**Sundown and Silence**" and "**Violence, Spectacle, and Cultural Erasure.**"

Rosewood trailer