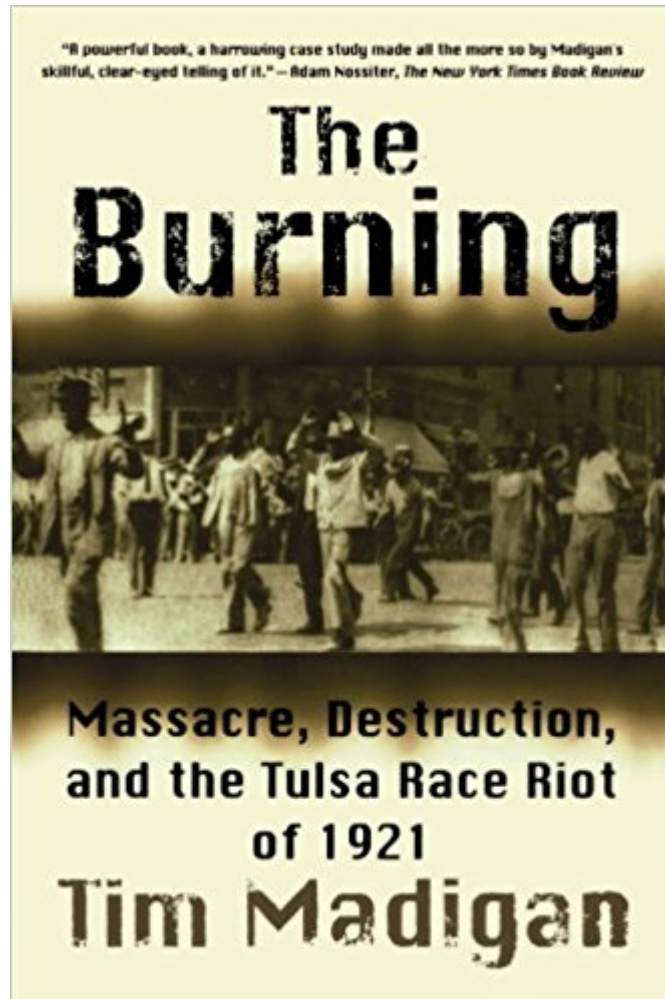


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The Burning: Massacre, Destruction, And The Tulsa Race Riot Of 1921



Synopsis

On the morning of June 1, 1921, a white mob numbering in the thousands marched across the railroad tracks dividing black from white in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and obliterated a black community then celebrated as one of America's most prosperous. 34 square blocks of Tulsa's Greenwood community, known then as the Negro Wall Street of America, were reduced to smoldering rubble. And now, 80 years later, the death toll of what is known as the Tulsa Race Riot is more difficult to pinpoint. Conservative estimates put the number of dead at about 100 (75% of the victims are believed to have been black), but the actual number of casualties could be triple that. The Tulsa Race Riot Commission, formed two years ago to determine exactly what happened, has recommended that restitution to the historic Greenwood Community would be good public policy and do much to repair the emotional as well as physical scars of this most terrible incident in our shared past. With chilling details, humanity, and the narrative thrust of compelling fiction, *The Burning* will recreate the town of Greenwood at the height of its prosperity, explore the currents of hatred, racism, and mistrust between its black residents and neighboring Tulsa's white population, narrate events leading up to and including Greenwood's annihilation, and document the subsequent silence that surrounded the tragedy.

Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: St. Martin's Griffin; Reprint edition (February 1, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312302479

ISBN-13: 978-0312302474

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (42 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #250,461 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #188 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > African Americans > History](#) #450 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Minority Studies](#) #1422 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > African-American Studies](#)

Customer Reviews

Up to this point, Tulsa native Scott Ellsworth's "Death In a Promised Land" has been the best book on the Tulsa Massacre of 1921, but Tim Madigan has done an excellent job with this story.

Ellsworth's (who graciously gave Madigan assistance with this volume) book on this subject was written in a scholarly "matter of factly" tone, well-written and long on historical detail but somewhat short of passion for the subject. Madigan gets deep into the emotions of the people behind the events and transforms this detail into a story that the readers can identify with. The details and excellent use of primary sources makes it hard to believe that it only took a year to write this book! Historians and casual readers will both find this book interesting (if extremely sad) reading. However, the ending does say much for the triumph of the human spirit and the book does give an interesting lesson to the depths and heights of human behavior. You may still want to check out Ellsworth's book for a primary introduction to the subject, as it goes a bit deeper into the background of Tulsa to understand the events. But overall, Madigan's work is as of now the best book on this subject.

Tim Madigan's lively, vivid and long over-due account of the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 is a journalistic treasure. As one who originally hailed from Kansas and had been in and out of Tulsa twice a year since 1947, I was certainly familiar with the Oil Capitol; thus, Madigan's book spoke to me from the book rack. However, I found myself frustrated by the lack of a map of the Greenwood area. I actually had to buy a map of Tulsa and sit down with underlined passages in order to recreate exactly where Greenwood was. This is not the author's fault but it certainly is the fault of his editor at Thomas Dunne Books. (To be honest, other books about the same subject also see maps as expendable). In any case you can smell the smoke in Madigan's account and you get a visceral reaction to the whole sad scene. The book is tangible proof that Ben Jonson was correct when he said that "Sunlight is the best solvent."

Racism and jealousy of "black" wealth - and a lying "white" woman in an elevator - sparked a terrorist act committed against American citizens known as the "Tulsa Race Riot of 1921." Before it could be controlled, a "white" police officer with credible facts and confession, was key to maintaining law and order. However, destruction, murder and mayhem claimed yet ANOTHER viable and self sustaining "black" community in America.-----Now-a-days, within disenfranchised "black" communities, gentrification is everywhere - more than one can reason - and owned almost exclusively by non-blacks. Consider the cosmetic industry; "black" women purchase and spend billions annually. "Black" cosmetics are largely Korean and Chinese manufacturers and merchandise now, targeting "black" culture. Asians have no interest in vetting "blacks", let alone showing much along mutual tenets of respect... and, the Chinese are becoming the "neo-landlords" of Africa. Asians surely are not purchasing from "blacks"...If "blacks" are to succeed again, today, a

lesson or two from A.G. Gaston's effective principles are necessary; used to combat segregated public water fountains - WhiteTMs Only - signs on the drinking fountains in front of institutions good enough to take "black" money; as in the case of the First National Bank of Birmingham, Alabama. Gaston threatened to pull his account. Indeed he possessed the financial assets to make things happen. Many have forgotten the extent to which "blacks" used to exert economic pressure to bring integration in the decade before the Civil Rights Act of 1964: "Black Titan: A.G. Gaston and the Making of a Black American Millionaire". It is entirely one thing to reminisce about our former "Black Wall Street" and successful segregated communities, or about the wealthiest person to ever exist, "Mansa Musa and the Empire of Mali", but it is an entirely different matter to currently and perpetually "finance our own oppression":1). In the mid-1990s, there were 54 "black" owned banks, today there are only 21 - with assets totaling only 4.7 billion - while "blacks" possess a combined 1.1 trillion dollars potential in buying power!!2). The truth remains, even "blacks" refuse to invest within the (so-called) "black" community, but are always seeking to escape oppression.3). We already know that the wealthiest of "blacks" today surly do not build or invest in "black" American communities, and nor does some of the world's most racist (but powerful and successful) companies.... So, what has become of "blacks" seeking and employing the services of "black" professionals as other ethnic groups? It is practically nil. As consumers, we certainly have the resources. It is time "blacks" stopped financing our own oppression. Legislation and political party loyalty is a farce, and constantly proves - without money - "a vote is not a voice."

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