



## *Tulsa Race Riots Part 1*

### **Rationale**

This lesson can be used to familiarize students with conditions in Oklahoma leading up to the race riot. It can be used alone or as part of a larger unit.

### **Guiding Questions**

What were race relations like in the early 1900s Oklahoma?

What events lead to race riots in Tulsa?

### **Mastery Objectives**

Students will have some knowledge of the events leading up to the deadliest race riots in our nation's history.

### **Vocabulary**

Race relations

Renaissance

Stereotypes

Lynching

Militancy

### **Materials**

Copy of attached reading for each student

Copy of *Tulsa Star* April 4, 1914 (attached)

Editorial, "And this is the white man's law?" *Black Dispatch* September 3, 1920 (attached)

Copy of *Claud Chandler Hung By Mob, September 3, 1920* (attached)

### **Standards**

Oklahoma C3 Standards. Process and Literary Skills:

A.1 – Cite specific and textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

A.2 – Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.9 Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail"), including how they address related themes and concepts.



Greenwood, the black section of Tulsa, was often referred to as "Little Africa." Situated just north of the center of Tulsa, this community was largely self-sufficient in the 1920s. Citizens there lived in relative freedom, and the economic prosperity of the community promoted the idea of equality. Among its citizens were veterans of World War I; men who had travelled the world and seen the freedom and equality Blacks enjoyed in other parts of the world.

During this time, the Harlem Renaissance was in full swing. The primary theme of this movement was that racism and stereotypes could be challenged by the New Negro, one that used intellect and the arts to fight racism. These ideas were primarily carried to Greenwood by the *Tulsa Star*; a paper published weekly by A.J. Smitherman. This paper, along with other regional and national periodicals alerted the residents of Greenwood of recent victories and setbacks the black community had experienced in the courts and the arts. It also informed Greenwood residents of their legal rights.

Community leaders in Oklahoma believed that respect for the law was the solution to racial conflict. Unfortunately,

unregulated violence was very common as areas across the southwest experienced frequent breakdowns in the law when some white Southerners attempted to prevent the social or economic climb of blacks.



Mob violence was common throughout Oklahoma Territory during the early 1900s. The *Tulsa Star* ran this cartoon with the caption "Shall These Horrors Await Our Future Generations?" This showed the concern within the black community that there was a tremendous amount of work to do in order to protect the future generations.

Lynchings were the response to the rising aspirations of social and legal equality of the black community. The opposition to the death penalty of Oklahoma's second governor, Lee Cruce, meant that lynchings faced little, if any, punishment. The lack of protection by local law enforcement led to increased militancy of the Greenwood community. As evidenced in the article *One Hundred Men Lynched Negro Woman At Wagoner* in the *Tulsa Star* April 4, 1914, residents predicted there would be violence unless the law was followed and the lynchings stopped.

The turning point began in August 1920 when a black man, Claude Chandler, was lynched in Oklahoma City. Chandler had been accused of killing a white police officer when his house was raided and was being held in an Oklahoma City jail. Three unmasked white men broke into the jail and within a few minutes had dragged Chandler out. His body was found hanging from a tree the next day.

Immediately, the black community accused the jailor of being involved in the kidnapping. The following excerpt is from an editorial that appeared in *The Black Dispatch* September 1, 1920:

It does not even matter if Sheriff Johnson and his jailor, two spineless cowards can show that they were overpowered. The public will want to know BY WHOM WERE THEY OVERPOWERED? Everyone knows that even after you have entered the jail door, one must be an adept, one must certainly have intimate knowledge of the keys and the location of prisoners, to accomplish their purpose as quickly as Jailor Sanders says they consummated their work. THINK OF IT, IN five minutes, unknown men can come to the jail, tie the jailor, cut the wires and then find the man whom they seek, from among the many cells, they can do all of this without any information or assistance from the inside. THE PUBLIC IS ASKED TO BELIEVE THIS.

Feeling they had no other way to protect themselves against lynchings, the black community began to arm itself and mobilize whenever they felt their fellow black man was in danger. This increased militancy further strained the relations between the two races.

Because of coverage in the local and area newspapers, Greenwood residents were primed for a fight to protect themselves. They were also well-schooled in the idea of equality under the law and were prepared to do what was necessary to uphold that idea.

1. What was the race of the person who wrote the article? What evidence do you have of this?
2. Why might black veterans of World War I be especially active in the movement for equal rights?
3. Why was it important for the black community to have their own newspaper?
4. Why is it significant that the men breaking into the jail were not masked?
5. What can you infer from the newspaper editorial about the writer's belief about the events surrounding the death of Claud Chandler?
6. Why might Whites have chosen lynching as a method to kill Blacks?
7. Look at the cartoons on the front page. What do they tell you about the state of racial equality during the time they were printed?
8. Draw your own political cartoon that depicts your view of race relations today. Make sure it is appropriate for printing in a newspaper.
9. Did any prominent white men support the Blacks? If so, who?
10. Would you have the courage to stand up for what is right and just even though public opinion might be against you?





# The Gateway to Oklahoma History

THREE MONTHS ..... 75

ROSCOE DUNJEE ..... Editor

DAUSILLA DUNGEE HOUSTON ..... Contributing Editor

## AND THIS IS THE WHITE MAN'S LAW?

Governor Robertson speaks the sentiment and belief of every Negro in Oklahoma when he says that he believes that the sheriff and the jailor of Oklahoma County acted in collusion with the cowardly hell-hounds that sought and murdered Claude Chandler, Sunday night.

Again, in the words of the governor the "Stock Excuses" are too flimsy this time. Think of it! Three men overpowered the jailor, tied him, cut his telephone wires and light, HIS TELEPHONE WIRES, OVER WHICH THE EDITOR OF THIS PAPER HELD A CONVERSATION WITH THAT SAME JAILOR AN HOUR LATER.

It does not even matter if Sheriff Johnson and his jailor, two spineless cowards, can show that they were overpowered. The public will want to know BY WHOM WERE THEY OVERPOWERED? Everyone knows that even after you have entered the jail door, one must be an adept, one must certainly have intimate knowledge of the keys and the location of prisoners, to accomplish their purpose as quickly as Jailor Sanders says they consummated their work. THINK OF IT, IN five minutes, unknown men can come to the jail, tie the jailor, cut the wires and then find the man whom they seek, from among the many cells, they can do all of this without any information or assistance from the inside. THE PUBLIC IS ASKED TO BELIEVE THIS.

Well, WE DON'T BELIEVE IT. What we do believe is that Sheriff Johnson and his jailor, Sanders, had guilty knowledge of the act. If the American Legion in Oklahoma City has not the guts to say so, the Negroes of Oklahoma City will join the brave Governor of Oklahoma who has had the manhood and the nerve to say he believes this to be true and has ordered the Attorney General to enter into ouster proceedings.

But even though Claude Chandler has been hung by whelps who should be bloating in hell, the Negroes of Oklahoma have nothing to be ashamed of. The very stealth and secrecy with which these vicious reptiles, who hung Claude Chandler, went about their orgy, goes to show that they feared to let the Negroes of this community know that they had any such intention. There was no challenge to anybody's manhood. Every step INCLUDING THE LIES THAT WE HEAR NOW, bears the ear marks and the stink of hungry wolves, who fear the light and who feast only on dead carcasses in the night.

Law and order has completely broken down in this county. This is the condition that the editor of this paper referred to, when making a statement before the race relations committee, last October. This condition makes, in a sense, inconsistent the governor's admonition to the delegation of Negroes who visited his office Monday. The governor said many brave things, for which we commend him. He has taken the position in this regrettable matter that is far in advance of the position taken by men who hold similar positions, under the same circumstances: but the admonition of the governor to the Negroes to "LEAVE THE WHOLE THING IN THE HANDS OF OUR CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES" sounds just like as though one had said, "Go TRY YOUR CASE IN HELL."

Here we have County Attorney Cargill come out in a statement which reputable papers alleged is his statement, and says that he had Claude Chandler brought here for the reason that, if tried in Logan County, his jury would be Negroes. He brought him here where, of course, his white man's program choked his tongue out at the end of a rope. Now this same County Attorney is to hold an investigation! Oh Consistency! It is to laugh and to cry when Caesar starts out to try Caesar.

The truth is, that County Attorney Cargill ought to be tried for manslaughter. Claude Chandler had no right to be brought into this county, if he committed any crime, that crime was committed in Logan County. Claude Chandler would today be alive and have his day in court, but for the action of County Attorney Cargill and his associates. We hope that the authorities of Logan County will follow out the just processes of the law and bring the criminals who violated their oaths of office to the bar of justice.

LOGAN COUNTY? No! They did not want Claude Chandler to get to the jail in Logan County. The former sheriffs of Logan County have a record for protecting prisoners. One sheriff stood on the steps of the jail and held off a mob of one thousand, who were trying to reach a Negro prisoner, AND THEY DID NOT TAKE THAT PRISONER EITHER.

Well, many things have happened this week to black folk, yet through it all we have exercised a fortitude almost unexplainable. One could stand anywhere in the black section of this city and say as is said in "Revelations": "Here is the patience of the Saints." We have stood this week and looked at the naked passions of the barbarians that rule us. We have seen the venom of the reptile gush from his loins; we have seen down in the bottom of what he calls law and still we have been patient.

We are not ready yet to say that all white men are vile. To do this, we would have to forget John Brown and Lincoln. Governor Robertson says that he will probe to the bottom of this outrage and we still have confidence in him.

## RECOGNIZE THE NEGRO AS A MAN

Judge James R. Kooton has at last called the race relations committee to meet next Tuesday morning at the Governor's office; the public will remember that Governor Robertson appointed this committee last year, but no meetings have ever been held.



THE THINGS THAT KILL THE CHURCH

The strength that the church once possessed has been weakened in our time by many influences. Once every man who pretended to be respectable was a regular attendant of church with his family. Once in this nation only the churchman had a vote. If we made regular attendance of church today, the test of respectability, there would be few reputable people.

The advance of education has as a rule made people more independent of the church. Trusting LETTER KNOWLEDGE as a guide, they feel they do not need religious guidance as men once did. If we were a happier and better people today, I would think this view right; but we are not. Education has turned many from constructive service to the church and changed them into CRITICS.

It is criticism today that is most greatly weakening the vital life of the church. Not criticism from without, but from WITHIN. Our people are in the habit, thoughtless, yet no less harmful, of leaving every service pleading flaws. No good word of the Spirit's power, the sermon or the truths moved; but right in the presence of the unconverted we say the service was too long.

Sister A and Brother B, whose prayers and tears in the still watches of the night make the continuance of God's mercy possible. We speak of them before our children as too noisy or fussy. In the hour of race peril if they had not still power with God, for the hardheartedness and indifference of this generation, the very grounds of safety would be cut from beneath our feet.

We have another class deluded with the idea that they are educated. The scriptures say: "Verily a little learning is a dangerous thing." From this class we hear the complaint: "That the minister twisted too many verba or did not branch out into science and philosophy." These are too ignorant to realize that education is one thing and religion is distinctly another. Any man of high sounding phrases but of little spiritual insight wins their applause.

St. Paul warned us that the letter killeth. So do men who are merely

them in scorn. Some of them might have been slightly tawdry phrases, only their words.

Spurgeon, one of the greatest the world has ever known for twenty years held the London spell bound, was a good man. If our critics educated they would know Spurgeon's story accounts as one of the ages that the he rule the mighty; for the of all time have bowed at men lettered or unlettered they recognized God's work.

If we are vain and stiff-necked Pharisees, who rejected will today as effectually criticism, many who are we will not obey the truth and go out into the world and constrain men to repent; do we seek to destroy those who will? If we our children why will we criticizing word which their confidence in those save them.

The ungodly husband near the church because the Christians (and they know) openly criticizing the denizens; and our boy minister could save, will the church service because the Christian part of the services were too to younger children who nee good out of Bro. C's soul; ers because the folks at ridiculed his earnestness.

We have become a people weakened. We are responsive weakened power of the church. Our punishment lies in the lives of our children. The faults but they should be of secret counsel and prudence will show us how them. The scandals we not so much the hurt of those as the death of the for a people to love they God, to build up, not tear walls, O Zion.

The critic's reward—Woe on the mistakes of others see the ruin threatening him. When it comes, no one is pathy for him. Those who the church, live under blast and abroad. When they Christian enterprises, they gives them no support for people, as they themselves on none. "As ye measure it be measured to you again."

We have all been guilty, not? We thought we were in criticism. The church love. Let us close our eyes when sinners are present church members attempt interference in their presence. to the pastor, the deacon the church conference with claim. Out of this shall a intelligent readjustment force in the church.

## Haywood's Health Hints

mendable habit. Some recent authors in Hygiene bathing every morning a

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FEARLESS  
EXPONENT  
OF RIGHT  
AND  
JUSTICE

# THE TULSA STAR

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SUBSCRIPTION  
LIST MAKES A  
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SUCCESSOR TO THE MUSKOGEE STAR

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## Are You For a Greater Tulsa? It's Up to You, Mr. Voter!

### One Hundred Men Lynched Negro Woman At Wagoner

#### Second Colored Woman Victim of Mob Violence -- Dozen Men or More, Since Statehood

#### And Yet, Although These Mobs Go Un- masked, Not A Single Man Has Been Punished! Why Shouldn't Negroes of This State Arm Themselves to Uphold The Law?

One hundred white men stormed the county jail at Wagoner, Oklahoma, Tuesday morning and after overpowering the jailer took Marie Scott, a negro woman, and lynched her almost in the heart of the town.

The woman was charged with the murder of Lemuel Peace, a white man, who it is claimed she cut to death Sunday night. A newspaper dispatch from Wagoner reports the incident as follows:

"A mob went to the jail before daylight and around the jailer, they covered him with a gun, took his keys and opened the negro's cell. They then placed a rope around her neck and led her a block away, where she was instantly hanged. The women made no outcry. So quietly did the mob work that the town was not aroused.

The sheriff later removed the body. The authorities are investigating the settlement here in with the mob.

Wagoner is one of the counties in which negroes, convicted of murder, have had their sentences commuted to Governor Crook.

The white man who was killed was popular here and of good family. There was no provocation for the stabbing. Peace was walking along the street when the woman darted out from a house and stabbed him to death with a long knife which she plunged into his body time and again.

The Tulsa Star made special effort to get the facts in the case by telephone, but failed to get anything definite.

It is claimed, however, that the woman had lived only two weeks in Wagoner and that she was a prostitute. She lived in a district where this class of women reside and it is said the white man was in this community when he met his death. What business he had in a segregated district of this kind is not known, but the logical inference is that he was there for immoral purposes with Negro prostitutes.

Although newspaper dispatches from Wagoner say there was no provocation for the killing there are but few people who will believe that this was a true statement, in full. It is well known that "Prominent white men" and "men of good families" in Wagoner and nearly every other town in the state are continually trespassing the "color line," with the lowest type of Negro woman prostitutes.

Some of these men have families—lovable wives and children and happy homes; and instead of living the part of a MAN to these dear ones all the time they are frequently found using

the cover of night to live the part of a brute with prostitutes.

This may or may not have been the case with the white man killed at Wagoner, but subsequent facts will probably show that it was.

This makes the second Negro woman lynched in Oklahoma, and a dozen or more men, since statehood, but not a single man has been punished in any way for participating in the lynchings.

These conditions are becoming very alarming and a serious calamity is sure to follow if something is not done to force all citizens to respect the law.

There are the conditions that beset Black Hand Societies and similar organizations. The lynching of this woman seems to have been intended for a rebuke to the Governor's policy regarding capital punishment more than to avenge her alleged crime.

The Star does not make any defense for the alleged crime committed by the woman.

There's no defense we could make for the crime, even though there might be some illuminating circumstances yet undeveloped. And much less is there any defense to be made for the brazenly cowardly brutes who murdered a poor defenseless woman.

There can be nothing but shame and contempt in the heart of any true man for the hellish villains who committed this heinous crime. Will Judge Allen call a grand jury? Wait and see.

#### R. T. HILL IN CALIFORNIA

Reuben T. Hill, the defendant cashier of the True Reformers Savings Bank of Richmond, has been located in California, where he has lived for some months, posing as a physician and living in seclusion, in a part of Los Angeles where no Negroes live. If Hill is returned to Virginia he will have to face a charge of embezzlement covering \$45,000 to \$50,000. A heavy reward is standing for the arrest and conviction of Chief Hill.

#### CHIEF SAM'S COLONY

Two car loads of Negroes of the Chief Sam emigration plan left the barracks of the company at Wagoner last week for California, where they are left at Wagoner's are destitute and are seeking employment in any way and anywhere and at any price. Many of them are back to their former homes begging to be employed upon farms they formerly owned. The women of the present colony are washers and doing other work as domestics in the neighborhood just for their food and shelter. Sickness is among them and they are sadly in need of assistance.

### Okmulgee Colored School Ordered Closed

The colored teachers of Okmulgee are facing a perplexing problem which perhaps will find a solution only in the state courts unless the matter is soon adjusted by the City Board of Education.

Last week Prof. W. H. Fort, principal of the Colored School at Okmulgee, received orders, not to open school Monday morning because the County School fund, he was told, was exhausted, and there was no money with which to pay the colored teachers.

It seems that the City School for Colored at Okmulgee is financed from the County School fund, but is under the supervision of the City Board of Education. The teachers hold contracts issued by the City Board of Education and they hold that this contract is binding upon the board even though the County fund is exhausted. The city will be compelled to maintain the teachers and run the Colored schools, just as long as there are funds to run the white city schools. Prof. Fort refused to close the schools and it is now thought the matter will be adjusted if it hasn't been already.

#### SUMMER SCHOOLS FOR NEGROES

Of four summer schools for colored teachers, reporting 2,121 students in the U. S. Commissioner of Education in 1913, four were held in Virginia and had 57 men and 407 women in attendance. Habesop with 146 students and Tuskegee in Alabama with 263 included the list.

#### LOUISIANA NEGRO IN REPORTED LYNCHED

NATCHEZ, Miss., April 4.—News of a lynching in an isolated section of White parish, Louisiana, Sunday night has not reached here. According to manager reports, J. C. McLaughlin, a farmer, had a dispute with Allen Turner, a Negro, after which the Negro struck the farmer with a hoe, inflicting a serious wound. A constable arrested Turner and when taking him to jail was confronted by a band of farmers who seized and shot the Negro to death.

## City Campaign Is Now At Fever Heat

The political situation is at fever heat and "hot breathing." Every night this week there are meetings and have been the last few days and many dirty races have been waged by candidates on all sides of their fronts. With the election only three days off it is now generally admitted that a second election will be inevitable. However, there are some odd line politicians who predict a decisive victory next Tuesday. Others are equally certain of success for the independent ballot. There is at least a chance for all of the tickets and the candidates all seem to be so confident.

A certain old timer in the political game yesterday gave it as his opinion that this election would be the hottest contested and most uncertain ever held in Tulsa, and old "Ben" knows.

News comes from Holey and Weleska that followers of "Chief Sam" are going back to the soil. They are busy now looking for land to farm and places to live—where and better people. "The Chief" is penning a letter to "Big North" enjoying the comforts from his cozyly gotten coin from the fanatics of Oklahoma.

### Surffragette Movement Fails In U. S. Senate

#### Vardaman Beaten In His Infamous Attempt to Repeal The 15th Amendment

### Hunt Making Good Race

D. D. Hunt, candidate for Congressman No. 1 on the democratic ticket, is growing in strength as election draws near, especially so among the colored voters of this city. A story is told of this man which shows his true color as a man who has deep regard for his duty as a man and an American citizen.

During the Dry Farming Congress meeting in this city last fall the story goes, Mr. Hunt was about to leave the fair grounds in his automobile when he noticed a crowd of Negro boys leaving the ground after the city. He asked them if they wanted to ride, and of course the reply came in a chorus, "Yes, sir, yes, sir." He loaded them in every one of them, and gave them a joy ride to town. Another white man, noticing the Negro boys in his rear, said to him: "Hunt, don't you know the public will ridicule you for hauling 'niggers' about in your car?"

Mr. Hunt's reply came promptly and freely: "If I can make a little Negro boy happy by giving him a ride in my car I will certainly do so, and then I have done only a small part of my duty to humanity."

This was just a little incident, but it showed the caliber of the man and the big manly heart within him.

Whatever else may be said of the Negro, he has never been found disloyal to his friends, and it is certainly a hopeful sign for the Negro to recognize his friends regardless of political parties. The colored people of Tulsa have not forgotten Mr. Hunt's part in location of the convention for the Colored Dry Farming Association and many will support him to show their appreciation of his friendship.

Below we reprint from John Mitchell's paper, The Richmond Planet, an article which will be interesting and instructive to our readers, submitting, as it does, a few facts which will be evidence that politicians of the Vardaman type and the adherents of his policies do not by any means speak for their party.

The Question of Suffrage.

The fight for Woman Suffrage was not successful last week in the United States Senate. The vote to submit to the states a constitutional amendment to the Constitution of the United States, permitting women to vote, was lost by a vote of 35 ayes and 24 nays. It required a two-thirds vote of the membership of the Senate to secure favorable action upon the resolution. This meant the affirmative vote of 64 senators.

It will be seen then that the Woman Suffragists had 29 votes less than the number needed. Senator Vardaman of Mississippi did not lose the opportunity to emphasize his hostility to the colored people of the country. He offered an amendment to repeal the fifteenth amendment. This amendment was offered for the purpose of disfranchising the colored people of the United States.

The vote on Senator Vardaman's amendment was rejected by a vote of 48 to 19. The senators voting in favor of repealing the fifteenth amendment included Senator Vardaman and Senator Swanson of Virginia. Their names are:

- Byran, Florida; Gore, Oklahoma; James, Kentucky; Lee, Tennessee; Lee, Maryland; Martin, Virginia; Myers, Montana; Overman, North Carolina; Handell, Louisiana; Reed, Missouri; Sheppard, Texas; Shields, Tennessee; Smith, Georgia; Smith, South Carolina; Swanson, Virginia; Tillman, South Carolina; Vardaman, Mississippi; West, Georgia; Williams, Mississippi—19.

Senator John Sharp Williams of Mississippi offered a resolution providing that only white women be permitted to vote. It was lost by a vote of 44 to 21. This ended the contention. It brought into the limelight the race question and showed just how many United States senators were ready and will to wince from the war between the states.

his constitution the practical democratic breaking spell for it has been broken. The colored folks may have a strated that with the democratic party in absolute control of the government they are not able as yet to do positive injury to one of the kindest races of people on the face of the globe.

### Sapulpa News

Sapulpa, Okla., March 20th, 1914.  
Editor Tulsa Star.

A great revival just closed last week at the Mt. Olive Baptist church, conducted by Rev. R. A. Whitaker, 49 members were added to the church.

Monday was a high day at the Mt. Olive Baptist Church, two special services were held. Rev. T. W. Hester, pastor of Okmulgee, officiating. At 11 o'clock a. m. the Women's Home Mission held their service at three o'clock p. m. The Knights of Pythias had their annual services preached. The Home Missions appeared again on the scene at night, the collection both morning and evening was good. Hutton Yates the hustling groceryman are still doing a good business. Isaac Clardy the old reliable Groceryman and Dutcher is getting his share of trade. Sapulpa the "Magic city" is beginning to be a real live one. Mr. E. P. Glass is contemplating on building a new hotel and installing a cab line. Will be going some then. Mrs. Coffeaker Hank is just returned from a two weeks' visit at Havensport, Okla.

Miss Ellen Woods is on the sick list, having trouble with her eyes. Mr. W. H. Purrie is preparing to have his house papered soon. Mrs. Dora Brown has just returned from Little Rock, Ark., where she has been attending to some business.

The recent rains have made it fine for the gardeners and also for the farmers at large.

A Reporter.

Hello, friend! where is Carr's place? in the Gurley building, 114 N. Greenwood, St., and its the best in town, boy.