

Tulsa Race Massacre Survivors Testify C-SPAN

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3L1e90L9cE> [May 19, 2021 (26 mins)]

Testifying before a US Senate subcommittee, the three last known survivors of the Tulsa Race Massacre (May 31- June 1, 1921) recall the vibrant Greenwood community that they lived in, and the trauma they faced as the thriving “Black Wall Street” was burned to the ground by white mobs, killing as many as 300 Black residents, and leaving 10,000 homeless. Viola Fletcher, age 107 talked of the home and community she loved that was violently taken from her. She describes the trauma that she experienced and re-experienced throughout her life—the planes, the fires, the killing—and the outrage she feels that the horror of Tulsa Massacre was erased from historical reference. Ms. Fletcher’s younger brother, Hughes Van Ellis describes his service to this country in WWII, his belief in American to this day. As an American and a survivor, Mr. Van Ellis demands that accountability and justice be given to himself and the descendants of the massacre. Lessis Bennington, aka Mother Randall, describes her beautiful Greenwood until, “White men with guns came and destroyed the community. We did not understand why...we were told they just dumped the dead bodies into the river...I was so scared; I didn’t think we would make it out alive.” She tells of the lasting trauma and believes that she is “still here” to bear witness and tell the story of the white hate that fueled the massacre. Mother Randall calls for justice and reparations, “which are always so slow or not possible for Black people.”

Additional Resources:

The Tulsa Massacre and cover up <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-ltsPBTF00> Vox (9 mins.)

“What the Tulsa Race Massacre Destroyed” <https://nyti.ms/2RJVVJ3>

In the spring of 1921, Black residents of Tulsa, Oklahoma's Greenwood neighborhood were attacked by a mob of angry... www.npr.org/2021/05/25/1000118546/tulsa-100-years-later

An illustrated history of the Tulsa Race Massacre, including testimonies from several survivors: <https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2021/05/28/tulsa-race-massacre-1921-illustrated-history-black-wall-street-destruction/7454545002/>

[Racial violence in America: 60 years of whitewashing \(cnn.com\)](https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/28/racial-violence-in-america-60-years-of-whitewashing/index.html) in an interactive way, tells the stories of multitudes of communities of African Americans, but also of Chinese and Mexicans who were attacked by white mobs in the decades before during and after Tulsa demonstrating that Tulsa—however tragic in scale-- was no isolated incidence of racialized violence.