

# Objectives

- **Describe** the historical significance of "Black Wall St." in Tulsa, Oklahoma in the early 1900s
- **Discuss** the pushback against the success of Tulsa's Black section at the time
- **Analyze** our country's current circumstances in an effort to understand if the financial stability of minority groups is still a threat to power, and if so, how and why?



*The Devastation of Black Wall Street: Tulsa, Oklahoma. 1921. A wave of racial violence destroys an affluent African-American community, seen as a threat to White-dominated American capitalism. By: Kimberly Fain*



# History of Tulsa, Oklahoma



<https://www.tulsahistory.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre/photos/>

## Let's Think About It...

On May 31 of that year, the *Tulsa Tribune* reported that a Black man, Dick Rowland, attempted to rape a White woman, Sarah Page. Whites in the area refused to wait for the investigative process to play out, sparking two days of unprecedented racial violence.



**What specific event led up to the Tulsa race riots? How has this trope impacted the experience of Black people historically?**

“In 1906, O.W. Gurley, a wealthy African-American from Arkansas, moved to Tulsa and purchased over 40 acres of land that he made sure was only sold to other African-Americans,” writes Christina Montford in the *Atlanta Black Star*. Gurley provided an opportunity for those migrating “from the harsh oppression of Mississippi.” The average income of Black families in the area exceeded “what minimum wage is today.” As a result of segregation, a “dollar circulated 36 to 100 times” and remained in Greenwood “almost a year before leaving.”

**What factors contributed to the rise of Black Wall St. (Greenwood)? How is financial stability different now than it was in this time? Are marginalized groups better or worse off financially now than they were in the past? Why or why not?**



The massacre of Black Wall Street primarily occurred due to Whites' "generalized perception that African-Americans were 'out of line'" and needed to be put "back in their place....The destruction of this successful African-American community was no accident. Messer asserts that "[t]he destruction of the community was rationalized as a necessary and natural response to put them back in their place." Evidently, private industry and the state stood to benefit economically from the destruction.

## How did the government support the undercutting of Greenwood's Black families following the race riot?





How do we see similar actions taken being taken against Black financial upliftment today?

