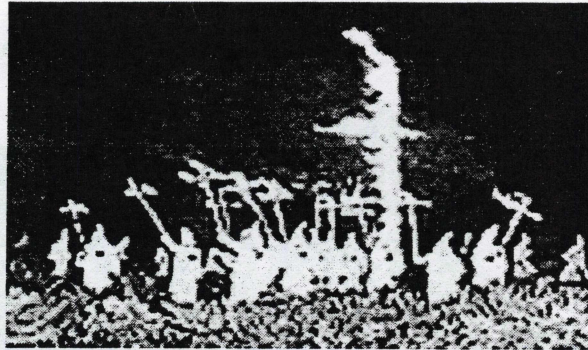


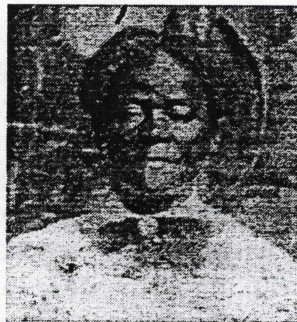
Rosewood

Rosewood Case, one of the worst race riots in American history, in which hundreds of angry whites killed an undetermined number of blacks and burnt down their Florida community. In 1922 Rosewood, Florida was a small, predominantly black town. During the winter of 1922, two events in the vicinity of Rosewood aggravated local race relations: the murder of a white schoolteacher in nearby Perry, which led to the murder of three blacks, and a Ku Klux Klan rally in Gainesville on New Year's Eve.



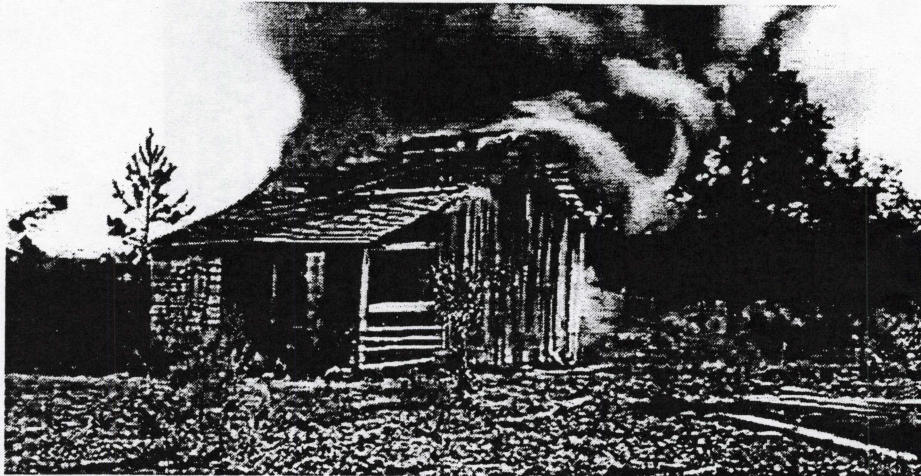
KKK Rally

On New Year's Day of 1923, Fannie Taylor, a young white woman living in Sumner, claimed that a black man sexually assaulted her in her home. A small group of whites began searching for a recently escaped black convict named Jesse Hunter, whom they believed to be responsible. They incarcerated one suspected accomplice, Aaron Carrier, and lynched another, Sam Carter. The men then targeted Aaron's cousin Sylvester Carrier, a fur trapper and private music instructor, who was rumored to be harboring Jesse Hunter. A group of 20 to 30 white men went to Sylvester Carrier's house to confront him. They shot his dog, and when his mother, Sarah, stepped outside to talk with the men, they shot her. Sylvester killed two men and wounded four in the shoot-out that ensued. After the men left, the women and children, who prior to this had gathered in Carrier's house for protection, fled to the swamp where the majority of Rosewood's residents had already sought refuge.



Sara Carrier

The white men returned to Carrier's house the following evening. After a brief shoot-out, they entered the house, found the bodies of Sarah Carrier and a black man whom they believed to be Sylvester Carrier, and set the residence on fire. The men then proceeded to rampage through Rosewood, torching other buildings and slaughtering animals. They were joined by a mob of about 200 whites who converged on Rosewood after finding out that a black man had killed two whites. That night two local white train conductors, John and William Bryce, who knew all of Rosewood's residents, picked up the black women and children and took them to Gainesville. John Wright, a white general store owner who hid a number of black women and children in his home during the riot, planned and helped carry out this evacuation effort. The African Americans who escaped by foot headed for Gainesville or for other cities in the northern United States.



Rosewood Home on fire.

By the end of the weekend all of Rosewood was leveled except for the Wright house and the general store. Although the state of Florida claimed that only eight people died in the Rosewood riot—two whites and six blacks—testimonies by survivors suggest that more African Americans perished. No one was charged with the Rosewood murders. After the riot, the town was deserted and even blacks living in surrounding communities moved out of the area.

It is unclear what became of Jesse Hunter. Residents of nearby Cedar Key claimed that he was captured and killed after the massacre. The descendants of the Carrier family contend that Jesse Hunter was not the man who had attacked Taylor. Philomena Carrier, who had been working with her grandmother Sarah Carrier at Fannie Taylor's house at the time of the alleged sexual assault, claimed that the man responsible was a white railroad engineer. She says that the man had come to see Taylor the morning of January 1 after her husband left for work. After an argument erupted between Taylor and the man, Philomena witnessed the man exit the back door and jog down the road toward Rosewood. The Carriers' descendants maintain that the man was a Mason and that he persuaded Aaron Carrier, a member of Rosewood's black Masonic lodge, to help him escape by appealing to the society's code requiring members to help one another regardless of race. Carrier in turn persuaded another black Mason, Sam Carter—one of

the few men in Rosewood with a wagon—to pick up the white man at Carrier's house and drop him off in the swamp. From there the man disappeared without a trace.



Lynched Man

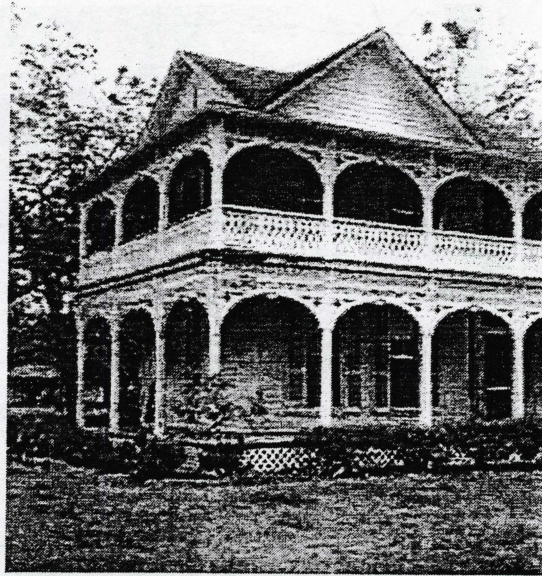
Although the Rosewood riot received national coverage in the New York Times and the Washington Post as it unfolded, it was neglected by historians. Survivors of Rosewood did not come forward to tell their story because of the shame they felt for having been connected with the riot. They also kept silent out of fear of being persecuted or killed. In 1993 the Florida Department of Law Enforcement conducted an investigation into the case, and this led to the drafting of a bill to compensate the survivors of the massacre.



Aftermath of 1923 fire.

After an extended debate and several hearings, the Rosewood Bill, which awarded \$150,000 to each of the riot's nine eligible black survivors, was passed in April 1994. In spite of the state's financial compensation, the survivors remained frightened. When

asked if he would go back to Rosewood, survivor Wilson Hall said, "No, ... They still don't want me down there."



John Wright, storekeeper's house. The only remains of Rosewood.

<http://www.africanaonline.com/rosewood.htm>, fpc.dos.state.fl.us/reference/rc12408.jpg,
<http://www.displaysforschools.com/history.html>, www.ghosttowns.com/states/fl/rosewood.html