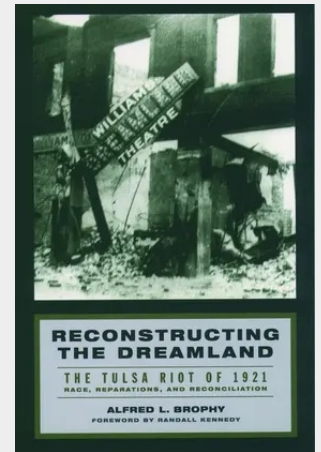


Reconstructing the Dreamland

The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation

The 1921 Tulsa Race Riot was the country's bloodiest civil disturbance of the century. Leaving perhaps 150 dead, 30 city blocks burned to the ground, and more than a thousand families homeless, the riot represented an unprecedented breakdown of the rule of law. It reduced the prosperous black community of Greenwood, Oklahoma to rubble. In *Reconstructing the Dreamland*, Alfred Brophy draws on his own extensive research into contemporary accounts and court documents to chronicle this devastating riot, showing how and why the rule of law quickly eroded. Brophy offers a gut-wrenching portrait of mob violence and racism run amok, both on the night of the riot and the morning after, when a coordinated sunrise attack, accompanied by airplanes, stormed through Greenwood, torching and looting the community. Equally important, he shows how the city government and police not only permitted the looting, shootings, and burning of Greenwood, but actively participated in it. The police department, fearing that Greenwood was erupting into a "negro uprising" (which Brophy shows was not the case), deputized white citizens haphazardly, gave out guns and badges with little background check, or sent men to hardware stores to arm themselves. Likewise, the Tulsa-based units of the National Guard acted unconstitutionally, arresting every black resident they could find, leaving Greenwood property vulnerable to the white mob, special deputies, and police that followed behind and burned it. Brophy's revelations and stark narrative of the events of 1921 brings to life an incidence of racial violence that until recently lay mostly forgotten. *Reconstructing the Dreamland* concludes with a discussion of reparations for victims of the riot. That case has implications for other reparations movements, including reparations for slavery.

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