

# Timeline of the Tulsa Race Riot

With a few exceptions, accounts recorded within a few years of the events.

Compiled by [I. Marc Carlson](#)

Please note that rather than attempt to mangle the events into MY idea of what happened, I am going to list the descriptions as I can, so we can see where the evidence seems to lead us.

This means that there will be a number of contradictions as people remember events differently, sometimes telescoping events, sometimes reinterpreting them to fit their own agendas.

## 30 May 1921, Monday. *Memorial Day*

Morning

- Dick Rowland and Sarah Page have some sort of encounter in the elevator of the Drexel Building. She screamed, possibly drawing a clerk from Renberg's, which was closed at the time ?

## 31 May 1921, Tuesday

- *Tulsa Tribune* headline "Nab Negro for attacking girl in elevator" [No actual copies exist, although Gill claims to have seen one].
- Several black leaders began to organize for the possible necessity of defending Rowland from a lynch mob. The police also prepared to repel a possible lynch mob. The chief of police had Rowland transferred to a detention cell in the county jail, on the top floor of the courthouse. The county jail was considered by both the police and sheriff's department to be easily defendable (*Tulsa Tribune*, 3, 6 June 1921).
- Black men gather to "face the lawless white men" (A.J. Smitherman's "The Tulsa Race Riot and Massacre")

About 6.30

- Gabe was visiting a friends when he heard about the lynching, so he went home to get his gun and went to the court house (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

About 7.00

- Barney Cleaver was on Greenwood when he heard about the trouble, so he went to the Court house (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

Sunset (7.08 p.m.). (*American Ephemeric and Nautical Almanac*, 1921).

7.30 p.m

- A crowd of three hundred white curiosity-seekers had formed around the courthouse (*Tulsa Tribune*, 3, 6 June 1921.; *Tulsa World*, 20 July 1921).
- At the Courthouse, there were 700-800 men, women and children gathered. Gabe saw Barney Cleaver, and Mr. Gurley (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- Sowders noticed a gathering in the street at Greenwood (Testimony of Henry C. Sowders, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

8.00 p.m.

- Sheriff McCollough withdraws to the top floor, and stations deputies through the building to protect Rowland. The Sheriff and Ira Short stationed themselves on the first floor and repelled 3 men who entered (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- A number of armed Blacks meet up with a car in front of the *World* offices before heading to the Jail. With the outbreak of hostility, the streets evacuate (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- The mob deliberates what to do when the armed Blacks arrive. The Blacks leave when asked to by Barney Cleaver.
- (about 7.30-7.45) About 25-30 blacks came up to see about the lynching. Cleaver went out and reassured them, and they headed back on Boulder (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- A "company of armed and hostile" (Charles F. Barrett, *Oklahoma After Fifty Years* (Oklahoma City: Historical Record Association, 1941). 3:207). blacks marched up the street to the jail. They had come to offer their services to the authorities who had Rowland in custody. They wanted to protect him from a lynch mob, such as the one that had hung Roy Belton, a white man, a year earlier (Parrish, 47; *Tulsa World*, 20 July 1921). The sheriff and one of his black deputies convinced the men that they were not required and should return home quietly. The blacks left (Barrett, 207; Parrish, 48).
- Gabe sees a car with 9 black men parked across from the courthouse on Boulder (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- Gabe encounters 3 carloads of black men coming to the courthouse (on Boston?) - he tried to warn them back, but they threatened him (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- Gabe then goes to Boulder and Archer, where he sees 5000 blacks, more or less (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.) Eventually he gets into a car and goes back to the Courthouse, is told to leave, and they drive down to third street (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

8.30 p.m.

- Maj. Daley is first apprised of the trouble in Tulsa while in Sapulpa (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

9.00 p.m.

- 150 White guys, 300 Negroes (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition). 200 blacks (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- Fight broke out (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- The crowd had swelled to over four hundred (White, 910; Halliburton, 337; Ellsworth, 49). After an abortive attempt by three white men to remove Rowland from custody, the sheriff effectively barricaded the prisoner, himself, and his men into the office (*Tulsa Tribune*, 3 June 1921; *Tulsa World*, 20 July 1921).
- The white crowd was still growing (Barrett, 207-8). when several carloads of armed blacks arrived at the courthouse. Approximately seventy-five men got out of the cars. (*Tulsa World*, 10, 14, 15 June 1921). Their arrival sparked a great deal of shouting, harsh words and insults between the crowds of whites and the blacks (*Tulsa World*, 1 June 1921; Gill, 31-32).

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- MAJ. Paul Brown sends out two of his Sgt's to round up the people in his unit together (Report of Paul Brown, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- MAJ. Bell is alerted by Sgt Payne and Pvt. Canton of B Company that armed men were converging on the Courthouse, but he is not too disturbed. He went to the Armory anyway. After talking to the Sheriff, he ordered all the men currently at the Armory to remain. It is reported that the Blacks are driving around town in a threatening mood.
- MAJ. Bell ordered that the remainder of the units be notified as best as possible to report to the armory without giving any alarm (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton; Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton). He then returned home to get his uniform. He is alerted by a runner that a mob is trying to break into the Armory. Backed by Cpt. Van Voorhis, and Sgt. Leo Irish of the Police department, they are driven off (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Blacks said to be organizing a call to arms at the plant of the *Tulsa Star*, according to O. W. Gurley. Smitherman was advising people to remain calm. (*Tulsa Tribune*, 4 June 1921).

9-9.30 p.m.

- Redfearn closed the Dixie Theater because he saw a "colored girl" going from person to person, telling them something. Looking outside he saw several men in the street, talking and bunched up, saying that there was going to be a lynching (Testimony of William Redfearn, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

9.30 p.m.

- CPT. Van Voorhis was at the armory when the call came from the Sheriff's and Police departments asking for help stop the rioting. No one left the Armory until direct orders came from TLC Rooney at 10.30 (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Redfearn went to the courthouse, saw about 50-60 people out front, he was asked to go back and try to convince people to not come up town (Testimony of William Redfearn, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

10:00 p.m.

- P.O. J. L. Wilson TPD, was at 2d and Cincinnati and fell into a large crowd of armed Blacks who threatened to lynch him. His life was saved by a shoeshine/preacher. They let him go (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- 200 Whites at courthouse refusing to disperse (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Fight broke out at 10 (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- MAJ. Byron Kirkpatrick is at home, and notices armed men in Vehicles speeding west along 6th. Shortly afterwards, there were a number of shots fired into the air at 5th and Elgin (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton). He called LTC Rooney (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- MAJ. Bell refuses to send out men until the unit has been activated, but has his men ready their weapons and ammunition anyway (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Redfearn returned to Greenwood, and the street was full of blacks, a number armed, standing in groups talking, and told them that he had been assured there wouldn't be a lynching (Testimony of William Redfearn, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.) [Then he went home]

10.10 p.m.

- LTC Rooney, CPT. Vann and others arrive at Kirkpatrick's home (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

10.13 p.m.

- MAJ. Kirkpatrick reaches the Adjutant General in Oklahoma City (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

10.15 p.m.

- A white man (James Greeson?) killed by a stray shot through the head (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921). At least one black was injured as Det. E.S. MacQueen began firing into them (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- Fighting breaks out - [ by a shot from "Johnny Cole", and Andy Brown] [- 2 wounded. Negroes taken to police station. At least one expected to die.] (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition). 1 injured Negro at police Station -expected to die. 2 were injured in initial shooting.  
2 white men killed, shot through the head. In first shooting? Curd Miller was hit in this exchange, taken to the hospital and released (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Gurley then drove to the Courthouse and offered his help to the Sheriff, when 40-50 people marched up, led by two brothers named Mann, Jake Mayes, and a man named Anderson. Gurley says Mann fired the first shot. (*Tulsa Tribune*, 4 June 1921).
- First one shot, then three triggered the battle. Four white "lynchers" died, and many more were wounded. (A. J. Smitherman's "The Tulsa Race Riot and Massacre")
- The 'spark' that touched off the riot was an incident between a white deputy and an armed black man outside the courthouse. The deputy was attempting to disarm one of the blacks when the gun for which they were wrestling discharged. The following is account collated from the several different versions of what happened. The most informative accounts are in the *Tulsa World*, 1 June 1921; *Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921; and Ellsworth, 52. John McQueen, a white deputy, approached Johnny Cole, an armed black veteran who was leaning in an open automobile doorway. Indicating the army issue .45 Colt automatic that Cole was holding, McQueen asked, "Nigger, What are you doing with that pistol?"  
"I a.m. going to use it, if I need to." Cody replied.  
"No, you'll give it to me." The deputy reached for the weapon.  
"Like Hell I will." was Cody's response. As they wrestled for the pistol it discharged, striking Andy Brown, a black man, in the chest, and killing him (or wounding him, with him dying later, either on the street because no one would let ambulances near him - or later in the Police Station).

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- Cleaver says he was inside, and only heard about the start of the Riot when a Lawyer came in announcing there were a lot of armed blacks outside. The Sheriff and a number of Deputies, including Cleaver went out to find a large white crowd with women and children, and a large black group. The blacks were being headed back towards Boston when a gun was fired (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- The Tulsa National Guard command communicated with higher headquarter in order to keep those up the chain of command abreast of the disturbance. General Charles F. Barrett, the National Guard Adjutant General, who was in constant communication with both the Tulsa unit and the Governor, told the unit's officers that they should mobilize only to guard the armory, and that they were to assist the civil authorities if necessary. The Governor was the only person who could mobilize the unit, and he could not officially do so unless the civil authorities felt that they were no longer able to control the situation (MAJ. James A. Bell, Report on the activities of the National Guard on the night of May 31st and June 1st, 1921, to Lt. Col. L. J. F. Rooney, 2 July 1921 (Governor James B. A. Robertson Paper, Oklahoma State Archives, Oklahoma City); *Tulsa World*, 10, 14, 15 June 1921).
- Gabe is on Third nearing Boston when he hears the shooting start (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

10.20 p.m.

- MAJ. Kirkpatrick is picked up and taken to the Armory (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton). The service truck was being loaded with 10-15 men to go to the City Jail (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

10.30 p.m.

- Gen. Barrett, the Adjutant General advises that Company B, and the Service Company be mobilized at once and sent to assist the civil authorities (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton). It was while speaking to the General that LTC Rooney showed up and took command (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton). LTC Rooney ordered CPT. Van Voorhis to take two officers and sixteen men to go to the Police Station, leaving seven men at the Armory to guard it (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- The mob breaks in to two groups, one moving east to Main, then North. On the West side, general fighting at 6th and Boulder (about a hundred whites). pushing the Blacks north on Boulder (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Moving North on Boulder, an exchange of fire wounds a black man and a white guy. Both are taken to the Hospital (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- A group moving east on 6th. A group of four shoot two blacks in an alley (on 4th and one about 100 feet further north (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- A report is received that the Blacks are gathering at 1st and Cincinnati to invade the business district. Sporting Goods stores looted for firearms (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Encounters took place between individual whites and groups of armed blacks near the railroad tracks.<sup>23</sup> At the courthouse no violence had as yet occurred.
- Police Commissioner James Moore Adkison met a party of 60-70 blacks, armed with clubs, bricks, and guns three blocks north of the courthouse. He asked them to disarm, and when they refused, Adkison led them back to the railroad tracks where he left them. *Tulsa World*, 19 July 1921. Claud. Thomas "rescued" a young white woman from a large black mob at 1st and Cincinnati. The mob beat him up before he and the girl were released (*Tulsa Tribune*, June 1921).
- The crowd panicked and split into several confused groups. The armed blacks and the police began firing, first into the air, then eventually into the crowds and at each other. The police, quickly joined by the few armed whites, drove the blacks north. Many of the unarmed whites, led by a few police officers, broke into pawn shops and hardware stores searching for weapons and ammunition.<sup>25</sup>
- The battle rushed north, dividing along several of the main streets until it reached First Street. There the blacks drew, and for a short time held, a battle-line (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Sentries were established at jail, and at 2d and Boulder and 2d and Main, to keep back crowds and traffic (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Three armed blacks became separated from the rest at 6th and Man, and were surrounded. 2 had consented to surrender when they all heard shots from the court house a block away, A white and a black went for the same gun -- a second Black shot the White through the foot. The blacks split up and fled (one ran west (towards the fighting) with a white man emptying his revolver at him - all rounds missed him). The other Blacks retreated back up Boulder and the alley behind the courthouse, firing as they went. As they emerged on 4th St. Heavy fighting on 4th at Boulder. One Black was killed on Boulder, one wounded near the alley. As the Blacks were in full withdrawal, the Whites began looting the Stores on Main, looking for weapons. A major fight began at 2d and Cincinnati 20 minutes later -- one man wounded on the steps of the Hotel Tulsa a block away. The Blacks retreated back across the Frisco Tracks and "trenchified" themselves (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- Gabe is going down 6th when two men come out of an alley and one threatens to shoot him. Gabe is on Cheyenne, heard a black had been killed, met with Police Commissioner Adkinson, then met deputy Smitherman on Detroit and Smitherman asked him to help stop the rioting; then he went and asked Stratford for help, but he wouldn't; then he went to Archer and Cincinnati, where he heard glass breaking on Main. Someone fired a shot while he was on Cincinnati, hitting another man. (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- (about 10-1030 -- Mr. Cotton, the manager of the Dreamland tells Sowders to cut the houselights back on. Cotton said there was some excitement on the street (Testimony of Henry C. Sowders, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.) There was some hollering and the house was cleared very quickly. When he tired to leave he found his car was full of 9 blacks. He was placed on the back of a Ford truck and driven to the police station. On the way he saw Officer Pack trying to hold people back at the tracks; at Cincinnati, they nearly ran over a black man standing in the middle of the street shooting, and two others lying in the street; going up Main they saw Dick Bardon's pawn shop being looted. He mad his report to the police and went home (Testimony of Henry C. Sowders, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

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• The black veterans establish a defensive line that can't be broken (A.J. Smitherman's "The Tulsa Race Riot and Massacre")  
about 10:45 p.m.

- "Train from Oklahoma city to Muskogee was stopped at the Katy Station about 10:45, May 31st, and was held until about 6:00 am, June 1st. Negroes were retreating from the south past the station. Armed white mob pursuing contained a large number of teenagers, women and men, many under the influence of whiskey, who were out of control and wildly shooting. The mob boarded the train and removed all Negroes from the segregated cars. Blacks trying to surrender and those in the streets were randomly killed" (*Muskogee Democrat*, 6-2-21, pg.10, as cited in O'Brien, W.M. *Who speaks for us?*)

11:00 p.m.

- "300" men had been armed, and were being drilled and coached, organized into companies of 50 men each. Police Commissioner and Inspector of police, with "part of the home guard company" started forming armed white men into companies and marching these into advantageous positions" - blocking off the black egress from the district (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- "Hundreds", or "45" cars brought into service (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- LTC Rooney and the National Guard showed up on trucks (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- H.L. Curry is hit by a stray shot when he stopped his car for water at 5th and Boston, coming from a group of Blacks coming west up Fifth (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- During the fight (sometime) two White women watched a large Black man get chased by a White in a car, and get gunned down at Fourth and Main (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- CPT McCuen reports for duty at the armory. He is quickly sent with 20 men "equipped for riot duty" to report to LTC Rooney at the police station. They are assigned to keep people from entering 2d between Main and Boulder (Report of John W. McCuen)
- Gabe saw a man shooting out the lights at the Frisco Depot. Later he saw some men on Boston with a torch. It took three men to get the torches to a little shack and set it on fire. Then he went home to bed (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- "Whites begin massing to the south of the depot and engage in sporadic shooting with the blacks" (*Tulsa Tribune*, 6-1-21, pg.3 & 5, as cited in O'Brien, W.M. *Who speaks for us?*)

11:40 p.m.

- MAJ. Daley arrived at the West Tulsa bridge (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

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- One White was killed and two were injured at the Frisco tracks, and one at Madison and the Tracks. (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- Madison and Frisco Tracks. A brakeman on an east bound freight train was shot in the face and chest, by a Black sharpshooter aiming at a 16 year hobo [G.T. Prunkard, conductor] (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Robert Palmer was struck while waiting for a train to pass at Main and the Frisco tracks.

## 1 June 1921, Wednesday

by 12-1 a.m.

- "Thousands" of whites (armed men, inquisitive women). mass on 2d St. from Boston to Boulder (most east from Main). - many present to quell an uprising of blacks (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- A group of four Blacks hiding in the weeds at Archer and Frisco were being pursued by one groups of Whites.
- A. B. Stick is struck while standing at the Cincinnati entrance to Hotel Tulsa (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Lee Fisher is struck while standing at the corner of 1st and Cincinnati (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- L. C. Slinkard is struck by one of the Black skirmish cars while crossing main at the Frisco tracks (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Ed Austin was hit in the left foot while on south side of a drug store (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- E. F. Bershmer was struck in the left and hand leg at First and Detroit (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Guardsmen face down people intent on gaining access to the Armory's weapons (*Tulsa World*, 7 Dec 2000).
- A detachment of Company B, 1st BN, 3d Inf Regt. under CPT. John McCuen enter the apparently untouched region of northern Greenwood with orders to stop snipers from firing into the adjacent white neighborhoods, and not fire unless fired upon. There they have a "gun battle" with a groups of barricaded blacks who refused to surrender, "killing them". A short while later, they encounter another group of 10 barricaded blacks engaging a group of armed white citizens (*Tulsa World*, 7 Dec 2000).
- "Passenger train stopped in front of Frisco Depot being fired on by militant blacks" (*Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, 6-2-21, and transcript of T. J. Essley interview recorded summer 1987, annotated by Robert D. Norris, Jr. Commission files, as cited in O'Brien, W.M. *Who speaks for us?*)

12:00 a.m.

- Last White car through the Black District before lines closed off. "Thousands" of Blacks massing north of Frisco station (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- White pedestrian was beaten when he attempted to pass through the district (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- A group of Whites at the Denver Viaduct begin turning back traffic heading North (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Several Black cars are seen in the residence districts (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- The line broke after an hour and a half of shooting and the blacks fell back a block north to the railroad tracks. A line of black snipers formed at the tracks to prevent the white rioters from entering the black district. The blacks held back the whites across a "no man's land" of gravel and steel (*Tulsa World*, 1 June 1921).
- Shortly after midnight, the whites attempted to burn down the buildings protecting the black snipers. This arson, however, had no strategic result at the time (*Tulsa World*, 1 June 1921).

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12.05 a.m.

- MAJ. Daley arrived at the courthouse, there were 2-300 armed men there. He picked a half dozen ex-military men to serve as his assistants, and ordered that all men under 21 should be disarmed (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton). He then reported to LTC Rooney on 2d St. he is ordered to organize the automobile patrols and to assume charge of the men at the Courthouse (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- MAJ. Daley ordered the men at 2d and Main that if they were to remain, they must abide by instructions rather than running wild. These were split into units of 12-30, under the command of an ex-service man (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

12.00-2.00 a.m.

- "City is generally Quiet" (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- the battleground fell relatively silent, disturbed only by the occasional, sporadic gunfire from one side or another. No record exists of any moves made, by either side, to establish mutual, peaceful communication.
- MAJ. Daley's automobile patrols were sent to pick up all the blacks on the streets, and in servants quarters to keep any from damaging the homes of the white population.

c. 12.30 a.m.

- Frisco Station: after an attack from blacks at 2d and Cincinnati, whites hit an unidentified white pedestrian, shot 25 times (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).

12.35 a.m.

- MAJ. Kirkpatrick got a hold of GEN. Barrett and the Governor on the phone, and was instructed to prepare and send a telegram to the Governor asking the local National Guard to be called out officially. This must be signed by the Sheriff, the Police Chief and a District Judge (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

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- MAJ. Bell sends four men and a non-commissioned officer to Public Service Co.'s plant on W 1st St., and a similar unit to the the Water Works on Sand Springs Rd. (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- MAJ. Bell sends a squad under SGT Hastings of B Company to the Sand Springs substation on Archer between Boston and Cincinnati to restore power. Snipers wounded SGT Hastings (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- LTC Rooney takes CPT McCuen and his men to Elgin and Detroit on the Service Company Truck, they advanced east two blocks, taking a few prisoners. While surrounded by blacks near the Gurley Hotel on Greenwood, SGT Hastings was wounded by in the scalp by a rifle (Report of John W. McCuen)
- B Co. falls back to Detroit to establish a base line, and await reinforcements. They form a skirmish line on Detroit (with right flank on Archer, and left flank between Brady and Cameron, moving north and south continuously between Archer and Cameron. They evacuate prisoners from houses and out buildings and turn them over to police cars standing by (Report of John W. McCuen)



c 1.00 a.m.

- Last of the Black Skirmish cars was driven from the street (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- 12 Blacks had been arrested by White Skirmish cars, and taken to City Jail (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- A group of 30 Negroes were pushed back from 2d and Cincinnati (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Major Daley turns over to LTC Rooney a "machine gun" (later described as 'not in repair' and capable of only firing as a single shot piece), with one belt of ammunition in front of the police station. This is mounted on the Service Company's truck. [The implication

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is that it was the Police Departments (The local National Guard units vehemently have maintained that **their** two Machine Guns never left the armory -- although there is a photograph in Haliburton, and two different photos in Hower, of a Browning M1917 water-cooled light machine gun set on a tripod on the back of a truck, with people in Army uniforms around it). McCuen describes it as belonging to a veteran who brought it back from Germany as a souvenir] exCPT Wheeler, LT Wood, and several volunteers and enlisted to operate the weapon (Report of LTC Rooney, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

- A "machine gun squad" on a truck went to turn back rumored reinforcements from Muskogee (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Drove to N. Detroit, and deployed about 60 men N-S on Detroit and Brady. These were then marched up to Standpipe hill, as a skirmish line. The truck followed along. Whole area was lit by burning frame buildings. The unit is only fired upon from the east (Report of LTC Rooney, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

1.15 a.m.

- MAJ. Kirkpatrick communicated with GEN. Barrett again, keeping him apprised of the situation (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- A Machine Gun was "produced" and placed in the rear of a truck with three experienced gunners and LT Ernest Wood, and six men at the front of the truck under LTC Rooney and so equipped, was ordered to different parts of the city (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

1.30 a.m.

- 500 Whites exchanged shots with a force of Blacks who were firing from a "two story shack" on Boston between the Tracks and Archer (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921). 4 Blacks were killed, although only two bodies were found. One White was slightly wounded (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921). Those "shacks" catch fire, and the fire department is not allowed to put them out (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).

1.46 a.m.

- Telegram is received by the Governor (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

c. 2.00 a.m.

- "Shacks" north side of tracks, on the east side of Boston were set on fire. The fire department was allowed to put out this fire (?). (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition). The fire eventually burned themselves out (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition). The fire department is called, but is fired upon, either by blacks (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton), or by whites (Black Survivor accounts?).
- Sheriff McCullough signed telegram requesting outside help (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Former Lt. Demerkel complained to the *World* offices that he had been refused weapons at the Guard armory (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- The whites stop attacking the black defensive line, and start planning the massacre (A.J. Smitherman's "The Tulsa Race Riot and Massacre")

2.15 a.m.

- MAJ. Kirkpatrick is officially notified that B Company and the Service Company have been called out (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

2.30 a.m.

- MAJ. Daley notes that there were over a hundred car squads, many of which were detailed to watch the roads to guard against the rumored Black reinforcements from other towns (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Urgent message received that the Midland Valley train had been commandeered by 500 Negroes from Muskogee, and Rooney went to organize a patrol to meet it. Rooney and Daily went to Midland Valley station, leaving Lt. Wood in command of the Service Co., Detachment, and CPT. McCuen in charge of them. CPT. Van Voorhis returned to armory. Then Rooney returned to the Skirmish Line on Standpipe Hill (Report of LTC Rooney, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Before they leave for the MV Depot, a Guard line on Boston Ave and Brady is established, with the Service truck (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- LTC Rooney and MAJ. Daley assemble a company of ex-service men under the command of a Mr. Kinney, to set up at the MV Depot. The arriving train is just a freight train (possibly the one that was fired on at Madison and the Frisco tracks) (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- the battle increased in intensity as the whites tried to weaken the black's defenses and push across the rail-yard. They were pushed back by the black defenders who were now joined by other blacks coming to defend their homes from an invasion of their district by the whites.<sup>32</sup>
- A short time after this, Lt. Wood was informed that white residences on Sunset Hill were being fired upon from black settlement further to the North and North East (Report of LTC Rooney, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- CPT. McCuen and Lt. Wood decided to set up an emplacement on Sunset Hill as a demonstration (Later they swear that it couldn't have been fired more than about 20 times, and wasn't fired by their commands). (Report of LTC Rooney, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

3.00 a.m.

- The residence at the north end of the block [Mrs. Fannie Dingo #33?] catches fire. 6 Negroes who were firing on the Whites from this residence try to escape - 5 are killed [This may be where the story of burning five people alive comes from] (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
- Whites at Archer and Boston begin to push east down Archer towards Cincinnati, in the face of fire from the defenders (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
- LTC Rooney ordered CPT. Van Voorhis to accompany him and his detail up to Stand Pipe Hill. On the way, they found men detailed on North Detroit, arming and arresting Blacks and sending them to the Convention Hall, and by Police Cars and Trucks (Report of

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Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton). At Cameron St, they encountered snipers in the belfry of a "large brick Negro church", which were silenced by return fire (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

3.15 a.m.

- Fire on North Boston is put out by the Fire Department, surrounded by MAJ. Daley's troops (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- At this time, heavy firing has begun at the Frisco Depot. There MAJ. Daley found a large groups of whites firing into the Black area. He enlists 20 volunteers to help contain the men in a triangular formation, from Boston, to the end of the Frisco Platform at Cincinnati, then back across the tracks. He then returned to the Police Station (Report of C.W Daley, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

4.00 a.m.

- *Tulsa World* 1st edition printed. "2 dead Negroes at the Frisco Depot" (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 1st edition).
- Cleaver and two others leave the Courthouse and head back down to Greenwood. They are stopped by several cars with whites, and are told that if they head back across the tracks they will be killed (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.). At Greenwood, he meets 15-20 armed blacks where he gets called a "white man lover"; he heard no shooting, but saw a number of armed individuals. He went home (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)

4.45 a.m.

- Rooney's people claimed to have received fire from the tower of the "new brick Negro church" just prior to day break (Report of LTC Rooney, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

*Sunrise* (4.47 a.m.). (*American Ephemeris and Nautical Almanac*, 1921. Note: Pre-dawn twilight is from 4.21-6.09. Sunrise is from 6.09-6.12, and is the sun actually appearing on the horizon and rising above it. Therefore items said to have happened at "sunrise" cover about a two hour period.)

- Three other Black bodies were lying near the Depot. Two have been removed [These are probably the same as the bodies mentioned at 4:00 a.m. ] (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
- The body of a dead black is dragged through the business district behind a car (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
- An unverified report of three Frisco switchman and a Fireman being shot to death by Blacks because the Whites refused to haul them out of town [probably a rumor] (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
- About 5.00 "scores of Whites in cars" moved in north at Standpipe Hill, encircling the district. Fighting is particularly heavy on the south side of Sunset (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- At daybreak, the loosely organized army of white rioters entered the black district in two movements. The first movement was a push from the south that came across the rail-yard, covered by white snipers. According to one witness, there was a machine gun atop the granary tower that covered this southern push as well. (Parrish) This push moved through the business district, and into the neighborhood, looting and burning.(Parrish) The second front attacked from the north down Standpipe Hill. A machine gun on the hilltop covered this attacking force. This second front ran into, and through, crowds of black refugees who were fleeing from their homes.(Parrish) Whites in spotter planes oversaw the entire battle. These planes, with no known official authority, were used to locate pockets of black resistance for the white ground forces.(Parrish)Eyewitness reported outrages committed by whites as the white belligerents swept over the district. Most of these reports involved the murder of blacks who had surrendered or were obviously non-hostile or ...
- A three hour engagement is ended by twenty minutes of machine gun fire from two machine guns. The blacks hoisted a white flag, which was a signal for the whites to invade (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- There is a report of a white policeman trying to stop the white invaders at daybreak from crossing the rail-line (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921; *Tulsa World*, 19 July 1921).
- The machine gun on Sunset Hill is fired a few times to the northeast, where there were Blacks firing on the hill. After a few rounds of fire, the Blacks surrendered, after which the machine gun ceased firing (Report of LTC Rooney, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- A National Guard captain was shot while trying to stop the whites atop Standpipe Hill from machine-gunning refugees (Captain Edward Wheeler of the Oklahoma National Guard was in charge of the machine gun mounted on Standpipe Hill. When he saw that the gun was being used to fire on refugees instead of any rioters, he ordered that it be stopped. A young white boy called CPT. Wheeler a "nigger lover" and shot the captain in the stomach with a shotgun. *Tulsa World*, 15 July 1921; Gill, 48).

5:00 a.m.

- 500 Whites around Frisco Depot are fighting with several Blacks firing from housetops. 3 Blacks are killed in a short period of time (one on top of 2 story brick building - the other two were hiding on Archer). (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition; *Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- GEN. Barrett and his troops leave Oklahoma City on a special train (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Gabe hears the whistle blow, and shooting take up all over town (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- The whistle blew and the shooting started (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.) People began shooting out of the Masons and Oddfellows hall, one man is shot out of a window and hits the sidewalk (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.) This shooting lasted not more than about a half hour, and only after the whistle blew (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- "Three long whistle blasts" (A.J. Smitherman's "The Tulsa Race Riot and Massacre")

5.30 a.m.

- Death list is estimated at 15, with only two unidentified Whites (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).

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- "More than a dozen" dead blacks are reported lying in in the street (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
- 5.45 a.m.
- With 6 spotter planes in the air, armed Whites are moving into "Little Africa", bands of riflemen at Elgin and Archer (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
  - A Black home at Elgin and Archer is burning (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 2nd edition).
- 6.00 a.m.
- *World* 2d edition published.
  - The Fire spreads north of Archer into the N. Greenwood Business district (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
  - The 6 a.m. Katy train from Tulsa to Muskogee doesn't leave (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
  - Gabe's house (422 Easton) is fired into, and he went to the door -- he encounters several white men who are getting shot at, and sees a low flying airplane, also shot at. He is rounded up and sent to the Convention Hall (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- 6.30 a.m.
- CPT. Van Voorhis left CPT. McCuen and 1LT Wood in command with orders not to fire unless fired upon, and went back to the Armory to eat and get reinforcements (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
  - One dead and two wounded Blacks are brought to the Convention Center, and tossed on the floor (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- 6.45 a.m.
- "Two thousand" Blacks are fleeing town to the north (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 3rd edition).
  - Blacks start being sent to Convention center (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 3rd edition).
  - Six badly wounded Blacks are among those taken to Police station (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 3rd edition).
  - Fires are started along Archer (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- 6.55-7.15
- Men wounded by Black sharpshooters in "Black Belt" are taken to Hospitals. Three die in ambulance on way (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 3rd edition).
- about 7 a.m.
- Lt. Roy Dunlap is notified to hold his FA Battery in readiness (Report of Roy Dunlap, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
  - Photographs show crowds on 1st street and across the tracks. Archer from Cincinnati to the east is on fire. The body on the tracks has his first picture taken about this time (timing based on shadows in the photos).
- about 7.30
- *World* 3rd edition published.
  - Everything on Archer from Boston east to Elgin is on fire. The fire department says "the mob" shoots at them when they try to put out the fire (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
  - About 50% of Dunlap's FA Battery reports for duty, are issued arms and ammunition, and are detailed to sentry duty at the Armory and at various points around the city (Report of Roy Dunlap, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
  - CPT. Van Voorhis, with six men, went to the brick kiln, and proceeded east on Cameron, looking for sign of his men. Not finding them, they proceeded on to Greenwood, then North on Greenwood. After three blocks, encountered a number of refugees. He had them stop, mad certain they were unarmed and placed them under a guard of two people, while he went on further. A few blocks, they encountered more armed Blacks who were disarmed and taken into custody. he sent his men on in different directions to search houses for more Blacks and weapons. They had about 20-30 prisoners when white civilians on Sunset Hill opened fire on them, and forced them to run them south and hide them behind a concrete building. Eventually the firing stopped and he could run his prisoners south on Greenwood, until they were safe. Then he turned the 35-40 prisoners over to the Deputies, to be taken to Police headquarters (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
  - After this, CPT. Van Voorhis and his six men marched up Greenwood three blocks, then turned left up Sunset Hill (up Independence?). 2/3rds of the way up the hill they were fired upon by Blacks to the north (wounding SGTs Stone and Sanders). They made it to the machine gun position on the crest of Sunset Hill. He sent CPT. McCuen and his men to get the White civilians to the NE of them to stop firing on the Blacks (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
  - Gabe sees Gurley's building on fire (Testimony of C.F. Gabe, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
  - Photographs show the Woods Building being looted and intact at this time, although much the the east side of Greenwood has been consumed and is collapsing (timing based on shadows in the photos).
- 8.00 a.m
- CPT. Van Voorhis took his men down to Davenport, and began to move back up the street collecting the inhabitants. A receiving point for prisoners was established at Greenwood and Davenport, and from there, moved up Greenwood again. A doctor named Charles Wickham helped them to get the other Blacks to surrender. He sent a detail north to the Park since he had been informed of a number of Blacks gathered there. Between the two details they gathered about 330 people and took them to the Convention Center (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
  - About this time, Ernest Austin is shot through the chest. He had stopped in his drive to work to look at the smoke when a stray bullet hit him (Obit notice in local NY newspaper, aft 9 June).
  - "After daylight" (McCuen estimates about 8 or 9 am), Co. B moves up to Sunset Hill to stop blacks from firing into the white homes on Sunset from their "settlement" to the NE. The move up the crest of Sunset hill, then a little further north to the "military crest" where his men have to lie down because of the intensity of the fire from the black skirmish line at the base of the hill to the NE among the outbuildings (Report of John W. McCuen)

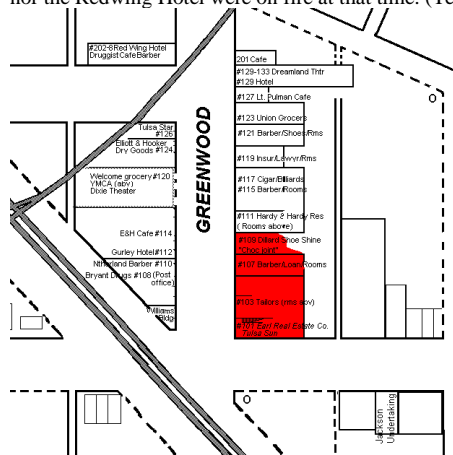


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- Redfearn returned to Greenwood. Although he says they are the 'west' side of the street, he identifies the Woods Building, and the Phillips building as being on fire, and Cherry's 'place' and maybe one other on the west side were on fire. Neither the Dixie Theater nor the Redwing Hotel were on fire at that time. (Testimony of William Redfearn, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)



8.25

- The Midland Valley passenger train no.6 is held up in Sperry, rather than continue on to Tulsa (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- After about 20 minutes of "fire at will", the blacks at the base of Sunset hill pull back to the NE. McCuen's men move forward. Company B moves North, while the Service Company moves to the NE (Report of John W. McCuen)

8.30

- Fighting at the Church, allegedly leaving 50-60 dead (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- McCuen's company received a little opposition about halfway through the settlement "Some negroes refused to stop firing and had to be killed" (Report of John W. McCuen)
- At the NE corner of the settlement, more than 10 blacks had barricaded themselves in a concrete store. Several whites and blacks were injured or killed in stiff fighting. They arrested many blacks and sent them under guard to the Convention Center (Report of John W. McCuen).

9.00

- A detachment of Company B, 1st BN, 3d Inf Regt. under CPT. John McCuen enter the apparently untouched region of northern Greenwood with orders to stop snipers from firing into the adjacent white neighborhoods, and not fire unless fired upon. There they have a "gun battle" with a groups of barricaded blacks who refused to surrender, "killing them". A short while later, they encounter another group of 10 barricaded blacks engaging a group of armed white citizens (*Tulsa World*, 7 Dec 2000, describing the incidents in the Report of John W. McCuen).
- CPT. Van Voorhis returned to Greenwood and gathered more prisoners, taking them to McNulty park, since the Convention Center was full (Report of Frank Van Voorhis, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- Between 8 & 9 a.m. Redfearn returned to Greenwood, and saw the fire almost entirely of the west side of Greenwood and about half of the east side between Archer and Cameron were on fire. He left before the Redwing was totally destroyed by fire. He originally claimed to have seen people break open the front doors of buildings on Greenwood (testimony given to the Fire Marshal on 3 June -- later repudiated (Testimony of William Redfearn, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.))
- Cleaver notes his house (508 N. Greenwood) is burning and his stuff had been looted. About that time the Gurley Hotel and Redwing were threatened by fire, although the fire was mostly on the east side of the street (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfearn v. American Central Insurance Co.)
- A photograph of the National Guard truck with the machine gun is taken on 2nd st (timing based on shadows in the photo).
- Photographs of prisoners marched into the Convention Hall are taken over the next hour, based on shadows.
- Photos of the looting and burning along North Detroit taken about this time, based on the shadows.

9.05

- Midland train to Muskogee doesn't leave on time (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).

9.15 a.m.

- GEN. Barrett and his troops arrive in Tulsa (Report of Byron Kirkpatrick, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

9.30

- National Guard train arrives from OKLAHOMA CITY (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 4th edition). Their first goal is to disarm the armed whites (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 4th edition).
- Fires along the Black Belt are uncontrollable (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 4th edition).
- By this time, most of the residences are empty, except for a few Blacks who are being ousted in a house to house search (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 4th edition).
- The firing, although continuous (until 11. am) begins to diminish about this time, although interspersed with explosions as the fires reach ammunition stores (Report of John W. McCuen).

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9.45

- Armed citizens and one Guard Corporal lead prisoners south from Convention Center to Western League Park (*Tulsa World*, 1 June - 4th edition).

10.00 am

- Photos of the prisoners being marched downtown, then being trucked to the ball field are taken about this time (timing based on shadows in the photos).

11.00 a.m.

- The fighting came to a stop when martial law was declared. The black district, after five to six hours of battle and looting, was a mass of black clouds of smoke rolling above the ruins of thirty-some city blocks of rubble and ashes (*Tulsa Tribune*, 1 June 1921).
- The armory begins to house the Black wounded (Report of James Bell, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- MAJ. Brown began treating the Black wounded at the Armory (Report of Paul Brown, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).
- CPT McCuen's men are relieved (Report of John W. McCuen)

11.45 am

- The Redwing Hotel is completely consumed by fire (Testimony of William Redfeare, Redfeare v. American Central Insurance Co.)

12.00 pm

- Photos of the burning of Mt. Zion were taken about this time based on the shadows.

1.00 p.m.

- Cleaver returns to Greenwood. The Redwing and Dixie Theater are both still burning -- the walls hadn't fallen in yet (Testimony of Barney Cleaver, Redfeare v. American Central Insurance Co.)

5.00 p.m.

- By this time, MAJ. Brown had reclaimed the former Cinnabar Hospital from its status as a rooming house, and opened it as an Infirmary for the wounded Blacks (Report of Paul Brown, as given in Appendix IV of Haliburton).

**2 June 1921, Thursday**

*This page was last updated 18 July 2012*

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## About Marc Carlson

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