

Hate Sits in Places

Folk Knowledge and the Power of Place in Rosewood, Florida

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This chapter's central goal is the "excavation" of folklore as it relates to the tragic history of Rosewood, Florida, and of the various meanings attached to the site as they unfold across time and space. While previous research into Rosewood constructs a descriptive history of the town's development and destruction (Colburn 1997; Dye 1997; Jones et al. 1993), I add a new perspective by considering folklore as a form of wisdom charting local and nonlocal perspectives regarding the 1923 Rosewood Race Riot. Although the town was destroyed and its African American population violently displaced, the tragic history persisted and the events of 1923 lingered at the edges of living memory for generations. Those who visit sites of death understand how past hatred can imbue a place with an eerie presence, a historic residue lingering in forms of evidence rarely examined by archaeologists. Rosewood exists as a literal ghost story haunting Florida's collective memory, where folklore is an important source of information for exploring the power of place in modern America and the relationship between place and memory in general.

Crafting new interpretations regarding Rosewood's role in the past and present benefits from thinking not only about place but also about landscape in new ways. The roughly two square miles of land composing Rosewood's historic boundaries have changed very little since 1923. The land is flat, sandy, with a mix of pine forests and swamps. Taking into account the agency of landscapes adds a critical component to the analysis of sites

where tragic histories complicate our efforts to interpret historic events (Burström 2011; Logan and Reeves 2009). I am not interested in inanimate intentionality but rather the ability of landscapes to influence humans and to continue to haunt them.

That the past haunts the modern world is familiar to archaeologists (Orser 1996), as is the knowledge that representations of the past simultaneously reflect and condition the present (Lowenthal 1985). My attempt to excavate memory is ultimately an archaeology of knowledge (Foucault 1972), and I am keenly interested in the discursive formations that gather around the area where Rosewood once stood. This underscores my examination of the role Rosewood plays in specific forms of memory work (Mills and Walker 2008). Just like Foucault's archaeology seeks to examine how barely conscious rules order thought and inform the present, excavating memory here investigates the conceptual possibilities guiding nonlocal perspectives related to the events of 1923. Ghost stories provide a way for nonlocals to simultaneously comment on and distance themselves from past racial violence. Situating ghost stories alongside documents and artifacts supports a deeper interpretation of the crucial role that forgetting plays in relation to structural racism in the present and overt racial violence in the past and more generally in regard to memory work in landscapes of pain and shame.

Landscapes as Memory

Landscape remains a central concern for archaeologists. This includes the now familiar separation of space, place, and landscape (Casey 1996; Hirsch 1995; Thomas 2001). Space exists as an empty expanse that becomes place when given meaning by humans. Landscape is a more inclusive term and includes natural space, cultural place, and the mediation between the two (Ashmore and Knapp 1999). Phenomenological and experiential investigations focusing on the perception of landscape emerged during the 1990s (Barrett and Ko 2009; Brück 2005; Casey 1996; Gosden 1994; Tilley 1994). Characterizing landscapes as a form of material culture has emerged more recently, with a handful of archaeologists advocating that landscapes be examined as wholes in a process similar to the ways archaeologists analyze artifacts. James Delle's (1999) analysis of coffee plantations in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica is particularly relevant here. Investigating the

ways in which elites managed the landscape to retain control of a rapidly changing social system, he shows that the material traces of this transformation are inscribed in space. Indeed, the traces remain visible in the arrangement and control of space even post-emancipation, thus articulating a broader social context of archaeological studies and emphasizing the complex ways that the past conditions the present (Leone and Potter 1988; Sassaman 2005).

Treating landscapes as a functional whole in my analysis corresponds to public perceptions of Rosewood, which blur the lines between Connerton's (1989) notions of inscribed memory (as texts and representations) and embodied memory (with its focus on rituals and practices). Locals and non-locals consider Rosewood a stage where specific actions occurred in the past. Accompanying this understanding is a ghost story, which provides a text to be read that follows a prescribed trajectory and has an internal logic or grammar. It is situated within a wider landscape and also tied to place. While these connections are often intangible, they produce profound connections between people and places. Investigating social memory in this way is crucial to understanding how spaces become imbued with a sense of place, the attachment of cultural meanings to specific locations (Feld and Basso 1996). Examining landscapes as a class of material culture also highlights the interdependence of artifacts and memory (Meskell 2004) and underscores how "all material traces are the residues of memory-making relationships" (Mills and Walker 2008: 4; see also Roby, this volume). The deposition of meaning relates here, quite literally, to archaeological deposition.

The landscape of Rosewood is a powerful example of the ways memory and place interact in unrecognized, yet profound ways. I examine this landscape through a study of the deposition of meaning as it relates to folklore. While folklore and oral history represent a form of evidence not available to all archaeologists, it is available to those researching the recent and contemporary past (Buchli and Lucas 2001), and it may support new interpretive insights for other contexts and periods as well, including for places with earlier and ancient histories.

People who dwell within landscapes experience place in multivalent ways (Barrett and Ko 2009). Such an experience can either contribute to the creation of a multi-vocal history or decontextualize the past. The site of Rosewood is not a complex geophysical or built environment. The town

included approximately 30 black homes, nearly half a dozen white homes, and fewer than 10 public buildings (e.g., stores, train station, churches), spread across almost two square miles. Today, only one historic structure remains, and most area residents have little or no familial connection to the area's past.

The history of pre-riot Rosewood is more complex. However, popular views of Rosewood and previous research have focused almost exclusively on the 1923 events. The public perception of Rosewood glosses the town's development, thus decontextualizing the town's history and collapsing meaning by reducing history to a single event. As a result, the site of Rosewood emerges as a master symbol, one that functions more to support current attitudes than to reveal fundamental truths about the past (Flores 2002). The public draws upon the site's decreased multivalency to mark specific aspects of their own identity. The ghost stories shared about the site provide a doorway to understanding the relationships between people, places, and the connections between past and present.

In this context, the experiential nature of place is crucial for the retrieval of memories. This not only underscores the interrelatedness of landscape and memory (Alcock 2002; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003) but also stresses that landscapes themselves—and archaeological deposits within landscapes—can possess agency (Joyce 2008). It is the very materiality of landscapes and specifically their stratigraphic layering—where the placement of later perishable materials interacts with preexisting landscapes—that engages human thought. Thinking about landscapes and objects in this way does not imbue them with consciousness or intentionality, although many traditional groups do just that (van de Guchte 1999). Rather, landscapes are considered “actants” (Latour 2007: 46)—that is, nonhuman agents—which interact with humans through entanglement (Hodder 2012). This understanding of landscape as a network of connections allows us to recognize the ways objects affect us and to appreciate the role of places in enculturation, habitus, and memory.

History of Rosewood

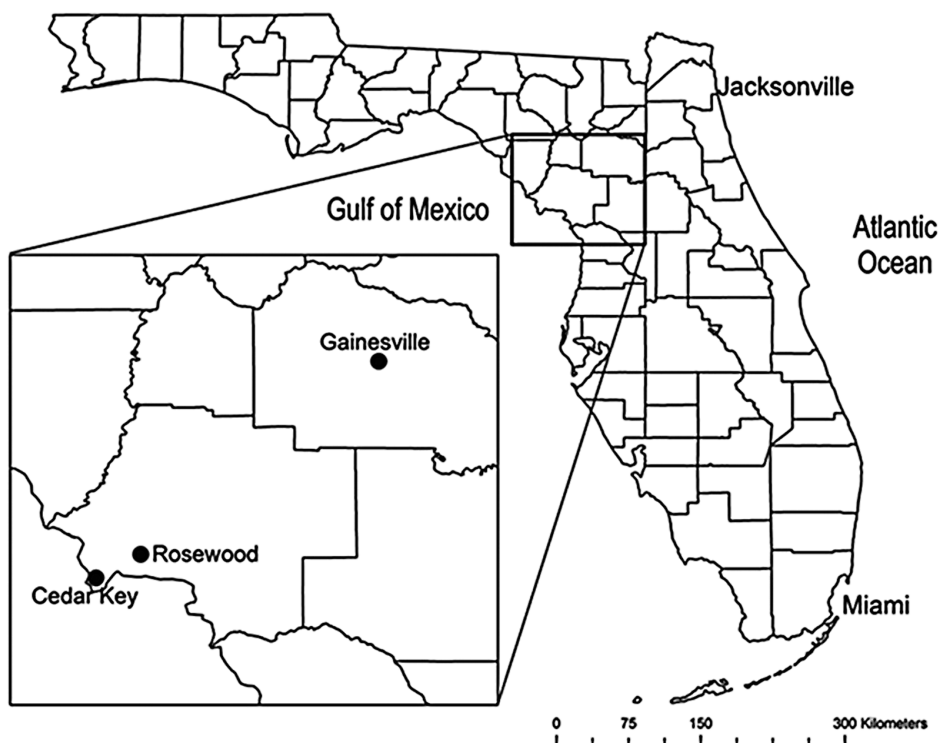
While historiographies of Rosewood tend to focus on the 1923 events, the growth of the town as a small village began in the 1800s. Rosewood had

grown to a fully developed, majority-black town by the 1920s, which underscores the tragic demise of the site in 1923. The event has been commemorated in limited ways, including a major motion picture (Singleton 1997) and a historical marker. The *Rosewood* movie sensationalized the events of 1923; although many descendants still reference the film, they are quick to point out the many historical inaccuracies. The opening scene portraying the extramarital affair between John Wright and an African American woman is particularly alarming, as the woman accused of infidelity is the mother of several survivors and descendants. Other fallacies include a fictional black hero drawing on the gunslinger archetype and an exaggerated death count involving a mass grave. The historical marker was erected in 2004 by *Rosewood* descendants, and many feel that it too sensationalizes the events of 1923. The film and marker cast the riot as a shameful event that a seemingly enlightened present is in no danger of repeating. This may not be strictly true.

The site is remembered in less tangible ways as well. This includes a ghost story that circulates across north Florida. My familiarity with the story comes from both personal and published accounts. The story demonstrates how the events of 1923 are a living history for some. The selectivity of characters and events speaks to the interaction of forgetting and remembering. The story treats *Rosewood*'s landscape as an active element and allows nonlocal Floridians to engage in a form of identity construction rarely accorded such groups in regard to historic race riots. When contextualized, this story also reveals uncomfortable truths about American society.

Development and Demise of *Rosewood*

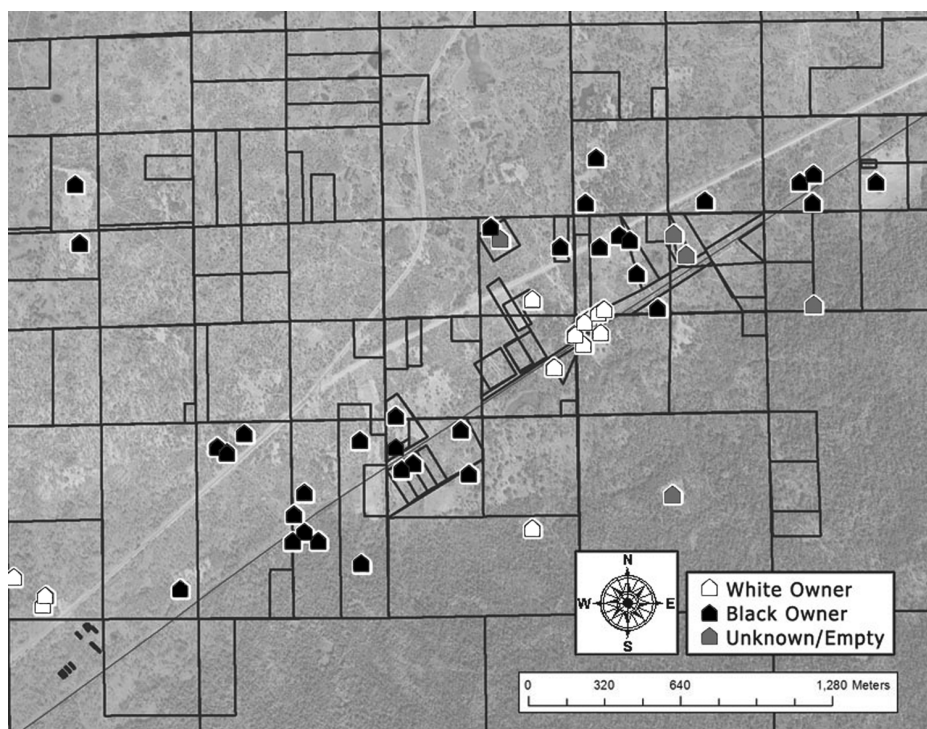
The former site of *Rosewood* is located nine miles from the Gulf of Mexico in Levy County, Florida (map 10.1). The town was settled during the late 1850s (Hawks 1871), and its name and initial economic vitality derived from the area's large stores of red cedar (Dye 1997). By 1900 the majority of residents were black, and by 1920 the town had three churches, a black masonic hall, a black school, and a mix of differently sized houses (Jones et al. 1993). The economic fortunes of *Rosewood* declined in the mid-1910s as most businesses relocated to Sumner following the construction of a sawmill there in 1915. Although these developments challenged *Rosewood*'s residents, the town continued to grow (Jones 1997).



Map 10.1. Map indicating the location of Rosewood. Map by author.

In fact, my research into Rosewood's past documents this growth based on historic properties GIS (HP-GIS). Utilizing geographic information systems (GIS) as a historical archaeological method, I have spent hundreds of hours analyzing thousands of property records and extracting their historical boundaries. The resulting HP-GIS joins these boundaries with census records and other data to reconstruct the changing landscape of Rosewood for more than half a century (1870–1930). Revealing a unique pattern of African American home ownership developed in Rosewood during the 1920s, this method shows how a growing black population had surrounded a historic area of white-owned properties—a spatial arrangement that would surely have appeared extremely threatening to whites at the time (map 10.2).

Rosewood's history came to an abrupt and violent end during the first week of 1923. What has become known as the Rosewood Race Riot was in fact a weeklong series of events beginning when a battered white woman



Map 10.2. The racial landscape of Rosewood in 1922. Map by author.

in neighboring Sumner claimed a black man had assaulted her. Local African Americans, including Sarah Carrier, remembered events differently and believed the woman had fabricated a black assailant to hide the injuries she received during an altercation with her white lover (Jones et al. 1993). Whites in Sumner called for justice, but what unfolded over the course of the week had little to do with righting wrongs.

Sumner's sheriff, Robert Walker, organized a posse to track the assailant. Hounds led the group to nearby Rosewood, most likely following the scents of residents whose daily walks between the two towns provided an easy trail. The posse grew and speculated that the assailant may have been Jesse Hunter, who had recently escaped from a labor camp. Hunter was allegedly seen in the company of Sam Carter, Rosewood's longtime blacksmith. The mob's interrogation involved hanging Carter by the neck from a tree. Under this incredible pressure Carter admitted to giving the assailant a ride out of town. When the bloodhounds were unable to pick up the scent,

and after Carter was unable to satisfactorily answer the mob's inquiries, his body was riddled with bullets and left on the road between Sumner and Rosewood. The mob then approached other homes in Rosewood. In the growing frenzy, the group threatened members of Sarah Carrier's family before hostilities ceased for several days.

On January 4, a "party of citizens" went to investigate unconfirmed reports that a group of blacks had taken refuge in Rosewood (Jones et al. 1993: 38). What spurred these reports is unknown, and it is likely that Sumner residents viewed the events of Monday as anticlimactic. The group targeted the Carrier household, and two members of the mob attempted to break into the home. The Carriers opened fire, and a pitched gun battle commenced. The battle continued into the early hours of Friday, January 5. Reports of wounded white men in Rosewood roused local whites, including members of the KKK from Gainesville, Florida. When whites left Friday morning to replenish ammunition, African Americans fled into the area's swamps. The white mob returned to Rosewood later that day and burned several homes and at least one church. They reportedly found the bodies of Sylvester and Sarah Carrier in their home, victims of the previous night's gun battle. The mob also killed Lexie Gordon, an elderly widow, by shooting her in the back as she fled her burning home. The death toll now included four blacks and two whites who died from injuries received during the gunfight. The seventh death occurred later that day when whites shot Mingo Williams as they drove through nearby Bronson to Rosewood.

Two brothers risked their own lives to bring a train through Rosewood at 4 a.m. on Saturday, January 6. Only women and children were allowed on the train for fear that local whites would kill all the passengers if any men were onboard. The brothers took survivors to nearby towns like Archer and Gainesville, where descendants remain to this day. That Saturday, James Carrier was apprehended by whites after returning to bury his murdered family members. He became the eighth death when the mob lynched him near the fresh graves of his mother and brother. On Sunday, the mob returned to Rosewood and burned every remaining African American building (fig. 10.1). The destruction of an entire community signifies that the race riot, or massacre, of Rosewood was indeed a pogrom that aimed at the complete removal of the black community there (Lumpkins 2008).



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After the events, a grand jury convened in February 1923, but no convictions were made, and the records have been lost. Residents of Rosewood had to wait 70 years for justice. In a 1994 landmark decision, the state of Florida decided to pay compensation to survivors and descendants. The memory of Rosewood survived in various forms through the years. Although never incorporated, the town continued to appear on maps. Stories and legends also emerged that commemorated the events of 1923 in unexpected ways.

I have encountered several versions of the following story. It is a variant on the vanishing hitchhiker urban legend (Brunvand 1981). I initially dismissed the story because I found the vanishing hitchhiker trope suspicious. This trope is a well-known element of many American urban legends and typically involves a ghostly hitchhiker who mysteriously vanishes while the vehicle is in motion or after arriving at their destination. This hitchhiker often shares the story of his own death with the occupants of the vehicle. After hearing and reading similar versions of the story, however, I began to notice a common element—a sort of epilogue connecting informants to the



Figure 10.1. The ruins of a house near Rosewood. Image from *Literary Digest* (1923).

events of 1923. They all end with personal reflections, offering important insights regarding a ubiquitous element in local accounts of race riots: the role of nonlocals in racial violence.

The following version of the ghost story, a similar version of which apparently appeared in the late 1950s, largely paraphrases a 2008 account by Robert Jones. The narrators regularly attribute the story to a friend or friend-of-a-friend. The friends are on a fishing trip when a flat tire interrupts their drive as they pass through an uninhabited area close to the Gulf Coast. They hear a commotion in the nearby woods just as they finish changing the tire. It is then that they notice an old dirt road and begin to walk toward the noise. They take a few steps along the road and notice a small sign with “Rosewood” barely visible on its aged surface. At this point a panicked black man bursts out of the woods. The man falls “to his knees crying and begging. ‘Please, misters, don’t kill me. I didn’t do it. None of us did. Oh, Lord! Please believe me.’” (Jones 2008: 2). The friends are shocked and take note of the wounds covering the frightened man’s body and face. They can clearly hear gunshots and yelling in the woods, and they ask him to explain.

He replies, "Oh, misters! You got to get us help. Those white folks are beating and killing every colored. They are catching men, women, and children. You got to help!" The two friends ask the man what he means. "They thinks one of us coloreds raped and beat up a white woman. But we didn't do it, sir. Lord knows we didn't, we didn't! They ain't listening to nobody." The two ask how the man knows an African American is not guilty of the accusations. At this point the man's demeanor visibly changes; he grows calm and looks the friends squarely in the eye. "I knows because I saw the man that done it. That's why some of them wants me dead." The friends convince the frightened man to accompany them into the nearby town of Cedar Key. As they enter the town, they see the sheriff's car at a restaurant. After relating their story, a visibly upset sheriff insists on meeting the man. All three return to the parking lot to find an empty car. Upon seeing that the friends are startled, the sheriff decides to share the events of 1923. The friends speculate on the meaning of their encounter. The sheriff replies, "That could be true. Many claimed that it wasn't a black man at all, but a white man traveling through. I guess old James won't be at rest until justice is done" (Jones 2008: 3, 5).

This would be the end of the traditional vanishing hitchhiker narrative. However, at this point the narrators discuss their personal connection to the events of 1923. Robert Jones states that it was his own father who provided the requisite connection to 1923. At the time, Jones's father was living in a town 30 miles from Rosewood. The father related how he and his own father traveled to Rosewood after hearing about the accusations of assault and rape. Upon arriving in Rosewood, the two men were appalled by the carnage, and Jones's father described how "things had already gotten out of hand. My Papa was a strong man, but a fair man. When he saw all the burning and killing, he told me we were going home" (Jones 2008: 5).

Many informants share versions of this commentary. Some offer it as part of a larger tale, and others present it as a dire warning. One informant in particular stands out. A young woman shared with me how her grandfather traveled to Rosewood to apprehend a rapist and instead encountered a scene of unrivaled brutality. The young woman shared this story with me in confidence. She was convinced that unnamed persons would punish her for speaking openly about Rosewood. This informant, her grandfather, and many others remain frightened to share their stories. While I have never felt threatened during my time in Rosewood and Levy County, I believe the

fear in the eyes of these informants, who share their secrets in hushed and nervous tones. I recognize the impulse many have to attach themselves to powerful places. There are certainly those whose interests in Rosewood are selfish. For others, the personal connections their families have to Rosewood are a burden. They implore me not to share their names. For this group, Rosewood is a frightful place where hate and fear still dwell.

These stories provide a personal connection to Rosewood while absolving the narrator's family from any wrongdoing. The story also addresses a historic accusation. Contemporary accounts of many race riots discuss how nonlocal actors perpetrated most of the violence. The Election Day riot of 1920 in Ocoee, Florida, is a powerful example. Contemporary accounts state that a white mob of nonlocals began gathering near the town after hearing that African Americans were attempting to vote. This mob eventually attacked and burned several black-owned buildings (Ortiz 2005). Similarly, several accounts from Rosewood implicate nonlocals. Oral histories with the area's white residents cite nonlocal actors as the perpetrators of the worst violence.¹ The ghost story and its customary epilogue provide nonlocals an opportunity to respond to these accusations. The vanishing hitchhiker legend is transformed into a multigenerational conversation regarding the events of 1923. In this way the ghost story functions as a form of counter-memory (Foucault 1977). It destabilizes the accepted narrative of nonlocal violence and implicates local actors. While specific agents did commit deplorable acts of violence—acts that went largely unpunished—the causes of racial violence are multidimensional, and they are systematic.

Racial Violence and Social Inequality in Rosewood and Beyond

The history of Rosewood speaks to the lingering causes of inequality in the past and present. Indeed, by going beyond Foucault's archaeology and moving toward his genealogical method (Foucault 1980), it is possible to reveal the deep historical connections between past racial violence and modern social inequality, which Rosewood exemplifies.

The period between 1915 and 1925 represents a unique moment in U.S. history. These years witnessed a profound transformation regarding the utilization of various forms of violence in regard to minority disenfranchisement. The appearance of intersubjective violence during race riots—

that is, the kind of everyday physical violence encountered in face-to-face confrontations (Bourgois 2004)—is routinely seen as the outcome of other factors, such as the migration of blacks fleeing Jim Crow, bigotry, labor competition, and halting black political participation. Some scholars identify the possibility that race riots were prolonged lynchings (Boskin 1976; Dahlke 1952), a practice that had reached its peak in the 1890s but continued throughout the twentieth century and is typically interpreted as the result of economic crises (Tolnay and Beck 1995).

As lynching rates decreased, the subsequent rise in brutality corresponded with an increasingly symbolic aspect involving the brutal dismemberment of black bodies in a carnivalesque manner (Wood 2009). Many scholars interpret a reciprocal relationship between the decline of lynching and a rise in structural disenfranchisement (Pfeifer 2004). Such analyses explore the unequal rates of imprisonment of blacks (Alexander 2010) and the exclusion of blacks from blue-collar jobs (Royster 2003) as forms of violence that are easily misrecognized as the “natural order of things” (Bourgois and Schonberg 2009). This is structural violence par excellence, as it speaks to the historically conditioned inequality between elites and minorities, which is established and perpetuated by particular political economies (Farmer 2004; Galtung 1969). In the context of race riots, structural violence typically refers to the constellation of tactics known as Jim Crow (Woodward 1955).

As African Americans organized grassroots efforts to combat these practices, social elites increasingly resorted to intersubjective violence to maintain their political dominance. Research by leading scholars of African American history (Franklin 2000; Litwack 2009; Ortiz 2005) complicates previous representations of African Americans as passive victims. A particularly sinister form of Jim Crow involved the creation of sundown towns (Loewen 2005), so named for the signs posted outside cities warning minorities to leave by sunset. These communities formed as all-white enclaves or were created through the violent ejection of minorities. The practice began in the western states where Asian Americans were run out of towns (Pfaelzer 2008), and it quickly spread to other areas of the country. White privilege allowed real estate agents, bank officers, policemen, and municipalities to restrict minorities through a variety of everyday practices.

Many of these practices were supported by specific forms of symbolic

violence, such as advertisements, articles, and political cartoons that portrayed minorities as the perpetrators of heinous crimes against good-hearted whites (Mizruhi 2008). One of the most powerful forms of symbolic violence to emerge in the early twentieth century was Hollywood cinema (Bernardi 1996). The 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* drew upon an entrenched narrative contrasting a utopic South alongside racist depictions of African Americans as hypersexual, deceitful, and inherently inferior. These sentiments gained support from the biological sciences in the form of the eugenics movement. Eugenicists contemplated numerous ways to restrict minority participation, including marriage laws, sexual segregation, involuntary sterilization, limits on immigration, and even extermination. The popularity of eugenics during this time is evidenced by the U.S. government's request that researchers with the Eugenics Records Office (ERO) in New York help write the Immigration Act of 1924 (Hannaford 1996). While eugenicists affiliated with the ERO discussed the supposed inferiority of African Americans (Baker 1998), their southern counterparts rarely considered this group, believing that no improvement was possible among an irredeemably degenerate race (Larson 1995). These forms of symbolic violence justified an ideology of racial superiority among whites, which was popularized by media outlets describing the benefits of eugenics-based reform.

While public understanding of violence tends to center on its intersubjective dimension, anthropologists analyze how distinct forms of violence are interrelated. In actual fact, however, intersubjective, structural, and symbolic violence intersect, and the various forms of violence that occur in the present have connections to the past. I draw here on Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1987) concept of assemblage in order to conceptualize specific forms of violence as parts of a larger whole. In addition, the concept of assemblage provides a useful foil for articulating the ways in which various forms of violence are experienced as a single form, while they are in reality a collection of distinct things.

The ways in which violence works in America underwent a number of shifts. While social elites may utilize one or more forms of violence to limit minority participation in society, following World War I in the United States intersubjective violence was increasingly supplanted by structural and symbolic means of disenfranchising minorities. The friction generated by this transformation produced intense reactions when marginalized

communities did not conform to the expectations of a white supremacist society. These expectations centered on the demand that minorities accept reduced access to employment, political participation, education, and other social practices often taken for granted by members of the white majority. It was this period when many of the country's largest and most brutal race riots took place. During the Red Summer of 1919, race riots broke out in more than 25 major metropolitan areas (McWhirter 2011).

These kinds of developments had drastic consequences for successful African American communities such as Rosewood, where black achievement and prosperity were the norm. Here, the appearance of intersubjective violence was not solely the result of a structural development, nor was it simply a reaction to a supposed transgressions of the color line. Fannie Taylor's accusation of assault was most likely recognized as false at the time, yet the mob that lynched Sam Carter moved with a disturbing intentionality and sought individuals who could corroborate or deny Taylor's story. Incendiary accounts of black-on-white violence had appeared with greater frequency in the years and months before 1923, and newspapers justified the mob's cruelty by drawing on a well-established tradition of refusing to acknowledge the rights of African Americans to protect themselves. Indeed, whites chose intersubjective violence when structural methods failed to significantly disenfranchise local blacks. In these situations, symbolic violence sustained the mob, secure in their knowledge that African Americans were not only inferior but also prone to attack without provocation, and structural violence insulated whites from any fear of prosecution.

As this illustrates, racial attitudes of the early twentieth century amounted to a set of practices that "created or reproduced structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race" (Omi and Winant 1994: 71). Modern America thinks of racism in slightly different terms, considering it mainly a sociopolitical concept that refers to a racial ideology and hence is seen as a product of structural violence. The understanding is that racism exists without racists (Bonilla-Silva 2006), and many believe that social elites no longer resort to mob violence. This is not strictly true. A deeper contextualization of Rosewood and similar events demonstrates a profound connection between the past and present. Rosewood was caught at the nexus of a transforming social system. The transition from selecting intersubjective violence to relying on structural and symbolic forms

of violence is formative of our modern society. The historic mob utilized clubs, ropes, and fire to disenfranchise minorities; the contemporary mob wields an unbalanced legal system, radically uneven incarceration rates, and apathy to marginalized groups. A brutal collectivity is at the center of past racial violence and present social inequality alike.

Archaeology as Memory Work

The ghost story may appear insignificant when juxtaposed with this analysis. It is important to remember, however, how the ghost story functions in regard to the events of 1923. The focus on culpability is illuminating and reveals how American society treats the past. The complicated and uncomfortable history of violence in the United States has resulted in a misrecognizing of the similarities that exist between mob behavior in the past and the present. This forces a reflection. The issue is not whether it is locals or nonlocals who are culpable. It is American society as a whole that needs to be held accountable. Ignoring this history of violence and the resulting historic wounds represents a powerful form of forgetting. In addition to racism, forgetting is one of the other major problems of the twentieth century (Forty 2001). Forgetting allows us to cope with a traumatic past, but it also allows many to ignore their privilege and the historic inequalities supporting it.

Memory work in Rosewood involves three modes of forgetting that take conscious and unconscious, active and passive forms. Following Barbara Mills (2008), I analyze these modes of forgetting as secrecy, transformation, and destruction. The initial destruction of Rosewood and the subsequent lack of prosecution of the perpetrators is a telling form of secrecy. Both strategies were intentionally aimed at “disappearing” objects and events from public memory, so that the events of 1923 became a hidden history. Yet, as Susanne Küchler’s (2002) work demonstrates, destruction—as the final form of forgetting—is often required before objects can become imbued with the power to be remembered. The result of the destruction and secrecy documented in Rosewood was that new meanings became attached to Rosewood, and the place was literally and figuratively transformed into a ghost town.

The ghost story presents one form of memory work highlighting the deep interrelations between remembering and forgetting. While preserv-

ing a memory of the town, its once thriving community, and its destruction, the ghost story also erases the collective responsibility of a society that continues to foster deep structural inequalities. These stories are not shared by the African American descendants, for whom the story of Rosewood is living history. I find it difficult to visualize the black descendant community retelling this particular ghost story.

Yet, as a form of folklore, Rosewood's ghost story is incredibly valuable, precisely because it speaks directly to the uneasy relationship between past and present. Many archaeologists lament our discipline's inability to interact with informants, and folklore offers an important opportunity to access precisely this sort of data. Unfortunately, archaeologists all too often treat folklore as a secondary and unreliable form of evidence (but see Gazin-Schwartz and Holtorf 1999). This privileges material remains while ignoring local knowledge. Elevating the importance of such rarely utilized forms of evidence like folklore within archaeological studies of landscape and memory is therefore crucial. There is an even greater need for this sort of work at sites of death and suffering because they resist traditional forms of commemoration. There are no local or state plans for further commemorating Rosewood, and such plans would most likely continue to decontextualize the events of 1923.

There are other reasons why my study does not rely on more familiar forms of material culture. Undertaking traditional archaeological investigations in Rosewood remains difficult (Davidson and González-Tennant 2008). Rosewood's descendant community also doubts that archaeology can provide new information regarding the lives of their families. This is a common sentiment among African American communities "because they have never seen themselves reflected in the makeup of the practitioners or in those being served by the outcome of the research agendas" common to archaeology (Battle-Baptiste 2011: 70). My approach to documenting ghost stories recognizes them as a class of artifacts created through human action in the past. As with traditional forms of material culture, oral histories as well as written documents are amenable to interpretations that reach beyond their obvious and intended meanings.

Creating an archaeology that matters is then predicated on research at sites that speak to experiences that fall outside mainstream, middle-class American interests. The long-term goal of the Rosewood Heritage Project is to develop a traditional archaeological project in the area that can gener-

ate support from various communities. Preliminary excavations at the site of Rosewood's former masonic temple reveal tantalizing clues related to the materiality of racial violence. Remains of a medicine bottle show the traces of intense heat, suggesting that a fire deformed the bottle during the targeted efforts of burning African American buildings. A second bottle, which was recovered from a nearby trash pit, is broken but otherwise unharmed (fig. 10.2). Under a nearly imperceptible layer of ash, we also found a number of bullets that had been fired into the building. These findings speak to a deeper pattern of inequality. For nearly a century Rosewood has remained a marked landscape, pregnant with multivalency. Material signatures of hate continue to plague the site. This includes the repeated vandalism of the site's historical marker, which is the most vandalized historical marker in the entire state of Florida.



Figure 10.2. Medicine bottles excavated from the site of Rosewood's Masonic lodge. Photo by author.

I concur with the Ludlow Collective (2001) that the practice of archaeology is itself a form of memory work, particularly if we expand the definition of what qualifies as archaeology to include documents, oral history, and folklore (McGuire and Reckner 2005). While descendants are skeptical of traditional archaeology, they are concerned with sharing Rosewood's story with as wide an audience as possible (González-Tennant 2010). This interest is reflected in another avenue of my own work, which centers on the ability of digital technologies to avoid depoliticizing complex histories of disenfranchisement while eliciting poignant and critical reflection from the public (González-Tennant 2013). The meaning of a site like Rosewood will always be complex. Some continue to deny the riot even occurred. Others rely on folklore to commemorate and comment on the events of 1923. The site's African American descendants hold family reunions and organize tours to the area where Rosewood once stood. The admission of the site's existence and destruction are typically preludes to expressions of personal identity, even solidarity with the descendants. The site thus truly functions as a stage for understanding the morality of racial violence and past culpability. What is more, the ghost stories of Rosewood are a manifestation of the process by which space becomes place, which we are able to see unfold before our eyes.

Conclusion

Recent archaeological explorations increasingly examine the nonhuman agency of material culture. This work opens up new spaces regarding the role that nontraditional forms of evidence, such as folklore and folk knowledge, might play in regard to memory work. As my research in Rosewood demonstrates, folklore relies on landscape as an active element for anchoring memory. Indeed, the interactions between people, memories, and landscape that I have described speak to broader issues of morality and identity in the past and present, while a dedicated analysis of the site of Rosewood itself reveals deeper patterns of culpability. This has ramifications for the present. The landscape of Rosewood is one venue supporting a multivalent history speaking to a range of meanings; some of these are personal while others refer us to a troubling collectivity.

The title of this chapter is adapted from Keith Basso's *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Basso ends his

text with a discussion on the nature of wisdom. This conversation between Basso and Dudley, his Apache informant, centers on the importance of reflection. Hate is not a noble sentiment like wisdom, but it does behave in similar ways. Dudley states that wisdom “sits in places. It’s like water that never dries up. You need to drink water to stay alive, don’t you? Well, you also need to drink from places” (Basso 1996: 127). Hate also sits in places. It is not like water, and we do not need it to survive, but the unfortunate reality is that hate often overpowers wisdom. The hate animating Rosewood’s landscape marks the area in unmistakable ways. The ongoing vandalism of the historic marker is an obvious example. Folklore documents how the fear generated by hate becomes attached to place. I think such practices tend to obfuscate responsibility and disconnect the past from the present in subtle and misleading ways. Articulating the myriad connections between past and present is necessary to effectively address current social inequality. The intersection of different forms of violence demonstrates how modern society maintains social inequality through various tactics. There was a time in America when racism was primarily expressed through inter-subjective violence. Today, racism is primarily expressed through symbolic and structural means. The 1923 Rosewood Race Riot occurred at the end of a five-year period following World War I when these forms of violent suppression were in traumatic flux.

Specific forms of memory work are required for recognizing the deep connections between the past and present. Struggles over memory and identity and their attachment to place are an active process. This process simultaneously takes place in the past and present. Sites like Rosewood remind us that we dwell in places and places dwell in us. Sometimes this should be an uncomfortable or even painful realization. That pain need not produce a crippling pessimism, however, but should serve as a call to action (González-Ruibal 2008). Critical reflection is vital to combating hate: reflecting on memory and landscape in Rosewood illustrates in stark terms the deep entanglements between present social inequality and past racial violence.

Note

1. Transcriptions of these and other interviews are available at the Rosewood Heritage Project’s website: <http://www.rosewood-heritage.net>.

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