Tulsa Race Massacre Investigation:
Report on Results of July 2020 Excavations and Proposed Next Steps

Public Meeting
Monday, September 14, 2020
Historical Background: Oaklawn Cemetery
Overview of Results from July 2020 Excavations

• Did not locate a mass grave or human remains in the area of the geophysical anomaly at the north end of the Sexton Area
  • Secondarily deposited historic/modern artifacts; road and construction debris

• Expanded excavations to the south

• Conducted mechanical coring to the east and south

• Did not identify a mass grave or human remains in other excavation trenches

Images courtesy of the City of Tulsa
Oaklawn Excavations: July 2020
Trench A/B Domestic Artifacts

Silver-plated Roger Brothers Windsor pattern fork, late 19th/early 20th c.

Armour’s Top Notch Chicago juice bottle, 1921+

Homer Laughlin-style molded decal plate rim, 1930-1950

Pepsodent Antiseptic mouthwash, 1937

Owens-Illinois Glass Company flask-style bottle base, 1929-1934

Whitall-Tatum Glass Co. bottle base, 1924-1938

Brush-McCoy Pottery Co. mixing bowl, 1928-1934
Trench A Grave Decorations

Metal frame from temporary grave marker

Brush-McCoy yellowware pottery corn pitcher, 1912-1925

Porcellaneous ware, early/mid 20th c.

Owens-Illinois Glass Company jar, 1934

Hand-painted porcellaneous ware, early/mid 20th c.

Porcellaneous ware, early/mid 20th c.
Overview of Results from July 2020 Excavations

- Identified road remnants
- Identified a deeply-buried, low-lying boggy area at south end of Trench B
  - late-19th and early 20th-century artifacts
  - Corresponds to another geophysical anomaly
  - No human remains
  - Only excavated the northern-most portion
- Collected data pertaining to landform development over time in this location
  - Relict streams (north/west and south)
  - Identified the approximate elevation of the 1921 ground surface, which is substantially lower than the modern era.
Feature 3: Deeply-buried early 20th-Century midden
Feature 3 Artifacts

- Bowl made in England, 1891-1897
- Plates made in England, 1883-1889
- Adolphus Busch beer bottle base, 1905-1917
- Safety Valve Fruit Jar Co., 1895-1918
- Turn mold made Bottle base, 1880-1915
- Maclaren’s Imperial Cheese Jar, early 20th century
City of Tulsa: Mayor G. T. Bynum, Deputy Mayor Amy Brown, Nick Doctor, Michelle Brooks, Terry Ball, Mark Hogan, Tim McCorkle, Streets and Stormwater Division staff

Cultural monitors (Public Oversight Committee): Brenda Alford (Chair), Kavin Ross (Greenwood Tribune), Chief Egunwale (African Ancestral Society), Turner Wentworth-Hunt and LeeAnne Wendt (Muscogee [Creek] Nation)

Physical Investigation Committee: Scott Ellsworth (Chair), Phoebe Stubblefield, Angela Berg, Carlos Zambrano, Alicia Odewale, Leslie Rankin-Hill, Amanda Regnier, Scott Hammerstedt, Kary Stackelbeck, Bob Brooks

Other Field Crew/Advisors: Leland Bement (OAS), Debra Green (OAS), Kent Buehler (OAS-Retired), Jessica Cerezo-Roman (OU-Dep’t. of Anthropology), Greg Maggard (ODOT-CRP), Heather Walsh-Haney (Florida Gulf Coast University), Robert Pickering (TU-Retired), Betsy Warner

Image courtesy of the City of Tulsa
Results from Additional Geophysical Survey in Clyde Eddy area

- Switch to Scott H. presentation
Proposed Next Steps...

• Excavation of possible individual grave shafts within the Original 18 area
• Soil coring in Clyde Eddy area and possible mechanical excavations (pending results)
Excavation in Original 18 Area

• Why dig here?
• Use backhoe to remove overburden
• If human remains present, expose and examine in place
• Document the following as condition and preservation allow:
  • Minimum number of individuals (MNI)
  • Sex
  • Age at death
  • Evidence of trauma (?)
  • Likely ethnicity (?)
• Document associated artifacts/burial furniture
• Determine individuals who might be candidates for exhumation and further study
Investigations in Clyde Eddy

- Hand-held coring/augering to assess soils and potential presence of graves
- Perhaps move to mechanical excavation pending results of coring
- If so, mechanical stripping to remove overburden in area of interest
- If human remains present, expose and document in place (as discussed for Original 18 above)
Physical Investigation Committee
Recommendations

- Proposed fieldwork in Original 18 area
- Proposed fieldwork in Clyde Eddy area
  - completed concurrently
- Monitors present throughout
- Plan appropriately for security of areas of interest
Additional Geophysical Survey Work

• The Canes
• Rolling Oaks
  • Agreement worked out; on hold because of COVID
Topics for Future Discussions

• Disinterment/Re-interment Process
• Potential for DNA studies
• Future transfer of artifacts
Discussion and Q&A