practical matters

Restoring Rosewood: Movements from Pain to Power to Peace[1]

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ABSTRACT

January 1, 1923, marked the beginning of a massacre that abolished the small, predominantly Black town of Rosewood, Florida, following an alleged rape of a young White woman. Rosewood is a story of physical, emotional, and spiritual pain, as many lost their lives and all lost their possessions when the town was burned to the ground. It is also one of power, as two elderly survivors broke an over sixty-year vow of silence to reclaim their agency and bring attention to their struggle while fighting to hold the State of Florida financially responsible. Drawing on Martha Minow, Donald Shriver, and Carolyn Yoder, I propose a six-phase peace and restoration model for Rosewood including: 1) facing fears, 2) truth-telling and fact-finding, 3) forgiving, 4) healing, 5) memory-making, and 6) holistic restoration, allowing the pain-filled story of Rosewood to end with restorative peace.

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God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou Who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou Who hast by Thy might, led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee.
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee.
Shadowed beneath Thy hand, may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.

-- James Weldon Johnson, "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

Written in 1900 by James Weldon Johnson and composed by his brother J. Rosamond Johnson, the original purpose of "Lift Every Voice and Sing" was to honor the birth of Abraham Lincoln. This song quickly gained a significant place in the cultural heritage of Blacks in America, ultimately being referred to as the Negro National Anthem. The Johnson brothers were natives of Jacksonville, Florida, a city on the northeast coast of Florida, only 120 miles from a small, primarily Black town near the north central, western coast of Florida known as Rosewood. "Lift Every Voice and Sing" is comprised of three powerful verses that tell a story of liberty, with the final verse offering a prayer to God. This final prayer, quoted above, will be used in this article as the guide for the movements of the survivors and descendants of the 1923 massacre in Rosewood, Florida, from pain to power to peace, while identifying a restoration model that aims towards peace for other similar atrocities. The Johnsons' visionary composition continues to unite and inspire millions of persons who share common experiences more than a century later, and today the story of Rosewood has the same potential.

Areas I explore in relation to the Rosewood massacre include the physical, emotional, and spiritual *pain* suffered by those living in Rosewood during the massacre and those descended from them; the *power,* which is undergirded by a belief in God and the rights of all humanity, that enabled survivors to challenge the State of Florida; and the quest for lasting *peace*, which I argue can only come from holistic restoration.

PAIN: God of Our Weary Years, God of Our Silent Tears

In the early 1920s, Florida, like many southern states, was a place of tension and tenuous racial balance between Blacks and Whites. This tension was particularly true in Levy County, an area of north central Florida, where Rosewood is located. In small towns throughout Florida, a new sense of unease and fear was growing as Blacks and Whites sought to redefine progress in the post-

Reconstruction era. In August of 1920, four Black men in Macclenny, Florida, were taken from the local jail and lynched for the alleged rape of a White woman. November of that year found the Black community in Ocoee, Florida, destroyed because of a dispute over voting rights—including the destruction of twenty-five homes, two churches, and a Masonic lodge; in addition two Whites and at least five Blacks were killed. In 1921, U.S. Representative L. C. Dyer of Missouri re-introduced a bill in the House of Representatives making lynching a federal crime. The bill passed in the House, but southern Senators organized a filibuster preventing it from being voted on in the Senate, so the bill died, allowing lynching to continue without any recourse for the Blacks who were most often those lynched. One year later in Perry, Florida, a Black man was burned at the stake after being accused of the murder of a White schoolteacher. His murder did not satisfy the Whites in Perry, so they also burned major social anchors in the Black community including a Black church, school, Masonic lodge, and meeting hall. This destruction of a portion of the Black section of Perry occurred on December 9, 1922, less than one month before what would become known as the massacre at Rosewood, located only an hour and a half away. As is evidenced by these examples, by the early 1920s, the post-Reconstruction era had become the Deconstruction Era for many Black communities that sought growth and progress.[2]

Less than fifty miles from Rosewood, on December 31, 1922, Gainesville, Florida, became the site for a Ku Klux Klan parade which brought participants from throughout southern Georgia and other parts of Florida. *The Gainesville Daily Sun* reported that about one hundred Klansmen in full regalia paraded through downtown Gainesville where at least one placard declared "First and Always – Protect Womanhood." In this area of Florida, it was not uncommon for the Klan to make appearances both as a way of generating support and instilling fear. Blacks faced constant reminders of the potential deadly consequences for challenging the Southern status quo. The silence of many Blacks, who feared death if they spoke up or fought back, only strengthened the power that the Whites received because of their fear tactics. Silent tears of victims and their loved ones gave witness to the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain that Blacks endured at the hands of certain Whites during this time in the South.[3]

Established in 1845, Rosewood, Florida, is located near the Gulf of Mexico, ten miles east of Cedar Key. From 1910 to 1920, the Black population in Rosewood increased from 128 to 344, thus outnumbering the population of Whites there, which increased from 158 to 294 in the same period.[4] The population of Rosewood had not only increased in number, but the Black residents of Rosewood continuously improved their lives and their independence. As one survivor, Wilson Hall, describes, during the early 1920s, Rosewood had become a predominantly Black town, with residents owning acres of land, owning two-story homes with farm animals, and growing small crops and other self-sustaining provisions. In an interview conducted for the official report submitted to the Florida Board of Regents, in *A Documented History of the Incident Which Occurred at Rosewood, Florida in January 1923*, Hall recalled, "My father was the principal at the school, plus he was a minister, and he also did a lot of sharecropping for people all around Levy County…

We had a big smoke house…plus we had a store that we used to also supply the community…he had just about everything you needed on a farm, plus caskets for people who died."[5] He went on to explain that his father, Charles Bakkus Hall, "had 80 acres in one place and had 60 in another."[6] The Halls and others who called Rosewood home maintained close, interlocking, and supportive relationships with all Black families in the area.

The Bradley, Carrier, Goins, and McCoy families were other prominent Black families with rich legacies in Rosewood, who helped build and maintain the town. Their nice homes featured lace curtains covering pane glass windows, front and back porches, and three and four bedrooms. The Carrier's home had a piano, and another home had an organ. As Elmer Johnson, a White man whose father was a foreman at the Sumner Mill at the time of the massacre, attested, "…Bradley had a beautiful house. It wasn't painted but it was a big substantial house. Bradley himself was apparently a very intelligent Black man and had acquired property. In those days that was not very popular." Johnson recalled that Bradley "had cattle and a lot nicer home than most of the clowns that were there," as he referred to White men who came to Rosewood during the massacre from near Starke in Bradford County.[7] It was believed by some, including some Whites, that jealousy played a role in the White men's desire to completely burn and destroy all aspects of this Black town's relative prosperity compared to the neighboring, predominantly White town of Sumner, Florida.[8]

The *pain* that was about to be felt in Rosewood began on January 1, 1923; however, this *new* year would be one that would never become old in the minds of the residents of Rosewood, but would live on in dreams, nightmares, memories, and fears. Common reports from the area state that Fannie Taylor, a young White woman who lived in Sumner, was attacked by a man on the morning of January 1 after her husband had gone to work at the Sawmill. (New Year's Day fell on a Monday, so the people of Rosewood and Sumner went to work). From there two basic accounts of the incident exist. The White residents of Sumner say that an unknown Black man, whom they assumed was an escapee from a nearby chain gang, assaulted Fannie Taylor in her home. The Black residents of Rosewood recall a different report of the incident that was given to them by Sarah Carrier and her granddaughter Philomena Goins, who was a little over eleven years old at the time. Carrier and Goins were domestic workers at the Taylor's house at the time of the alleged attack, making them the only witnesses other than Fannie Taylor and the man. Carrier and Goins said that Taylor's boyfriend, whom they had seen there before, arrived at the house after her husband had gone to work, and this boyfriend physically assaulted Taylor on that day.

The racial climate in the South at that time was such that the mere inference of disrespect toward a White woman was enough to result in the brutal hanging of a Black man. In very little time, the stage in this small southern town was set for a violent eruption of trouble. It is commonly suggested by both Blacks and Whites who were living in the area at the time that persons from outside (likely those who had been in attendance at the Klan rally in Gainesville the day before) were the ones who executed mass destruction on Rosewood. Despite Fannie Taylor's claim that an

"unknown" Negro assaulted her, all of those murdered in Rosewood were well known to Whites living in Sumner.

During the first week of January 1923, the New Year was rung in with the sounds of bullets and the smell of fire and fear instead of celebratory expressions. Wilson Hall, who was eight years old at the time of the massacre, recalls the fear and resulting pain increasing in Rosewood: "…when they [White men] started coming you can see the lights of the automobiles, see for miles, but when my mother looked out the window upstairs she saw the cars coming then she went and got all the kids up and said 'ya'll lets go, cause they are coming.' See cause that had been going for about a week, it was just working that way and they had started to killing more and more people."[9] Reports of the number of deaths in the Rosewood massacre vary from seven to over one hundred, and the actual number likely will never be known.[10] After working hard all of their lives to build homes and livelihoods, families were forced to flee and leave all they owned in the middle of the night. Arnett Turner Goins, who was a young boy at the time, could not understand why he could not go back to his house from the swamp where they were hiding to get the new suit he had received just a week before for Christmas.[11] While they hid, they could often see the flames and smell the smoke of their memories. Mothers, older sisters, and others kept young children quiet as they hid out in the woods and the swamps, praying and waiting on deliverance from their fear and pain.

The escaped prisoner who was suspected of being this "unknown" Negro was never found in Rosewood or any of the surrounding areas. All Black areas of Rosewood were burned to the ground as White vigilantes exacted their forms of "justice" as retaliation for the alleged rape and for Black progress in the town. This self-supporting town—with its two churches, Masonic hall, homes, and small farm-based businesses, along with people's pictures, family items, and personal belongings—was completely destroyed. The only structures that remained standing in Rosewood after Whites raided the town over the course of a week were the home and store of White business owner John Wright.

God of Our Weary Years, God of Our Silent Tears

Despite their firm belief in God, many living in Rosewood felt like God and those throughout the United States had forgotten them during the first week of January in 1923. Men and women of Rosewood fought back to defend their families and homes as they were able. When they were forced to flee, men would not hide in the same area as the women and children because their male presence could put those hiding in greater danger if found. Many of the men walked through the turpentine swamps deep into the woods through which they made their escape. The plight of Rosewood citizens was known far beyond the state of Florida, as the story of Rosewood ran on the cover of *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Atlanta Constitution*, *The Washington Post*, *Boston Daily*

Globe, and *The New York Times* as the massacre was happening.[12] The newspapers reported the deaths and destruction, and they even vividly captured the horrific story of an elderly Black man forced to dig his own grave before being shot into it. Despite this feature story, neither the state nor the national government responded to the massacre, and the silent tears of the Rosewood residents fell virtually unnoticed. The nation was aware of this mass destruction in Rosewood, but its moral conscience was not pricked to act.

The pain continued as those who had been residents of Rosewood fled and became exiles in other areas of Florida. Days after they had been forced into the swamps, many of the women and children were finally able to escape by a train that took them to Gainesville, Florida. When they reached Gainesville, they were cold, scared, and in need of help and support. As they sought other safe places to live, they found that even some of their family members were afraid to take them in for fear of the retaliation that might come their way. One descendant recalled being turned away by an older sister in a neighboring town because of fear that her life would be in jeopardy if Whites came looking for persons from Rosewood. Although those who had escaped from Rosewood faced and would continue to face many challenges, they worked together in their new locations and tried to remain supportive as a communal family, just as they had in the past.

The adjustments were challenging for those who were starting over. Although Mary Hall's mother, also named Mary, had been able to maintain their spacious two-story home and manage the store they owned in Rosewood, she was forced to live in cramped quarters and beg for handouts after fleeing to Gainesville.[13] The mental and emotional pain felt during those initial days of the massacre continued as Rosewood residents mourned the loss of their cultural and spiritual foundations destroyed in the fire. Those who escaped experienced psychic pain as they sought to create new lives pseudo-ex-nihilo against the backdrop of traumatic memories hidden behind silent tears.

Many of the survivors took a vow of silence that would last for sixty years as they sought to hide the pain they experienced. The fear of what might happen if they were ever to return to the place where their physical, emotional, and spiritual lives were formed was passed down to their children, and as a result no one went back for over half a century. One survivor, Lonnie Jefferson Carroll, explained, "I changed my name, I was afraid that the Whites might track me down and kill me."[14] The nation's memory was brief, as stories of the race riot in Florida disappeared from media coverage within a week. During the sixty years of their silence, the memory of Rosewood became limited to the virtually silent tears offered up to a God who had been with the survivors and now descendants during both the good times before the massacre and the weary and strong years after their lives were interrupted.

This vow of silence influenced the limited discussions of Rosewood outside of "the Family." The Rosewood survivors did not come together and agree upon this vow explicitly. Many descendants recalled hushed conversations concerning the massacre and the aftermath among relatives who escaped from Rosewood. Some expressed fear of being found and harmed by the perpetrators of the violence, thus reinforcing their silence. Others expressed embarrassment about the way

they had to flee from their own homes in the middle of the night. After an article appeared in the *St. Petersburg Times* about the Rosewood story, descendant Annett Theresa Goins Shakir told her father that he was a celebrity now. Her father, Arnette Goins, revealed an element of shame-driven silence when he responded, "You mean you want people to know that your dad had to run into the woods like a scared rabbit."[15] Similarly, when reporter Ed Bradley asked Minnie Lee Langley during a 1983 *60 Minutes* interview why she kept the secret for so long, she replied, "I didn't want them to know just what horror I come along, you know, through all of this and what the White folks had did to us, because I thought it was really mean. What they did to us was mean and did it without cause."[16] Other survivors silently revisited the memory of the tragedy each year during the time of the massacre. Descendant Mae McCoy McDonald recalls her mother would become somewhat melancholy as the end of the year began to approach, a feeling that did not lift until after the New Year had passed. [17]

Elmer Johnson was almost six years old and living in Sumner during the time of the massacre. He recalls ways his father helped protect Black workers at the sawmill from the White mobs. Johnson also recalls aspects of the massacre that were revolting to him. There appears to be a relative silence among Whites in the area, as well, but many of the details of Johnson's memories indicate that the events were likely recounted repeatedly as he grew up.[18]

As significant time passed, the pain did not necessarily disappear, but a movement began to happen that would ultimately break the silence and lead to the acquisition of elements of power for the survivors and descendants of Rosewood.[19]

POWER: Lest Our Feet Stray for the Places Our God Where We Met Thee

Notions of remembering, acknowledging pain, and recovering memories are often powerful concepts for both the violated and the violators in the aftermath of atrocities. While the majority of Blacks from Rosewood took a vow of silence, it appears that many Whites in the Rosewood area took a similar vow, which resulted in the purging of official records and decreased knowledge of the painful events of that time. The result of the silence was a void in the legacy of memory and history, which was passed on to subsequent generations. As Mary Hall reflected when asked about a photograph of family members, "we had no photograph, we didn't have no clothes, no shoes, no nothing, but we just got right out of bed, you know, and out in the woods with what we had on."[20] Vows of silence also meant that some of the memories were lost to future generations completely, as mothers, grandmothers, fathers, and others often refused to speak of the massacre to their children. Years later it would be some of those direct descendants, including Arnett Goins, Mae McCoy McDonald, and Arnett T. Doctor, along with others, who would work with the remaining survivors to right the past wrongs and seek recognition of the injustices the survivors endured.

Lest Our Feet Stray from the Places Our God Where We Met Thee

The residents of Rosewood, as well as their descendants, found strength and power in religious experiences, which played a key role in their lives. God was integral to their overall belief systems. While living in Rosewood, many residents met God in the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, and others may have encountered God in nature while working in the nearby woods and swamps.[21] The residents had met God in Rosewood, yet despite the tragedy they suffered, including the burning of their churches, they did not leave God there. Even in exile, they found power and strength in God, as most survivors and their families continued to be members of A.M.E. Churches, where they have remained active in the life of the church into the present.[22] The church became a place to encounter a different source of power in the midst of a society that sought to disempower them. For many Blacks during this time, power through prayers and faith were often the only immediately accessible recourses against antagonistic White societal forces in the post-Reconstruction era.

Despite the spiritual power gained on Sunday, Rosewood survivors faced assaults on their political and economic power on a daily basis. Blacks who had owned large plots of land in Rosewood encountered White men trying to coerce Rosewood landowners into signing over their land to them. In some cases, the land was illegally taken from Black landowners, as court records in Levy County later indicated.[23] Often the power associated with the self-determination the residents experienced in Rosewood waned, as many had to scrape by simply to create a meager existence in a new place. Power was acquiesced in the silence born out of fear, as perpetrators were not called on to account for their actions.[24]

In spite of fear and a perceived lack of power, two older women, Minnie Lee Langley and Lee Ruth Bradley Davis, who were young girls as they lived through the Rosewood massacre, decided to step out on faith and break the crippling silence, as they finally sought legal recourse after sixty years. In breaking the silence, the pain previously hidden was uncovered and revealed, and the quest towards holistic healing and restoration began. The breaking of the silence found help in 1982 as Gary Moore, an investigative reporter with the *St. Petersburg Times*, became inquisitive about an area of Florida where there never seemed to be any Black persons. Moore's article on the area became an exposé of sorts that brought attention to the decades-old massacre.[25] Media continued to play a role in the exposure of the massacre, which led to increased power for some survivors. After returning to Rosewood in 1983 for a segment with Ed Bradley featured on CBS's *60 Minutes*, Lee Ruth Bradley Davis and Minnie Lee Langley began the process of telling their story more broadly to lawyers at the Holland and Knight law firm.[26] Because the silence had been broken, the potential for positive power was enhanced and the movement towards peace became a possibility.

PEACE: May We Forever Stand True to Our God, True to Our Native Land

There are six areas I identify that form a model towards peace and restoration for survivors and descendants of Rosewood. The model is developed from my reflection on peacekeeping theory and the actual praxis of survivors and descendants of Rosewood. The legal and political process that was utilized by the survivors and descendants is viewed with an aim towards peacebuilding. In forming my peace and restoration model, I engage Martha Minow and Donald W. Shriver, Jr.'s work on truth-telling and forgiveness, and Carolyn Yoder's work on trauma and memory.[27] The areas of my peace and restoration model are: 1) facing fears, 2) truth-telling and fact-finding, 3) forgiving, 4) healing, 5) memory-making, and 6) holistic restoration. These areas will be explained based on the process experienced by the survivors and descendants of Rosewood, as well as by additional recommendations that I include for further holistic restoration. Although the last survivor died in 2010, there remains a need for restoration of the communities impacted by the Rosewood massacre. Because of the complexities surrounding the healing of the pain and hurt experienced and of bridging the lacuna created between the Black and White communities by the massacre and decades of silence, my model of healing and restoration primarily focuses on those efforts for the Black community, while acknowledging a significant need for healing and restoration in the White community also.[28]

I offer this as *one* model for Rosewood, acknowledging that the unique past of Rosewood provides an opportunity to uncover additional methods of peace and restoration within groups and communities that have been violently broken, disrupted, and dispersed.

Rosewood: A Model towards Peace and Restoration

Facing Fears

When Minnie Lee Langley, Lee Ruth Bradley Davis, Leroy Carrier, and Sam Hall returned to Rosewood for the first time in 1983 for the taping of the *60 Minutes* segment with Ed Bradley, there was a lot of apprehension and fear. Their last view of Rosewood was sixty years earlier as terrified children driven from their homes in the middle of the night, forced to leave all that they knew and loved and not knowing if they would even live to see the morning. As the years passed, the stories of terror and trauma remained, without any new contemporary stories inserted into the litany that had been replayed in their minds for six decades. Prior to their trip, Ed Bradley asked if they would go back to Rosewood, and Langley replied, "I would go, if y'all don't let 'em bother

me or nothing like that. I don't want to go there and get hurt or nothin'." Edith Foster, a White woman who was sixteen years old at the time of the massacre, confirmed the validity of Langley's fear, as she recalled that the White men who had come in to destroy the town said, "They had destroyed all the buildings and said there'd never be no more to live here no more, you know, they couldn't let them come back and live."[29] So as the survivors walked through the land that had once sustained them, they were facing their fears in an effort to ultimately move forward. Restorative power is found in facing fears instead of continuing to push the painful, fear-generating memories into the recesses of the mind. Because these four survivors faced their fears and returned to the place of the origin of their pain, they were able to clear the way for other survivors and descendants to make the painful trip back to Rosewood with less trepidation.

White persons who remained in the area after the massacre also lived with fear, although this fear was generally unacknowledged. Some Whites who moved to Rosewood after the destruction of the town and took advantage of the abandoned property expressed fears of previous Black owners returning to claim their land. When Mae McCoy McDonald returned to Rosewood in the 1990s, she went to see the graveyard where her maternal grandmother was buried before the massacre. She encountered a White man whose property is now used to access the graveyard, who through tears kept asking, "y'all aren't going to come and take my land are you?"[30] His tears reveal an understanding of the circumstances that enabled him to come into ownership of the land that now blocked direct access to one of the sacred resting places for Black residents of Rosewood. In order to move towards restoration, this encounter and others like it will become necessary as both Black and White persons face their fears. The difficult questions that arise from such encounters will have to be addressed with contextual care that gives consideration to both the current landholders and the previous landowners, as well as to the socio-political factors that led to a reification of an imbalance of power.

Truth-Telling and Fact-Finding

As fears are faced, truth is uncovered, revealing truths associated with beliefs, feelings, assumptions, and experiences that have been known yet hidden for years. Martha Minow expresses that there is a "restorative power of truth-telling" that seeks to expose the secrets of a sick society in an effort to heal that society.[31] As Minow states, "Testifying publicly before an official body can transform the seemingly private experience into a public one."[32] What had initially been a public event, known throughout the nation, quickly began to live in the private shadows and whispers of the survivors and descendants of Rosewood for sixty years before becoming public again. Through the sharing of their story on *60 Minutes* and in the legal depositions that began to be taken following the request of Langley and Davis, Rosewood residents and descendants publicized their once private experiences of silent suffering. Through numerous interviews conducted by attorneys, historians, and journalists, the vow of silence of Rosewood survivors was broken, and the power that

had been maintained by those who committed the atrocities began to erode, as the White residents' controversial contributions to the history of the area were no longer overlooked.

It is interesting to note the limited number of White persons who articulated their "truth" through depositions and interviews.[33] Media persons including Gary Moore and Ed Bradley functioned as the initial receiving party for the truth-telling sessions. The second receiving parties for the truth-telling were the Holland and Knight attorneys obtained by Rosewood survivors and descendants and historians assigned by the State of Florida who collected depositions and interviews which were all publicized within the legislative arm of the State of Florida, thus granting the very important aspect of official acknowledgment of their truth.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, when working with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), stated, "The purpose of finding out the truth is not in order for people to be prosecuted. It is so that we can use the truth as part of the process of healing our nation."[34] Similarly, Minow explains that when a truth commission is separated from prosecutions, vengeance and retribution can be avoided. Since the Rosewood truth-telling was sought apart from prosecution, potential resistance by those who could have been prosecuted was avoided. However, unlike the TRC that provided conditional amnesty for offenders, there was not a provision for amnesty for those who participated in the Rosewood massacre and the subsequent cover-ups by county officials as land was taken in the absence of the original owners. This lack of amnesty may be one reason so few White persons shared their stories, as they feared being prosecuted for their past direct involvement or complicity.[35] As time continues to pass, fewer and fewer people will actually know how White families came into possession of land in Rosewood. The missing court records of land ownership in Rosewood during the early 1920s combined with the silence among Whites regarding the massacre will lead to incorrect narratives for subsequent generations, who may grow up believing that they have *always* owned the land within their families. Including provisional amnesty as part of the truth-telling process, as was done with the TRC, may have benefitted those involved with Rosewood, as a fuller truth may have emerged. If additional truth-telling takes place in the future, Rosewood descendants should decide what level of forgiveness they are collectively comfortable with offering and determine whether amnesty should be a part of that.

Holistic healing and restoration also requires an objective method of fact-finding as multiple stories and multiple truths are shared. Fact-finding quests differ from truth-telling by including elements of cross examination and truth-testing. In 1993, a team of historians from Florida A & M University, Florida State University, and the University of Florida was appointed by the State Legislature to begin the mission of finding the facts surrounding the massacre at Rosewood.[36] The team collected documents from Levy County, the State of Florida, newspapers, and many other sources that added details not shared by the Black and White communities of Rosewood and Sumner through truth-telling. The documentation that supported the facts found by the team of historians helps insure that this history will not be lost and possibly provides credence to stories shared by survivors and perpetrators of violence.

Forgiving

After pain is revisited through truth-telling and fact-finding, moving to forgiveness may require crossing a lacuna than cannot be easily bridged. Most of the documents that exist within the official Rosewood depositions and interviews do not show an explicit desire of the survivors of the massacre to forgive their perpetrators. We do see, however, that despite longstanding negative effects from the massacre, the survivors and descendants did not seek violent vengeance on those who perpetrated the violence. In *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics,* Donald Shriver outlines four dimensions of forgiveness: 1) memory suffused with moral judgment, 2) the abandonment of vengeance, 3) empathy for the enemy's humanity, and 4) the renewal of human relationship.[37] For Shriver, forgiveness in a political context "is an act that joins moral truth, forbearance, empathy, and commitment to repair a fractured human relation."[38] The first two of these four dimensions of forgiveness that Shriver outlines for political groups appear to have taken place within the Rosewood family. However, the third and fourth dimensions of empathy for the enemy's humanity and a renewal of human relationship have been limited by the lack of sustained engagement across the color line. Although the Black and White families in Rosewood and Sumner knew each well other in 1923, the empathy and renewal of human relationships will require some acknowledgment of and interaction with persons from each side of the color line. These human relationships will be further considered in the final component of my model.

The strength of the "Rosewood Family," which encompasses all of the family lines of historic Black Rosewood families, has made possible the process of forgiveness. For members of the Rosewood Family, the move from pain to forgiveness cannot be separated from their enduring Christian faith, which empowered them and encouraged them to forgive. In 1984, Annie Bell Lee started the Rosewood Family Reunion, where the families come together each year and share stories with the younger generations, thus promoting a renewal of familial relationships for all that is reminiscent of Shriver's fourth dimension of forgiveness. Carolyn Yoder acknowledges that "trauma often creates a need to 'restory' our lives," and this is what a peace and restoration model that includes truth-telling, healing, and memory-making allows individuals and societies to do.[39] Rosewood descendants are able to restory their lives for future generations as they keep the experiences of Rosewood alive at the annual Rosewood Family Reunions through stories focused not on victimhood but on survival, strength, and faith.

At the 2007 Rosewood Family Reunion, themes of survival, strength, and faith became evident as the family business meeting opened with singing the spiritual "Thank You Lord" with the inclusion of verses "Made a Way" and "Been So Good" and each verse ending with the refrain, "and I just want to thank you Lord." As the families come together each year and continue to tell the story of Rosewood, they experience strength, pride, and freedom without being shackled to the pain of their past, making a road to forgiveness and the path to holistic restoration possible.

Healing

The violent and traumatic manner in which the Rosewood community experienced massive group trauma as it was destroyed by White vigilantes from throughout the region, and the significant amount of time that has transpired since the destruction without any type of focused healing suggest the wounds from the pain endured are deep and may require multiple forms of healing. Yoder posits, "Traumas occur in a context, a social setting, with dynamic interactions between the individual and the surrounding society," and historical trauma is the "cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations emanating from massive group trauma."[40] The wounds of Rosewood have extended across generations requiring broad healing. One of the ways to heal from traumatic events is to bring things back to a place of balance. Therefore, as historic traumatic events like Rosewood lead to disorder, disempowerment, and disconnection, healing involves a return of order, empowerment, and reconnection. The healing process begins with a) the acknowledgement of the pain and brokenness, b) the actual grieving of the losses that can range from physical to emotional to spiritual, and c) the desire to begin a journey that may uncover memories and pain that have been hidden and possibly even ignored as a survival mechanism in the face of trauma.

As Yoder writes, "Mourning and grieving are essential for finding healing and breaking the cycles. Acknowledging and telling the story counteracts the isolation, silence, fear, shame, or 'unspeakable' horror."[41] The Rosewood Family, led by Langley and Davis, began the first steps towards healing when they broke the silence that they maintained for over half a century. The breaking of the silence allowed the actual grieving, mourning, and therefore healing process to begin. The acknowledgment of the wrong, the grieving of the losses of innocence, possession, and history were experienced through the exercise in truth-telling.

In 1994, the Rosewood survivors sought restitution in the amount of $7.2 million, which would provide between $15,000 to $270,000 to the survivors and descendants based on how much they could document their losses. The Rosewood survivors and descendants actually received restitution from the State of Florida totaling $2.1 million, with a maximum amount of $150,000 for remaining survivors and lesser amounts for descendants (some as low as $3,000). A scholarship was also established by the State for descendants of Rosewood to attend any of the state universities in Florida. The State of Florida intentionally did not call these monetary disbursements reparations because the legislators did not want to set a political precedent of financial reparation in the state and the nation. This decision further minimizes the power of the acknowledgement of the act of terrorism that took place in Rosewood, but also other similar acts that impacted Blacks in Ocoee, Florida; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and other cities throughout the nation.[42]

Having land stolen was a significant component of the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain of the Rosewood residents and their descendants. Unlike the culminating lines of Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing," in which being shadowed by the Hand of God kept them true to God and

true to their native land, many in the Rosewood family still do not feel free to return to their native land. This loss of land also has had a significant economic impact, since former Black landowners in Rosewood are no longer able to pass land down through generations or use it as an asset or form of collateral. This collective loss of land and place, and the resulting loss of cultural and community memory, are significant breaches in the foundations of the Rosewood community that must be restored for enduring peace to thrive in the future. The very act of thinking about returning, and even possibly owning land in Rosewood again, is a part of the healing process, as deep healing will become evident when descendants from Rosewood and Sumner live in peace within the same vicinity again. Since the 1994 awarding of restitution by the State of Florida, there has been limited talk (but talk nonetheless) by some descendants of possibly returning to Rosewood in the future. If this potential is to become reality, those returning to Rosewood will need to maintain their spiritual connection that has sustained them in the decades since the massacre, so that Rosewood can once again become for them a site of peace and not pain.

Memory-Making

The role of social and cultural memory is an important aspect on the path to peace and restoration after tragedy. As the story of Rosewood continues to be recovered in the collective memory of society, lasting memorials, museums, and markers should be established that help make memories of the past and provide direction for the future. Currently, Rosewood descendants Janie Bradley Black and Lizzie Robinson Jenkins both operate separate tours of Rosewood in an effort to enhance broader memory-making. Black frequently participates in organizations such as Southern Truth and Reconciliation (STAR) and speaks to groups including history departments at universities, thus expanding the knowledge of the Rosewood story. Jenkins has also written a book, *The Real Rosewood,* that reflects the journey of her family and a few of the other Rosewood families.[43] Further, there are a few websites that provide information about Rosewood, thus enabling global access to the story of the struggle and the progress of the Rosewood families.[44] Alan Lipke of *Race with History: Between Civil War and Civil Rights*, has also produced a CD that includes interviews with survivors, descendants, and state officials. All of these efforts recognize the generational impact of the sharing of memories and reinforce the role of continuous education to help prevent atrocities like Rosewood from re-occurring in the future.

Partially fictive stories based on the true experiences of the Rosewood massacre have also helped to ensure that it will be remembered by future generations. These stories include those captured in the 1996 book *Like Judgment Day: The Ruin and Redemption of a Town Called Rosewood*, by Michael D'Orso, and the 1997 movie *Rosewood*, directed by John Singleton. While based on the history of Rosewood, creative elements have been added to both the book and film.[45] While these two efforts have had a broader reach, it is important to ensure that the memory-making center primarily on elements consistent with the truth-telling and fact-finding components.

After the State of Florida's decision to compensate survivors and descendants, Displays for Schools created a traveling exhibit to educate communities about Rosewood that traveled from 1999 through 2009. On May 4, 2004, led by the efforts of Lizzie Robinson Jenkins, a permanent Florida Heritage Landmark marker was dedicated in Rosewood by then Florida Governor Jeb Bush. While the traveling displays and Heritage Landmark are helpful, a more permanent memorial and museum should also be created *in* Rosewood as a combination of memory and reclamation of sacred space. Yoder links memorials to healing, indicating, "Memorials can provide a physical place to grieve, a symbolic expression of loss, and comfort that our loved ones will not be unacknowledged or forgotten."[46] The sacred nature of place should be acknowledged in such a way that the survivors and descendants are able to return to their native land and visit the graves of their loved ones without having to ask for egress to the burial site of their family members.

Holistic Restoration

As Martha Minow suggests, "Restorative justice seeks to repair the injustice, to make up for it, and to effect corrective changes in the record, in the relationships, and in future behavior."[47] Similarly, holistic restoration requires a strengthening of broken relationships and an empowering of those who have been disempowered. In 1993, at age eighty, when asked about what Rosewood had taken away, Wilson Hall replied, "Taken everything, taken my childhood, my manhood, they took my early education, and everything that I should have had, they took it….I had 'bout as much taken from me since Rosewood by the Whites, as I had before, but I still can't hold grudges against the future for the past. So I just try to keep pushing, keep pushing like I still am."[48] When faced with the deep loss of Wilson Hall and others, we know some effort should be made by direct or indirect perpetrators to right the wrongs, even as we also know there are limits to efforts of reparations and restitution.[49] The aim of the restoration efforts should be empowerment of those who have been disempowered through the initial and subsequent acts. Monetary reparations will not restore Hall's or others' childhood or personhood, but a repentant society that acknowledges its wrongdoing and its complicity can help restore dignity to those who have been repeatedly violated, both in the initial act and the ongoing lack of recognition of and reparation for the wrongdoing.

In most peacebuilding efforts, the goal is reconciliation. Reconciliation is understood in many ways, including that which gives splintered groups the ability to walk together again. I see reconciliation similar to having a cast placed on a break, which acknowledges that something is broken and is in the process of being put back together. However, I believe that the ultimate goal for Rosewood should not stop at reconciliation but move toward holistic restoration. I see restoration as what one has after the cast has been removed and the broken areas now have the strength to hold together without being supported by outside forces, such as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This restoration happens because the time and the support of the reconciliation process has allowed for deep healing, enabling what was broken to not only be mended but restored. Holistic

restoration includes restoration of humanity, restoration to community by righting and repairing relationships, recognition and memory-making of the past, reconciliatory reparations to include restitution of loss where possible, and a commitment to change for future generations. One can be reconciled in the sense that apologies have been made and people are able to be in the same location without the same intensity of pain. Yet, there can still be structural, social, and cultural inequities that lead to a lack of wholeness for individuals, families, and communities in the areas that were broken. With restoration, those areas that were broken and destroyed are not only mended but also restored to their places of strength.

As this analogy is applied to the Rosewood massacre, one must ask what happens during the restoration process to previous unhelpful societal elements, such as the race and class dynamics that kept Rosewood and Sumner residents divided. It would be doubly harmful if dynamics such as segregation were reinforced through the restoration process so that the communities could look as they did before the violent breech. As such, a restoration process needs to operate from principles of justice and equality, acknowledging the challenges of race and class realities while intentionally working through a model that enables forward progress.

Restoring Rosewood

The peace and restoration model of Rosewood may apply to other communities who desire to uncover and restore their past in an effort to have an internal and external future of peace. Despite some advancement, our American society still has deep wounds and pains that cannot be partially bandaged but must be dealt with directly for healing to take place.

Media has historically played a role in exposing and righting wrongs done to persons mistreated in prejudiced societies. As Minnie Langley and Lee Ruth Davis spoke out on the *60 Minutes* program, and later the *Maury Povich Show* in 1993, their story re-exposed the tragedy that had taken place decades before. Yet the work is not finished; current generations should also use media outlets to continue to teach about both the violent break that occurred in the Rosewood Massacre and the peaceful move towards restoration that continues. Creating space for learning and discussions about this tragedy within our nation's history helps to insure that a tragedy of this magnitude will not happen again. The acknowledgement, correction, or, in many instances, insertion of history is a part of peacebuilding through justice that enables holistic societal restoration.

In my view, a return to their native land is critical for restoration for the Rosewood Family. How else can complete restoration happen in the midst of diasporic displacement that results in multilayered generational losses? Families that have drawn strength from each other over the years must be able to return to the place where their ancestors are buried and teach younger generations about all aspects of their legacy—self-sufficiency, exile, and survival. As Japanese-Americans learned in

their quest for reparation following internment during World War II, for reparation to be successful, "it had to be a national effort, not just an effort pursued by Americans of Japanese ancestry."[50] Similarly, the restoration of Rosewood, and other similar communities like Ocoee, Florida, and Wilmington, North Carolina, must receive national focus, promoting the need for peace and restoration as critical for the future of the entire nation, not just those individuals directly affected by the event.

Encounters between the Black and White survivors, perpetrators, and descendants will be important for the possibility of real restoration and peace. While it may not be possible for the encounter to happen face to face, it would be helpful for both groups to hear and understand the stories of each other and then to begin to work towards developing a new story that acknowledges the pains of the past and moves into the possibilities of restoration in the future. This notion of real peace and restoration is similar to John Paul Lederach's description of reconciliation as the place where truth and mercy, justice and peace meet, the social space where people and things come together.[51] Restoring Rosewood requires that Blacks and Whites come together and begin to work through the facing of fears, truth-telling and fact-finding, forgiving, healing, memory-making, and holistic restoration.

The story of Rosewood and its journey from pain to power to peace is a story that is still evolving towards true peace. My model for peace and restoration identifies changes that still need to be made in order for personal and societal restoration to take place. The efforts being made through the annual Rosewood Family Reunions lead me to believe that one day there will be holistic restoration that is not limited to the monetary restitution. We will know it when a return to the native land is possible for Rosewood descendants and the tension between Blacks and Whites has been transformed from notions of collective pain to collective peace.

(Endnotes)

1 This essay began in a graduate seminar, taught by Liz Bounds, where I first began to reflect on the stories of the Rosewood Massacre. It has been strengthened by the anonymous peer reviewers for *Practical Matters* whose critically thoughtful comments and suggestions were very helpful. I am appreciative to the members of the Rosewood Family who welcomed me into their group and shared stories and resources with me. Any mistakes and shortcomings in this essay are my own.

2 For additional context on lynchings in Florida, see Walter T. Howard, *Lynchings: Extralegal Violence in Florida during the 1930s* (Cranbury, NJ: Susquehanna University Press, 1995); James R. McGovern, *Anatomy of a Lynching: The Killing of Claude Neal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992); and Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2005).

3 For additional literature on the Ku Klux Klan in Florida, see Michael Newton, *The Invisible Empire: The Ku Klux Klan in Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001).

4 The Rosewood Report, http://*www.tfn.net*/*doc*/*rosewood.txt*, 8 (accessed December 12, 2006). Also see data provided by Edward Gonzalez-Tennant in http://www.virtualrosewood.com/census.html (accessed February 27, 2012). A comparison of U.S. Census data from 1900, 1910, and 1920 shows that those who were conducting the census did not always include information that would allow for the most complete understanding of all persons who were living in Rosewood at the time.

5 Maxine D. Jones (Primary Investigator), Larry E. Rivers, David R. Colburn, R. Tom Dye, William R. Rogers, *Appendices – A Documented History of the Incident Which Occurred at Rosewood, Florida in January 1923*, (Florida Board of Regents, December 22, 1993). Hereafter this is referred to as *A Documented History.* The entrepreneurial nature of Charles Hall does not appear to be isolated with him, as others in Rosewood often had entrepreneurial ventures.

6 Mr. Wilson Hall's Interview by Dr. Maxine Jones, September 24, 1993, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 251-253.

7 Mr. Elmer Johnson's Interview by David Colburn in Sanford, Florida, November 10, 1993, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 307.

8 Sumner, Florida, is located less than three miles southwest of Rosewood, Florida. Sumner was the location of the Sawmill, which provided employment for many of the White and Black men in Rosewood, Sumner, and surrounding communities.

9 Wilson Hall, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 255.

10 There are reports, by both Whites and Blacks who were there during the massacre, of a mass grave, which to date is unconfirmed.

11 Dr. Annett Shakir's Interview by Dr. Larry E. Rivers in Tallahassee, Florida, September 25, 1993, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 367.

12 The cover pages of *The Los Angeles Times, The Atlanta Constitution, The Washington Post, Boston Daily Globe,* and *The New York Times* carried the story of Rosewood for multiple days in January 1923. A

few specific cover stories are captured in *The Tampa Daily Times* on January 5, 1923; *The New York Times* on January 6, 1923; *The Tampa Tribune* on January 6, 1923; and *The Gainesville Daily Sun* on January 5, 1923, and January 7, 1923.

13 Mary Hall's interview with Thomas Dye, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 240.

14 Displays for Schools, "Remembering Rosewood," http://www.displaysforschools.com/survivor.html (accessed December 12, 2006).

15 Annett Shakir, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 368.

16 "The Rosewood Massacre," produced by Joel Bernstein, *60 Minutes*, Transcript Volume XVI, Number 13, CBS Television Network, (originally aired December 11, 1983).

17 Japanese-Americans took a similar vow of silence after their internment by the U.S. Government during World War II. Years later many Japanese-American survivors remained afraid, broken in spirit, and ashamed. See Martha Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History after Genocide and Mass Violence* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 96. The restitution that Japanese-Americans received for their internment provided a model for Rosewood survivors.

18 Elmer Johnson, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 312.

19 See additional research on Rosewood in R. Thomas Dye, "The Rosewood Massacre: History and the Making of Public Policy," *The Public Historian,* 19, no. 3 (Summer, 1997): 25-39; and Maxine D. Jones, "The Rosewood Massacre and the Women Who Survived It," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 193-208.

20 Mary Hall, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 240.

21 Most of the depositions by survivors indicated that there were at least two churches in Rosewood, one consistently referred to as an A.M.E. Church and the other sometimes referred to as Baptist, but at other times referred to as a second A.M.E. Church. The churches were likely on a circuit, as indicated by comments of persons attending one of the two churches on alternating Sundays. Investigative Reporter Gary Moore notes that there were three churches, Rosewood A.M.E. Church, Pleasant Field M.E. Church,

and a Baptist church at the southwest edge of the community (*A Documented History*, 424).

22 Multiple testimonies and depositions reveal that women served on Stewardess boards, missionary societies, and worked with Sunday schools, among other things. This author's own experience also bears witness to Rosewood descendants being religiously active, serving on Trustee boards, Steward boards, singing in choirs, working with youth departments, and holding various leadership positions in many A.M.E. Churches throughout the state of Florida including Mt. Olive A.M.E. Church in Gainesville, Allen Temple A.M.E. Church in Tampa, and Bethel A.M.E. in Lacoochee.

23 Notations of coercion and questionable acts regarding land ownership may be found in the interviews of many survivors and descendants, including those found in the interviews of Arnett T. Doctor, Mary Hall, Earnest Parham, and Lillie Washington in the Appendix to *A Documented History*, 134, 181, 241-242, 360, 392.

24 Those persons who were brought up for questioning before the judge were not found guilty in 1923. Afterwards the property records mysteriously disappeared.

25 Gary Moore, "The Rosewood Massacre," *St. Petersburg Times*, July 27, 1982. Nearby Cedar Key is a "sundown town" whose lack of Black residents prompted Moore to begin asking questions, and he was eventually told about the massacre. For more on sundown towns, see James E. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: The New Press, 2005).

26 The *60 Minutes* show aired on CBS on December 11, 1983, almost sixty-one years after the January 1923 massacre. Lee Ruth Davis and Minnie Lee Bradley provided depositions to Holland & Knight Attorneys at Law on May 4, 1992, and June 2, 1992, respectively.

27 See Minow, *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*; Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Carolyn Yoder, *The Little Book of Trauma Healing: When Violence Strikes and Community Security Is Threatened* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005).

28 Additional work should be done to develop a model that can help to break the silence within the White community and acknowledge the now longstanding land possessions that resulted from the violence Whites perpetrated against Blacks in Rosewood.

29 CBS News, *60 Minutes*, "The Rosewood Massacre," December 13, 1983.

30 Interview with Mae McCoy McDonald, Fall of 2007.

31 Minow, 66.

32 Ibid., 67.

33 The "truth" as expressed by the Black and White individuals is assumed to be their best recollections, yet these recounted accounts were at times complementary and at other times very divergent, resulting in the subsequent need for the fact-finding component of the model.

34 Minow, 127.

35 Since there is no statue of limitations on murder, this fear may remain despite the time that has passed.

36 The team consisted of: Principal Investigator, Associate Professor Maxine D. Jones, The Florida State University; Co-Project Director, Professor Larry E. Rivers, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University; Investigators – Professor David R. Colburn, The University of Florida, Graduate Student R.Tom Dye, The Florida State University, and Professor William R. Rogers, The Florida State University.

37 Shriver, 7-9.

38 Ibid., 9.

39 Ibid., 25.

40 Yoder, 11, 13.

41 Ibid., 53.

42 Those who are seeking some form of reparation from the Tulsa Race Riot of 1921 have used the Rosewood victory as a model for their own legal quests.

43 Lizzie PRB Jenkins, *The Real Rosewood, Volume I* (Gainesville, FL: BookEnds Press, 2003).

44 Websites include: www.displaysforschools.com/rosewood, www.rosewoodflorida.com, http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/library/bibliographies/Rosewood_bib.cfm, and http://www.virtualrosewood.com.

45 Michael D'Orso, *Like Judgment Day: The Ruin and Redemption of a Town Called Rosewood* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996) and *Rosewood*, directed by John Singleton, Warner Brothers, 1997. Both of these accounts have fictive elements that have been included to increase its receptivity within broader entertainment audiences.

46 Yoder, 54.

47 Minow, 91.

48 Wilson Hall, Appendix to *A Documented History*, 262.

49 Indirect perpetrators refers to the State officials including the Governor of Florida, who were aware of the ongoing massacre in Rosewood and did not step in to stop it before the entire town was destroyed over the course of a few days. The Governor of Florida was vacationing and would not return despite his knowledge that a massacre was taking place.

50 Minow, 99.

51 John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 29.