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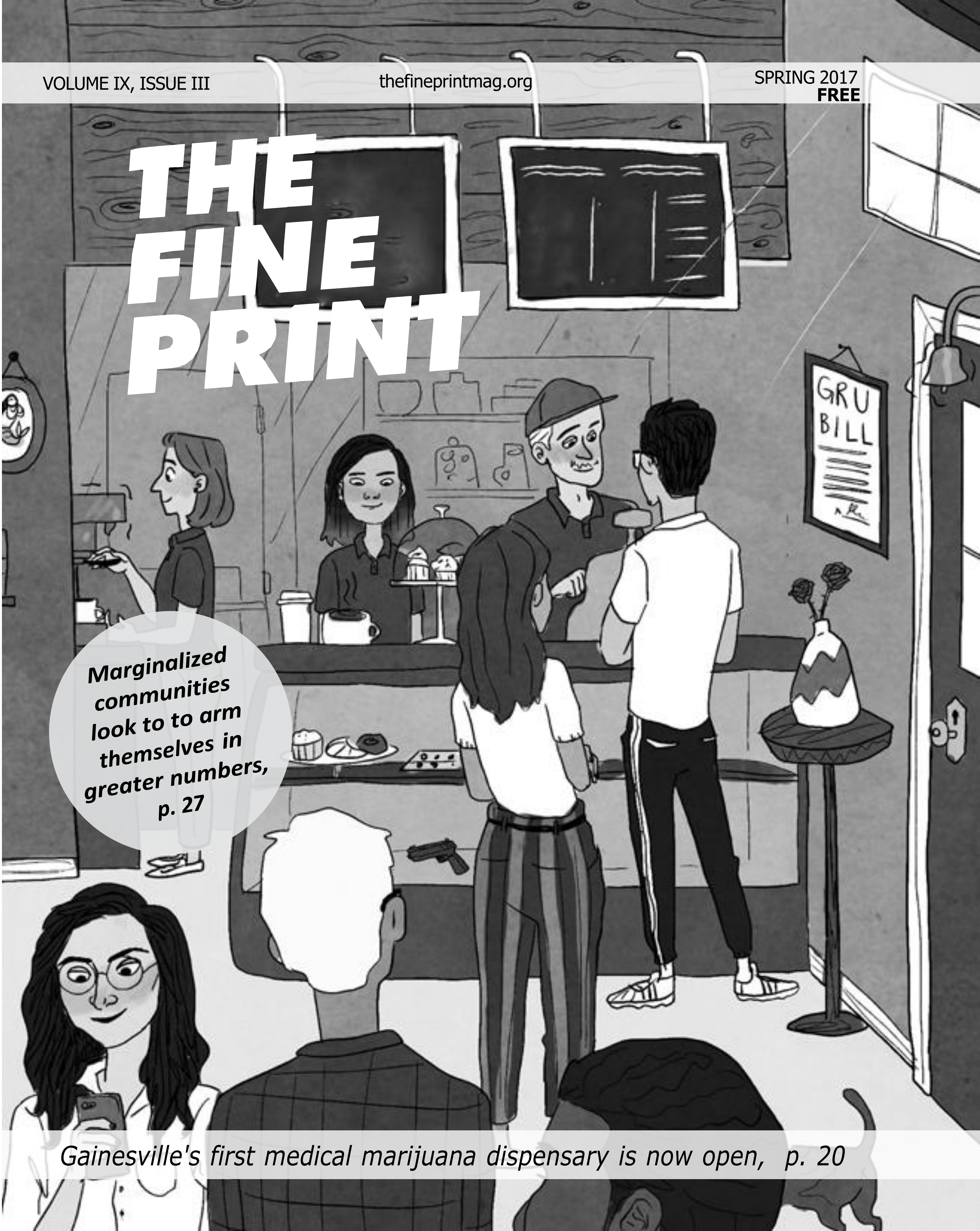
THE FINE PRINT



Marginalized communities look to to arm themselves in greater numbers, p. 27

Gainesville's first medical marijuana dispensary is now open, p. 20 *from the*

EDITORIAL DESK

In searching for inspiration for this editor's letter, I found myself looking back at editor's letters from several issues ago.

Most are introductions (a timid hello from a new editor) and some are goodbye's from editors after a long (or short) stint on the board. After pouring over several issues and iterations, I found myself smiling, recalling all the setbacks and struggles from each issue I was lucky to be a part of.

I don't want to send off my last editor's letter talking about all the memories I've had with The Fine Print over the past four years. Instead, I want to leave you all with a glimmer of what (I hope) will be in the not-too-distant future: Official non-profit incorporation. 501(c)-dom.

My vision for The Fine Print is a sustainable one. One where we can afford to work in our own office space, and not take up tables at the local coffee shop or cram into a living room. One where staffers can get paid and investigations can be funded. One where we can commission artists for their time and work.

While benefit shows and weekly farmer's markets help os cushion our budget, sustaining ourselves on scraps while putting in maximum time and effort just isn't going to cut it. I hope for us to garner more donations, more community support and obtain national funding — something we're ineligible for right now.

Gainesville needs an institution that values long-form journalism. A publication that covers the underdogs (M.A.M.A.'s club), rehashes Florida's shameful history (Rosewood), and brings it back to pressing current issues (medical marijuana and gun control). Heck, North Florida needs it.

With enough support and funding, I envision something bigger for this little paper. I hope you do, too.

To help us financially, visit our website and donate. To help us in other ways, pass on this issue to a friend, coworker or stranger and help us tell our stories.

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RISE AGAINST THE MACHINE
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Visit our site for multimedia and more stories. ***PLUS!*** Comment on stories, see photos from the printed issue (and more!) ***IN COLOR***. Flip through a digital version of the printed edition and much, much more, all updated throughout the month.

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THE FINE PRINT

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FEATURED STAFFER

Eva Sailly

Eva Sailly is a University of Florida advertising senior and aspiring illustrator. She enjoys a good bowl of ramen, 70s rock and soul, and dark comedy films. This summer, Eva plans to photograph and travel up the coast of California. She has no idea what she'll do with her life after graduation, but hopes it will all work out in the end.

Standing Tall

94 years ago and 49 miles from Gainesville, there was a town called Rosewood.

BY SIRENE DAGHER
ILLUSTRATION BY EVA SAILLY

It was 1943. Every weekend, Lizzie Robinson Jenkins watched her aunt Mahulda sew by the window of their farmhouse in Archer, Fla., in the same spot she took her reading lessons and learned to spell.

Jenkins was only five. She didn't understand why her aunt suddenly raced to the bedroom to hide every time a car rattled down the road.

Not until late one school night did Jenkins find out, when her mom called for her and her three siblings to come into the living room.

"Sit on the settee," she told them. "Mama's gonna tell you a story about Rosewood."

"What came into my mind was roses and the woods," Jenkins recalled. "I had never heard of Rosewood, didn't know what it meant, didn't know the significance."

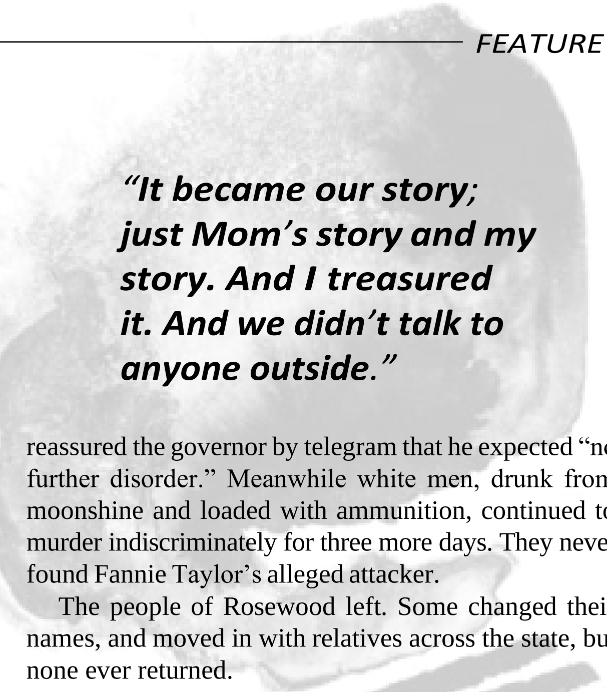
Rosewood was a viable black community just a half-hour from their home in Archer, where Mahulda had been a school teacher.

That was before the night of Jan. 6, 1923, when she—and every other person in Rosewood—was forced to escape. Spurred by a claim that a black man living in Rosewood had assaulted a white woman, a mob of over 100 men roamed and looted the town, killing four people and burning almost every home.

It would be 70 years before the state of Florida acknowledged what happened. Survivors rarely spoke of

Rosewood until a campaign to pass the first U.S. claims bill for racial violence

“It became our story; just Mom’s story and my story,” Jenkins said. “And I treasured it. And we didn’t talk to anyone outside.”



“It became our story; just Mom’s story and my story. And I treasured it. And we didn’t talk to anyone outside.”

Rosewood is 49 miles southwest of Gainesville, just before the fishing town of Cedar Key. A railroad split the town from the northeast, bringing industry to the smaller, predominantly black community. Rosewood had three churches, a sugar mill, two general stores and a schoolhouse, where Mahulda taught. Women sold vegetables in local markets and men played baseball on Sunday. At that time, it was as prosperous as a black community could hope to be in the Deep South.

The houses, mostly shanties or one-room schoolhouses, were spread out. Some of the older families, like Sarah Carrier’s, a prominent resident of Rosewood, had two-story homes that boasted baby grand pianos, white fences and fruit trees in their yards.

Rosewood neighbored Sumner, a majority white town 3 miles west. But unlike in Rosewood, most of the residents in Sumner did not own their own land and worked for pittance at the local sawmill.

Archaeologist Edward Gonzalez-Tennant said this disparity created animosity between some white residents in Sumner toward the black residents in Rosewood.

“While you have you have radios, TV’s, and newspapers, reminding whites of their supposed superiority, you have a black community that’s not conforming to its supposed marginalized status,” he said.

This animosity reached a fever pitch the night of January 1st when James Taylor, a Sumner resident, returned home to find his wife, Fannie, beaten. Hysterical, she told him she had been assaulted by a black man when she was home alone that morning.

Taylor went to the sheriff, who had word that an escaped convict was hiding in Rosewood. The sheriff set his sights on Rosewood, and the men of Sumner assembled the bloodhounds.

But someone else had been there too, Sarah Carrier, washing Fannie’s clothes, saw the real attack: Fannie was having an affair, and it had turned violent.

One of the first homes the vigilantes sought out was Sarah Carrier’s home, even though she lived the farthest from Sumner. As the mob attempted to break into her home, Sarah Carrier was killed, in addition to two white men.

News of the white men’s deaths—and Fannie’s Taylor’s assault —spread. Armed white men poured in from around the state. Some came from Gainesville, where a large Ku Klux Klan rally had been held the day before; others came from as far away as Georgia.

The Sumner sheriff, failing to call the National Guard, reassured the governor by telegram that he expected “no further disorder.” Meanwhile white men, drunk from moonshine and loaded with ammunition, continued to murder indiscriminately for three more days. They never found Fannie Taylor’s alleged attacker.

The people of Rosewood left. Some changed their names, and moved in with relatives across the state, but none ever returned.

Many historians claim that Rosewood was a deliberate land grab. Soon After WWI, lynch mobs in the south began targeting entire communities—rather than specific individuals—often as a result of white fear of interracial sex. It was an excuse to instill fear in black communities and take back what land they did managed to come by after the Civil War.

“I don’t think you destroy an entire community just to protect one person,” Gonzalez-Tennant said. “I think they were very thorough in their destruction of that community.”

After the town was burned down and abandoned, it was bought up for delinquent property taxes. In the 1950s and ‘70s, white people began to move in. Not an acre of the land is owned today by anyone that used to live in Rosewood.

Rosewood descendants maintain that a mass grave lies buried beneath the town, and that many more than eight six, upwards of 40 people were killed at Rosewood.

It is impossible to know. There are no records of Rosewood, not even of the three-day grand jury investigation held in Brunson the next month, where 25 witnesses—8 of them black— said that there was insufficient evidence of any wrongdoing.

“That was the end of it,” said, Maxine Jones, a history professor at Florida State University who led the state-funded investigation into Rosewood. “And the state of Florida just kind of dropped the ball. They didn’t try to help these people reclaim their land or anything.”

In 1992, Steve Hanlon, a pro-bono attorney at a law firm in Tallahassee, got a call from a film producer who pitched an idea for a movie about the last two survivors of the Rosewood massacre.

Hanlon had never heard of Rosewood. Neither had most people until 1982, when the massacre was intro-

TIMELINE OF EVENTS	DEC. 31, 1922	JAN. 1, 1923	JAN. 4, 1923	JAN. 6, 1923	JAN. 7, 1923	FEB. 12, 1923
	Large Ku Klux Klan rally in Gainesville.	*Fannie alleges attack by an un-identified black man.*	*Carrier's house is attacked. She and two white men are killed.*	*Women and children are evacuated by train.*	*The remainder of the town is burned.*	*Grand jury investigation failed to indict anyone.*

duced to the public by a journalist, Gary Moore. Moore had accidentally uncovered the story while reporting on tourism in Cedar Key. 60 Minutes did a follow up, bringing it national attention.

One of the survivors featured in the story was Minnie Lee Langley, a retired brush factory worker living in Jacksonville and Sarah Carrier's niece. After witnessing her aunt's shooting, Langley fled Rosewood with her family at just eight-years-old.

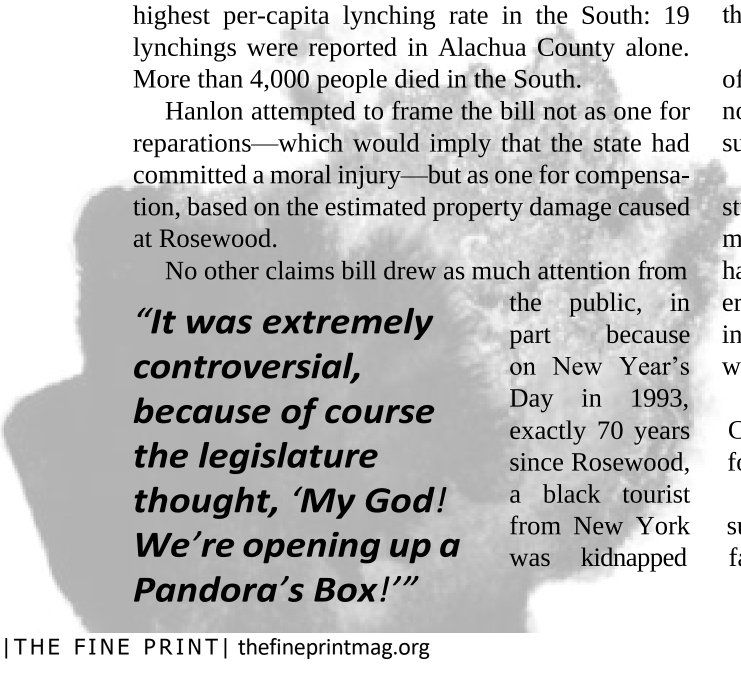
Hanlon's interest was piqued. He decided to investigate further, and booked a flight to Langley's home.

Hanlon would eventually learn that Langley was one of ten still-living survivors. He got them together to file a claims bill, the first of its kind in U.S. history.

"Of course [Rosewood] was a 70 year old case, but that didn't bother me," said Hanlon. "Once I met Minnie Lee Langley I was convinced that I was going to take the case."

But the case was a hard sell. No one wanted to pay for what seemed like reparations, even though it was only a drop in the 38 billion dollar proposed budget for the state legislature that March.

"It was extremely controversial," Hanlon said. "Because, of course the legislature thought, 'My God! We're opening up a Pandora's Box!'"



Rosewood was not an isolated incident. If the state gave money to the Rosewood survivors, legislators feared that hundreds of other cases would need to be redressed. Florida had the second highest per-capita lynching rate in the South: 19 lynchings were reported in Alachua County alone. More than 4,000 people died in the South.

Hanlon attempted to frame the bill not as one for reparations—which would imply that the state had committed a moral injury—but as one for compensation, based on the estimated property damage caused at Rosewood.

No other claims bill drew as much attention from the public, in part because on New Year's Day in 1993, exactly 70 years since Rosewood, a black tourist from New York was kidnapped by two white men in Tampa, doused with gasoline and lit on fire. Despite the incident, the legislature dismissed the first bill Hanlon filed on behalf of the survivors in April 1993.

> ***"It was extremely controversial, because of course the legislature thought, 'My God! We're opening up a Pandora's Box!'"***

Hanlon wanted to file a second bill, but he needed more white politicians on his side. The testimony of the ten survivors raised questions: All of them were children during the time of the massacre. Many politicians speculated that because they were black, the survivors were incentivized to fabricate the story.

"[The legislature] needed an objective, unbiased report, so that they could proceed with the bill," said Jones, the history professor from Florida State University. That is, they needed testimony from white people.

With the support of then-Governor Lawton Chiles, four professors and one graduate student from universities across Florida were given three months before the start of '94 legislative session to uncover what happened at Rosewood, a project that should have taken two to three years to properly research. The team, however, was determined and set out to Cedar Key.

"What we found was that, by-and-large, whites over time had buried the story, and anyone who had been involved with it," said David Colburn, the director of the Bob Graham Center who contributed to the report. "They buried the story because they didn't want to acknowledge that they'd been involved in violence of that sort against the black community there."

The team was getting desperate. There were no official records on Rosewood, no police reports—nothing but second-hand newspaper clippings and survivor testimony.

The state gave them another month. Finally, they stumbled upon 89-year-old Ernest Parham, a white man living in Orlando, who was willing to talk. Parham, was 17 years old during the massacre, and delivered ice to the residents of Rosewood from his home in Sumner. He had just finished mowing his lawn when Colburn knocked on his door.

"Parham had no axe to grind; he was a white man," Colburn said. "He could have easily added to the efforts of others to bury the story, but he chose not to."

Parham's account corroborated the that of the survivors. He remembers selling shells and guns that fateful Friday. He watched white men pass through

1982	December, 1983	1992	Spring, 1993	Dec. 22, 1993	May 4, 1994	2004
The first report on Rosewood is published in The Floridian.	*60 Minutes presents "The Rosewood Massacre."*	*Hanlon meets with Langley. He begins to draft the first bill.*	*The first claims bill is drafted. It fails to pass the legislature.*	*The official Rosewood Report is released by the state.*	*The second claims bill is signed into law by Gov. Chiles.*	*Jenkins' foundation sponsors a Florida Heritage Marker*

his home wounded, watched as they strung up a Rosewood man from a tree and shot him through the head.

Just before Christmas in 1993, the team released The Rosewood Report. And it passed, narrowly, but the amount awarded to survivors was dropped from $7 million to 2.1: $150,000 for each of the nine survivors.

It probably would not have passed, however, solely on the word of the black survivors. Parham's testimony was the deciding factor, said Sherry DuPree, a historian for the Rosewood Heritage Foundation.

"It was not us, not at all," she said. "But when a white man stands up and tells in the court that he was there and witnessed it and can corroborate the stories—that's what got it through."

But for the survivors, it wasn't about the money. Most of them gave it away or simply didn't care about it.

"There was certainly—among the survivors—great pride that they got to tell their story," Hanlon said. "You're never going to heal something like that, but to the extent that you can have some emotional release and let the world know what happened—that was very meaningful to my clients."

Lizzie Jenkins is nearly 80 now. She's still studying Rosewood. For the past 25 years, she's been giving talks, running bus tours and in 1998 she released "The Real Rosewood," a book based on conversations with her aunt and mother.

"Most important is to keep the message out there," Jenkins said. "To keep the information highway open. That's who we are. History is who we are."

The claims bill also contained a provision that created a $500,000 scholarship fund for the survivors' descendants and mandated that Rosewood be taught in Florida public schools.

Students rarely learn of Rosewood.

"It's awkward," Jones said. "When do you introduce it? When do you teach it? How do you talk about lynchings? How do you talk about burning men and women alive?"

"I don't know," she continued. "I think a lot of white teachers especially feel uncomfortable teaching it. So you don't teach it, or you glance over it."

But Rosewood was not an isolated incident, nor is it confined solely to the past.

"When it comes time to learn about African American history, it's the classic slavery-and-the-Civil-Rights-Movement with this 80 to 90 year period in between where you don't talk about stuff," Gonzalez-Tennant said. "Part of the reason we don't talk about it is because stuff like Rosewood is what's taking place, and it can be very uncomfortable for people to have that conversation."

> ***"The historic marker has bullet holes in it, and I show that to the people when I take them down on the tour. You just realize what the truth is."***

Efforts to memorialized Rosewood have been met with resistance. After the massacre became public knowledge, the highway sign indicating the town began disappearing. The only makeshift sign that evaded tampering and destruction was a plastic one, tacked onto two wooden posts, that listed the names of the five white men who aided the victims of Rosewood.

For now, the only physical memorial of the town is still the Heritage Marker sponsored by Jenkins's foundation in 2004. It is often uprooted. Some say it is the most vandalized sign in the state.

It was taken down around 14 times in one year, said DuPree. The Rosewood Heritage Foundation offers bus tours from Gainesville to Rosewood and rotating historical exhibits.

"The historic marker has bullet holes in it, and I show that to the people when I take them down on the tour," Dupree said. "You just realize what the truth is."

It takes three minutes to drive via Route 24 from Rosewood to Sumner. If you aren't looking for it, you'll miss the Heritage Marker. You have to stop and get out of the car to see that someone has placed a small sand stone in the corner of the sign. It reads "HOPE." •

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