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New Orleans

# Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Anthony Bean  
Community Theater  
Ribbon Cutting




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Data Zone  
Page 4

February 26 - March 4, 2022 56th Year Volume 44 [www.ladatanews.com](http://www.ladatanews.com)

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

## *The Real Story of* Rosewood *Florida*




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*The Real Story of*  
**ROSEWOOD**  
*Florida*



An angry mob lead by the town sheriff (Michael Rooker, center) in a scene from “Rosewood,” a Warner Brothers movie released in 1997. (Warner Brothers)

**Written and Edited by Edwin Buggage**  
**Editor-in-Chief Data News Weekly**

For the last several weeks Data News Weekly has focused on all Black towns or communities across America. The goal was to inspire us to today live in this spirit of supporting each other in our quest for excellence.

Today, geography does not define community alone. We can be a collective in so many other ways, because of technology. It is not only location, but a mindset, plan and forging out a blueprint to uplift the Black citizens in America.

This week, we are placing the spotlight on Rosewood, Florida. We are using information from History.

com as our source material for this story. Also, for a brief introduction of the story, go and watch John Singleton’s classic film Rosewood.

**Rosewood, Florida**

Though it was originally settled in 1845 by both Black and White people, Black codes, and Jim Crow laws in the years after the Civil War fostered segregation in Rosewood (and much of the South).

Employment was provided by pencil factories, but the cedar tree population soon became decimated and White families moved away in the 1890s and settled in the nearby town of Sumner.

By the 1920s, Rosewood’s population of about two hundred was entirely made up of Black citizens, ex-

cept for one White family that ran the general store there.

**An Unfair System and False Accusations of Rape**

On January 1, 1923, in Sumner, Florida, 22-year-old Fannie Taylor was heard screaming by a neighbor. The neighbor found Taylor covered in bruises and claiming a Black man had entered the house and assaulted her.

The incident was reported to Sheriff Robert Elias Walker, with Taylor specifying that she had not been raped.

Fannie Taylor’s husband, James Taylor, a foreman at the local mill, escalated the situation by

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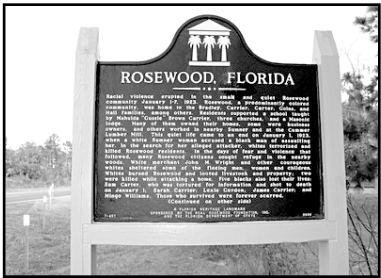
|                     |                                     |                       |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
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| Edwin Buggage       | DNW Staff Writers                   | Pubinator.com         |
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|                     | Business Conference                 | by Terrence Lee       |

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Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



Burning of Black resident's home, Rosewood, 1923.



Memorial Plaque



The ruins of a burned African American home in Rosewood, Fla., in 1923. Rosewood was a thriving African American community, until a dispute led to a massacre of at least eight people, and the town was burned and destroyed. (Courtesy State Library &amp; Archives of Florida).

gathering an angry mob of White citizens to hunt down the culprit. He also called for help from White residents in neighboring counties, among them a group of about five hundred Ku Klux Klan members who were in Gainesville for a rally. The White mobs prowled the area woods searching for any Black man they might find.

Law enforcement found out that a Black prisoner named Jesse Hunter had escaped a chain gang, and immediately designated him a suspect. The mobs focused their searches on Hunter, convinced that he was being hidden by the Black residents.

### Lynch Mob Justice

Searchers were led by dogs to the home of Aaron Carrier in Rosewood. Carrier was the nephew of Sarah Carrier, who did the laundry for Taylor.

The White men dragged Carrier out of his house, tied him to a car and dragged him to Sumner, where he was cut loose and beaten.

Sheriff Walker intervened, putting Carrier in his car, and driving him to Gainesville, where he was placed under the protective custody of the sheriff there.

Another mob showed up at the home of blacksmith Sam Carter, torturing him until he admitted that he was hiding Hunter and agreed to take them to the hiding spot.

Carter led them into the woods, but when Hunter failed to appear, someone in the mob shot him. His body was hung on a tree before the mob moved on.

The sheriff's office had attempted and failed to break up White mobs and advised Black workers to

stay in their places of employment for safety.

As many as twenty-five people, mostly children, had taken refuge in the home of Sarah Carrier when, on the night of January 4th, armed White men surrounded the house in the belief that Jesse Hunter was hiding there.

Shots were fired in the ensuing confrontation: Sarah Carrier was shot in the head and died, and her son Sylvester was also killed by a gun wound. Two White attackers were also killed.

The gun battle and standoff lasted overnight. It ended when the door was broken down by White attackers. The children inside the house escaped through the back and made their way to safety through the woods, where they hid.

### Rosewood Violence Escalates

News of the standoff at the Carrier house spread, with newspapers inflating the number dead and falsely reporting bands of armed Black citizens going on a rampage. Even more White men poured into the area believing that a race war had broken out.

Some of the first targets of this influx were the churches in Rosewood, which were burned down. Houses were then attacked, first setting fire to

them, and then shooting people as they escaped from the burning buildings.

Lexie Gordon was one of those murdered, taking a gunshot to her face as she hid under her burning house. Gordon had sent her children fleeing when White attackers approached but suffering from typhoid fever, she stayed behind.

Many Rosewood citizens fled to the nearby swamps for safety, spending days hiding in them. Some attempted to leave the swamps but were turned back by men working for the sheriff.

James Carrier, brother of Sylvester and son of Sarah, did manage to get out of the swamp and take refuge with the help of a local turpentine factory manager. A White mob found him anyhow and forced him to dig a grave for himself before murdering him.

Others found help from White families willing to shelter them.

### Escaping Violence and Terror

Some Black women and children escaped thanks to John and William Bryce, two wealthy brothers who owned a train.

Aware of the violence in Rosewood and familiar with the population, the brothers drove their train to the area and invited escapees,

though refused to take in Black men, afraid of being attacked by White mobs.

Many of those who fled by train had been hidden in the home of the White general store owner, John Wright, and continued to do so throughout the violence. Sheriff Walker helped terrified residents make their way to Wright, who then arranged escape with the help of the Bryce brothers.

### Florida's Reaction

Florida Governor Cary Hardee offered to send the National Guard to help, but Sheriff Walker declined the help, believing he had the situation under control.

Mobs began to disperse after several days, but on January 7th, many returned to finish off the town, burning what little remained of it to the ground, except for the home of John Wright.

The governor appointed a special grand jury and a special prosecutor to investigate the violence. The jury heard the testimonies of thirty witnesses, mostly White, over several days, but claimed to not find enough evidence for prosecution.

The surviving citizens of Rose-

wood did not return, fearful that the horrific bloodshed would recur.

### Rosewood Massacre Legacy

The story of Rosewood faded away quickly. Most newspapers stopped reporting on it soon after the violence had ceased, and many survivors kept quiet about their experience, even to subsequent family members.

It was in 1982 when Gary Moore, a journalist for the St. Petersburg Times, resurrected the History of Rosewood through a series of articles that gained national attention.

The living survivors of the massacre, at that point all in their 80s and 90s, came forward, led by Rosewood descendant Arnett Doctor, and demanded restitution from Florida.

The action led to the passing of a bill awarding them \$2 million and created an educational fund for descendants. The bill also called for an investigation into the matter to clarify the events, which Moore took part in.

Further awareness was created through John Singleton's 1997 film, Rosewood, which dramatized the events.

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*"Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in." - Martin Luther King, Jr.*



# A New Era

## *Anthony Bean Community Theater Ribbon Cutting*


Photos by Peter Nakhid

A New era for the Anthony Bean Community Theater (ABCT) is on the horizon. Last week surrounded by his students, Civic leaders and supporters, he opened the new ABCT. This space will be dedicated to teaching acting classes, as well as being a place where he will record a television show that focuses on the youth of New Orleans. "This is a great time not just for ABCT, but the entire community," says Bean. "My goal is to inspire and give us a voice. Also, to showcase the best and brightest of our youth. We have for over two decades been a shining light for our City and will continue with the new ABCT."



Last week surrounded by his students, Civic Leaders and supporters, he opened the new Anthony Bean Community Theater (ABCT).

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# You Are Worth Love



There is no reason to think less of yourself just because you are not in a relationship.



**Diva Dionne Character**  
Female Empowerment Columnist

Valentine's Day has recently passed, and we must ask ourselves the question of love? The answer is simple in my view. Love yourself as you are!!

There is no reason to think less of yourself just because you are not in a relationship. There will be no death sentence. Whether you received a diamond ring on Valentine's Day, gathered with friends over drinks or simply enjoyed dinner alone, you are worth love!

What if, we as women start looking at Valentine's Day as a day to fellowship with other women who have helped us along the way, showing appreciation for perfect friendships? What if, we gathered with other sisters who may be suffering from loss and help make them feel happy and appreciated for a day? What if, we restore all the bad days with good days and enjoy being alive?

These things are possible when we step out of our comfort zones and start making changes to love ourselves more. Perhaps you and a group of women can visit the elderly, showing them, some love and attention, forgetting about self and incorporate Valentine's Day on your own terms, not allowing the world to guide you into a depressed state of mind because your love has not been displayed the way society sees fit.

It may seem hard to focus on past romances and ill misfortunes when it comes to love but know that your heart is capable of mending through the good and bad. Love comes in all sorts of packages. It will never look or be the same for all of us.

Be grateful for the little spoonful of joy as you relish in what could become when your heart is open to new things. Perhaps love isn't where you think it should be. Don't let that stop you from being happy when you can give love to someone who has displayed love to others.

Dionne Character can be reached at [characterhollywood.com](http://characterhollywood.com).

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# Urban League of Louisiana Encourages Citizens to Say NO to HB14 and SB1!

## Voting Matters

### Urban League of Louisiana

The Voting Rights Act imposes an obligation on states to ensure that a racial minority of voters have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process and elect candidates of their choice. This is what the Urban League of Louisiana has been supporting throughout the redistricting process.

African Americans make up a third of Louisiana's population based on 2020 Census Data. De-



Urban League  
of Louisiana

spite countless Louisianians and multiple civil rights organizations calling for fair and equitable representation, the state legislature has passed redistricting maps that fail to increase African American representation.

Call Governor Edwards and urge him to veto HB14 and SB1, which do not provide fair representation for Black Louisianians.

We have been working with our partner organizations to ensure that the legislature advances maps that accurately represent the increase

in the African American population across our state. They have failed to do so by-passing House Bill 14 and Senate Bill 1, which do not increase the opportunity for fair African American representation. The maps now go to Governor Edwards for his signature, and we need your help.

Call Governor Edwards now at 225-342-7015 or click here and urge him to veto HB14 and SB1. We demand fair and equitable maps that accurately reflect the growing diversity of our state.

### State & Local News

## David & The Gladiators of The Batistes

*NOLA's Royal Family of Music Shines at Family Gras*

### Data News Staff Edited

And the beat goes on with Louisiana Hall of Famer, David Batiste on Saturday, February 19, 2022, in the line-up at Family Gras, a free music festival that took place two weeks in advance of Fat Tuesday.

"As we always say, 'music is healing' and it's great to be leading the way to getting back on track after two years of having the music scene in New Orleans impacted by the Pandemic," said David Batiste. "It's great to be a part of a festival paying tribute to Allen Toussaint and on the same bill as Marie Osmond, Sister Sledge, Girl Named Tom, Ann Wilson of Heart and others including the Batiste Brothers working to safely bring back the music.

Family Gras, just a few minutes from downtown New Orleans, yearly has had crowds surpassing 80,000 people. It will take place on Veterans Memorial Boulevard in Metairie across



Damon Batiste, Alana Harris, and David Batiste provided courtesy of Eric Cager, Cutting Edge Music Business Conference.

from Lakeside Shopping Center in NOLA's suburbs. Held from Friday, February 18, through Sunday, February 20, Family Gras will include national and Louisiana arts, interactive games, New Orleans cuisine,

kids' entertainment, and a local art market.

"It's a family affair in more ways than one," said Damon Batiste, New Orleans Cultural Ambassador and Founder of NOSACONN, Inc. (New Orleans South Africa Connection). "My Dad's Band, 'David and the Gladiators' and also my uncle Paul's band, 'The Batiste Brothers' are helping to bring back the fun and music.

Coming off a recent trip to South Africa (<https://www.prlog.org/12896341-damon-batiste-of-nolas-roy-...>) his 82nd trip to Africa, the younger Batiste, will soon be on his way back to Africa in March to solidify sister city relationships between New Orleans and Durban, South Africa, and other sisters. "It's like the original African beats of Congo Square that inspire me to make the connection between the motherland and New Orleans. Yes, the beat goes on as I work not only on culture and arts but tourism and trade to generate business," added Batiste.

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# Civil Rights Leaders Challenge NFL Team Owners to Prioritize Racial Diversity and Inclusion

## Call for Creation of Advisory Commission to Recommend Reforms

Data News Staff Edited Reprt

In the continued fight for justice, equity and inclusion, Civil Rights Leaders continue to challenge NFL team owners to overhaul their hiring practices for head coaching and top executive positions by setting measurable goals for recruiting and hiring diverse candidates.

The leaders called for the creation of an advisory commission to make recommendations and establish guidelines.

National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial, National Action Network Founder and President Rev. Al Sharpton, NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation President and CEO Melanie Campbell, and National African American Clergy Network co-convenor Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner met virtually today with Pittsburgh Steelers President Art Rooney II, Atlanta Falcons Owner & Chairman Arthur Blank, Arizona Cardinals Owner Michael Bidwell, Baltimore Ravens Executive Vice President Ozzie Newsome, and Houston Texans limited partner Javier Loya, along with NFL Commis-



National Urban League CEO, Marc Morial and National Action Network CEO, Rev. Al Sharpton, along with other Civil Rights Leaders are demanding equity and fairness from the NFL, in hiring more Black coaches and executives.

sioner Roger Goodell and other top NFL executives.

The meeting was the continuation of a discussion that began with Goodell last week, in which the leaders called for a replacement of the Rooney Rule, a policy established in 2003 that requires teams to interview candidates of color for head coaching and senior football operation positions.

"The League's recent focus on racial equity and social justice has not penetrated its own hiring pro-

cedures when it comes to head coaches," Morial said. "The NFL has produced an astonishing pool of Black coaching talent that owners routinely have ignored when filling the top job. We are committed to working with the owners and the League to bring the spirit of 'Inspire Change' to the head coaching rosters."

Sharpton said, "The meeting with NFL Commissioner Goodell

and the team owners was a step in the right direction, but we want timetables and goals to crystalize their commitment. We can be as antagonistic or as cooperative as needed, but we will not sit idly until this issue is resolved.

"We hope that the purpose of bringing on Loretta Lynch is to solve the Flores lawsuit, not to fight it," he added. "We want justice for Brian Flores. We enjoyed the Super Bowl halftime show but we want a full-time commitment from the NFL"

"It's not enough simply to interview more candidates of color," Johnson said, noting that there is not a single Black owner of an NFL team. "We need diverse voices in every room where major decisions are being made."

Williams-Skinner pointed to the substantial public investment in NFL teams and the non-profit status of the NFL, saying, "This is not simply a private issue that can be left for the owners to resolve on their own. We cannot allow the community that is the very lifeblood of professional football to be shut out of its governance and administration." She also raised a series of questions regarding NFL teams hiring process, accountability, policies, and the workplace diversity committee that Commissioner Goodell committed to provides written responses.

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### Job Opportunity

### Freelance Writers Wanted

Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for freelance writers to join our team print and digital team. We want to hear from you if you are a working journalist, or an aspiring journalist who has 2 years or more of newspaper or PR writing experience. We need writers who can cover New Orleans news stories, ranging from local high school sports, community events, City Hall and entertainment. Experience in print is necessary, experience in digital and social media are encouraged.

Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: [terrybjones@bellsouth.net](mailto:terrybjones@bellsouth.net) and [datanewseditor@bellsouth.net](mailto:datanewseditor@bellsouth.net).

We can't wait to hear from you!

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