



THE  
SAMUEL DUBOIS COOK  
CENTER ON SOCIAL EQUITY

**Hank & Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars  
Summer Research Institute**

*3<sup>rd</sup> Year Cohort*

**Research Papers**

Summer 2018



## **Samuel DuBois Cook**

The Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity (Cook Center) was named after Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook, a distinguished political scientist, scholar, educator, author, administrator, civil and human rights activist and public servant. Dr. Cook, a professor in the Duke University political science department became the first African-American to hold a regular and/or tenured faculty appointment at a predominantly white southern college or university. He went on to serve 22-and-a-half years as president of Dillard University in New Orleans.

## **Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity**

The Duke University Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity is an interdisciplinary research center within Trinity School of Arts and Sciences that is comprised of faculty and scholars from across Duke and a diverse international group of affiliated universities, research centers and non-governmental organizations. Its mission is to promote equity, across all domains of human interactions, through interdisciplinary research, teaching, partnerships, policy, and practice. The Cook Center seeks to employ the innovative use of new and existing data, develop human capital, incorporate stakeholder voices through civic engagement, create viable collaborations, and engender equity-driven policy and social transformation at the local, national and international levels.

## **Hank & Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute**

The Samuel DuBois Cook Center on Social Equity's Hank and Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute is a three-week educational enrichment program that provides middle and high-school students enrolled in Durham Public Schools (DPS) in Durham, North Carolina, with training to enhance their writing, research, and presentation skills. The program is sponsored by the Samuel Cook Center on Social Equity at Duke University in partnership with Durham Public Schools (DPS). In keeping with the Samuel DuBois Cook Center's central mission as a community of scholars engaged in the study of the causes and consequences of inequality, participants will explore curriculum related to the economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions of inequality.

During the Hank and Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute, students receive instruction from distinguished middle and high-school teachers, university professors, and leaders from community organizations. The program's main focus is on the development of students' research, writing, presentation, and critical-inquiry skills around issues of social justice. Students design and prepare original research presentations, posters, and papers focused on policy issues that affect inequality. Program material is selected by the teaching faculty in collaboration with Cook-Center scholars, focusing on various inequalities and their intersections. Emphasis is placed throughout the program on mentoring students in research, writing, and presentation skills. During the Hank and Billye Suber Aaron Young Scholars Summer Research Institute, students participate in workshops at Duke University's Perkins and Rubenstein Libraries and the Nasher Museum of Art.

### Oluwatobi Adio



Oluwatobi Adio is a rising senior at the City of Medicine Academy. She likes to read and binge watch Nigerian movies with her mom. Adio wrote her research to raise awareness on the underlying issues of sexual assault on college campuses.

### Kollin Brown



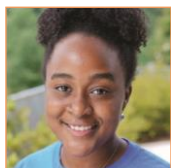
Kollin Brown is a rising senior at Hillside High School, where he held a conference about Social Equity for students in Durham Public Schools. Kollin has done research about housing Inequities. Watching Durham and Chicago firsthand, change over the years through gentrification has inspired him to do research about housing at the Young Scholars Institute. Upon graduation, Kollin plans on attending Morehouse College.

### Ayden Lawrence



Ayden Lawrence is a participant in the third year cohort of the Aaron Young Scholar Summer Research Institute and is a rising sophomore at J.D Clements Early College. He is interested in the development of food deserts because they are contributing to the rise of health diseases in communities of color.

### Akanke Mason-Hogans



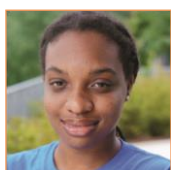
Akanke Mason-Hogans is a rising senior at Josephine Dobbs Clement Early College High School, and is a 3rd year student in the Aaron Young Scholars program. She has a passion for creative expression, social justice, and pepperoni pizza, and hopes to empower others through her research and advocacy. Akanke was inspired to write about the effects of colorism on education after witnessing it firsthand, with hopes that her research will enlighten educators on how to better serve their students in the future.

### Sandra Santillan



Sandra Santillan is an Aaron Scholar, Durham native, and rising senior at Hillside High School. Over the course of three summers at the Young Scholars Research Institute, Sandra has researched and worked on issues of gender inequity, mental illness, and incarceration. She has worked alongside her peers, generating research products on issues of inequity. Sandra hopes to continue her research and widen her understanding of social inequities, as well as spreading valuable lessons and finding potential solutions related to her research interests.

### Jenny Uba



Jenny Uba is a rising senior at City of Medicine Academy and is a part of the 3rd year cohort in the Aaron Young Scholars Institute Program. Her interest in food disparities was sparked when she learned about the inequities that exist in access to healthy food. Jenny hopes to further her research and expand her knowledge on the food supply chain in order to improve health outcomes in communities of color.

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# The African “American Dream”: The Destruction of the Black Wall Street

By: Kollin Brown

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify how and why the government and its policies have continuously destroyed black communities. Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa were self-sufficient communities where blacks had positive economic outcomes. In Tulsa, through racially motivated terrorism, and in Durham, under the guise of “urban renewal”, Black Wall Street was devastated. This destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa resulted in loss of housing, and destruction of businesses throughout the African American community. Because homes in Tulsa and Durham were demolished, families moved farther away from the inner city and their socio economic status has been impacted negatively.

## Introduction

In the early 1900’s, former slaves moved to places which promised them a good life. Tulsa and Durham were two great cities that fulfilled their wishes. Tulsa, Oklahoma had an emerging oil industry. Tulsa, the “Oil Capital of the World”, produced \$5.28 billion gallons of oil during 1900-1935.<sup>21</sup> The Greenwood district, a predominantly black neighborhood in Tulsa, also known as “Little Africa”, thrived on its own resources. Just like in Tulsa, the black community in Durham was self- sufficient and prospering. As a result of the tremendous wealth

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<sup>21</sup> “The Reemergence of the KKK.” Khan Academy. Accessed May 24, 2018.  
[https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-7/apush-1920s-america/a/the-reemergence-of-the-kkk.](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-us-history/period-7/apush-1920s-america/a/the-reemergence-of-the-<u>kkk</u>.)

and black-owned businesses, these areas were known as Black Wall Street, but all that soon came to an abrupt end.

### **Thesis Statement**

The U.S. government aided the destruction of Black Wall Street in Tulsa, through racially motivated terrorism, and in Durham, under the guise of “urban renewal”. This destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa resulted in loss of housing, and destruction of businesses throughout the African American community.

### **Research Questions**

1. How did the destruction of Black Wall Street limit African American advancement and change the socio economic status in the Tulsa and Durham communities?
2. Which factors led to the destruction of Black Wall Street?

### **Methodology and Literature Review**

Data about this topic was generated through secondary sources. The body of literature used for analysis comes from archival documents, from the Duke University Library database, related to Tulsa, Oklahoma and Durham, North Carolina and African American history. This research adds to the literature by making links between two cities that on the surface seem dissimilar but have a lot in common and as a result, we are able to make recommendations for policy changes that can be instructive for other cities.

### **Data Analysis**

#### Success of Black Wall Street

Black Wall Street in Durham created a positive economic outcome for the African American community. The Hayti District, an African American neighborhood, in Durham was the first all-black community to be fully self-sufficient. During the height of its success, Black

Wall Street, home to “the world’s largest Negro business”<sup>22</sup>, was dubbed as the “Capital of the Black Middle Class.”<sup>23</sup> In 1890 the valuation of black property in Durham was \$8,696. By 1920 the valuation of black property significantly increased to \$4,298,067.<sup>24</sup> During this time blacks in Durham had the highest rates of homeownership and per capita income in America.<sup>25</sup>

Black Wall Street in Tulsa was a symbol of black wealth, pride, and unity.<sup>26</sup> The neighborhood of Greenwood supported about 10,000 black residents.<sup>27</sup> According to 1920 city directories, Greenwood had 108 black businesses including 2 newspapers, 41 groceries and meat markets, 30 restaurants and cafes, and 33 offices for professionals, including 15 physicians and attorneys.<sup>28</sup> This black community was far more advanced than some white communities in Tulsa. Brandon Weber states, “The schools were superior to those of the white areas, and many of the houses had indoor plumbing before those in the white areas did.”<sup>29</sup> Due to segregation, Greenwood was “self-sufficient and became home to many black multi-millionaire entrepreneurs. With this growth and success came envy from white Tulsans. Many of the businesses in Greenwood (which they referred to as “Little Africa”) were more prosperous than those in the white community.

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<sup>22</sup> (Weare, Walter (1993). *Black Business in the New South*. Duke University History. p. 12.)

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, Jean (1990). *Durham County*. Duke University Press. p. 54

<sup>24</sup> Boyd, William (3 June 1927). *The Story of Durham*. Duke University Press. p. 70

<sup>25</sup> Smith, Autavius. "Promises Made, the Legacy of Urban Renewal in Durham." *Campus Echo Newspaper Online*. June 19, 2017. Accessed May 17, 2018. <http://campusecho.com/video-promises-made-the-legacy-of-urban-renewal-in-durham/>.

<sup>26</sup> "The Race Riot That Destroyed Tulsa's Black Wall Street." *Official Black Wall Street*. July 30, 2015. Accessed May 24, 2018. <https://officialblackwallstreet.com/black-wall-street-story/>.

<sup>27</sup> Mills, Darhian. "Deep Greenwood (Tulsa), Oklahoma (1906–) | The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed." *Black Past*. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/deep-greenwood-tulsa-oklahoma-1906>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Weber, Brandon. "Ever Heard Of 'Black Wall Street'?" *Progressive.org*. February 19, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://progressive.org/dispatches/ever-heard-black-wall-street/>.

## Destruction of Black Wall Street

The destruction of Black Wall Street in Tulsa was aided by the government and led to terrorism in the black community. This thriving community of Tulsa came to an end in 1921 due to false accusations of a black elevator operator sexually assaulting a white woman. In Tulsa, along with a mob of angry white men, local white officers armed other white rioters who were denied arms and ammunition at the National Guard Armory.<sup>30</sup> The police chief called all available officers to be dispatched during the riot. Hundreds of white civilians were also appointed as “special deputies” to enforce terror in the Greenwood District.<sup>31</sup> Through the threat of the white mobs, black men in the Greenwood district tried their best to protect their families and property. Blacks were outnumbered and their property was destroyed. Even World War I planes were dispatched, firing shots and dropping fire bombs on the black community.<sup>32</sup>

In Durham, the destruction of Black Wall Street was aided by the government under guise of “Urban Renewal.” Throughout the 1950’s Durham’s population was increasing. City officials were afraid that traffic in Durham would be a problem with the upcoming research triangle park project.<sup>33</sup> The “solution” to this problem was to construct Highway (Hwy) 147, the

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<sup>30</sup> "The Race Riot That Destroyed Tulsa's Black Wall Street." Official Black Wall Street. July 30, 2015. Accessed May 24, 2018. <https://officialblackwallstreet.com/black-wall-street-story/>. ; "Tulsa Race Riot Timeline." Tulsa World. May 31, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. [http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-race-riot-timeline/article\\_a69f47d8-febb-51bf-b800-950bce097c42.htm](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-race-riot-timeline/article_a69f47d8-febb-51bf-b800-950bce097c42.htm)

<sup>31</sup>Ibid

<sup>32</sup> "The Race Riot That Destroyed Tulsa's Black Wall Street." Official Black Wall Street. July 30, 2015. Accessed May 24, 2018. <https://officialblackwallstreet.com/black-wall-street-story/>.

<sup>33</sup> "I.L. "Buck" Dean Freeway." History Beneath Our Feet. Accessed June 01, 2018. <http://museumofdurhamhistory.org/beneathourfeet/streets/ILBuckDeanFreeway>.

Durham Freeway, to connect I-40 and I-85 through downtown.<sup>34</sup> In 1962, a bond referendum for the construction of Hwy 147 won voter approval because of the heavy support of three predominantly black precincts. The construction of Hwy 147 began in 1967.<sup>35</sup> The black community was tricked by the government that urban renewal would benefit them. Blacks thought that federal money would be used to renovate housing. But in reality Hwy 147 destroyed the homes and businesses and these new homes were not rebuilt.<sup>36</sup>

### Impact on the Black Communities

Almost every home in the Greenwood District of Tulsa was burned down which led to 90% of black residents being homeless.<sup>37</sup> Losing homes is one disastrous effect of the destruction of Black Wall Street, but the loss of life was unimaginable. In Tulsa, an estimated 300 blacks were murdered. Several prominent businessmen and doctors were among the dead. A.C. Jackson, recognized as one of the best surgeons of his time, surrendered to the mob of white men to protect his family but he was killed and nobody was found guilty of his murder.<sup>38</sup> Ironically, the police detained and arrested 6,000 blacks. These blacks would only be released if a white person vouched for them, others were jailed.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, none of the whites

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Mills, Darhian. "Deep Greenwood (Tulsa), Oklahoma (1906–) | The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed." Black Past. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/deep-greenwood-tulsa-oklahoma-1906>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Weber, Brandon. "Ever Heard Of 'Black Wall Street'?" Progressive.org. February 19, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://progressive.org/dispatches/ever-heard-black-wall-street/>.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> "Tulsa Race Riot Timeline." Tulsa World. May 31, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. [http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-race-riot-timeline/article\\_a69f47d8-febb-51bf-b800-950bce097c42.htm](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-race-riot-timeline/article_a69f47d8-febb-51bf-b800-950bce097c42.htm)



who murdered blacks and destroyed the Greenwood District were arrested.<sup>40</sup> In total, the Greenwood District's damage was equivalent to \$30 million.<sup>41</sup>

Across the Hayti community of Durham, 4,057 homes and 502 businesses were demolished due to Hwy 147.<sup>42</sup> Because of houses being destroyed, families had to find new places to live, which was usually farther away from the inner city and cost significantly more.<sup>43</sup> The effect of the destruction was bad for the smaller black owned businesses because it moved the consumers away. Fortunately, the larger businesses in Black Wall Street like NC Life Mutual and Mechanics & Farmers Bank could sustain itself due to its wealth.

### Bouncing Back

After the destruction of Tulsa in 1921, white leaders in Tulsa didn't want Greenwood to be rebuilt. Ordinances were passed to keep homes from being rebuilt in Greenwood. The white Tulsans' plan was to push blacks as far away from downtown as possible.<sup>44</sup> But when African American lawyers won an injunction to stop this from happening, the remaining black citizens rebuilt Greenwood by 1942 without any assistance from the state or insurance companies.<sup>45</sup> Greenwood's rebuilt district was starting to flourish, until, "urban renewal" efforts in the 1950's

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<sup>40</sup> Weber, Brandon. "Ever Heard Of 'Black Wall Street'?" Progressive.org. February 19, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://progressive.org/dispatches/ever-heard-black-wall-street/>.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Smith, Autavius. "'Promises Made,' the Legacy of Urban Renewal in Durham." Campus Echo Newspaper Online. June 19, 2017. Accessed May 17, 2018. <http://campusecho.com/video-promises-made-the-legacy-of-urban-renewal-in-durham/>.

<sup>43</sup> Hester, Denise. "We Shouldn't Have to Move Out to Move Up\*." Sociation Today. 2006. Accessed June 01, 2018. <http://www.ncsociology.org/sociationtoday/hester.htm>.

<sup>44</sup> Weber, Brandon. "Ever Heard Of 'Black Wall Street'?" Progressive.org. February 19, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://progressive.org/dispatches/ever-heard-black-wall-street/>.

<sup>45</sup> "The Race Riot That Destroyed Tulsa's Black Wall Street." Official Black Wall Street. July 30, 2015. Accessed May 24, 2018. <https://officialblackwallstreet.com/black-wall-street-story/>.

which pushed the majority of blacks out the district and further north.<sup>46</sup> In 2002, the Tulsa Metropolitan Ministry Reparations Gift Fund distributed about \$200 to each of the 131 riot survivors. Later in 2004 a federal lawsuit seeking reparations from city and state were dismissed due to statute of limitations.<sup>47</sup> Today there are only a few blocks of land in order to preserve some of Greenwood's History.<sup>48</sup>

In Durham, history is repeating itself. As new businesses spring up across once African soil, the cost of living is increasing in inner city Durham. Higher rent in Black neighborhoods are pushing families out of their homes and farther away from the inner city.<sup>49</sup> New luxury apartments, "The Lofts at Southside" managed by McCormack Baron are adding fuel to the fire of gentrification. The mission of the property management company says, "Transforming places into communities where all people can thrive."<sup>50</sup> Their mission statement contradicts what they are actually doing. They transformed a place (a black neighborhood) into a community where only some people (white/wealthier people) can thrive. Through the influx of new housing and new businesses, Durham has changed for the better for wealthier people and changed for the worse for the low income families living in the old Hayti District.

## Conclusion

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<sup>46</sup> Weber, Brandon. "Ever Heard Of 'Black Wall Street'?" Progressive.org. February 19, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://progressive.org/dispatches/ever-heard-black-wall-street/>.

<sup>47</sup> "Tulsa Race Riot Timeline." Tulsa World. May 31, 2016. Accessed May 24, 2018. [http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-race-riot-timeline/article\\_a69f47d8-febb-51bf-b800-950bce097c42.htm](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/tulsa-race-riot-timeline/article_a69f47d8-febb-51bf-b800-950bce097c42.htm)

<sup>48</sup> Mills, Darhian. "Deep Greenwood (Tulsa), Oklahoma (1906-) | The Black Past: Remembered and Reclaimed." Black Past. Accessed May 24, 2018. <http://www.blackpast.org/aaw/deep-greenwood-tulsa-oklahoma-1906>.

<sup>49</sup> Abrams, Leah. "'Cut the Bull:' a Deeper Look at Durham." The Chronicle. August 23, 2016. Accessed June 01, 2018. <http://www.dukechronicle.com/article/2016/08/a-deeper-look-at-durham>.

<sup>50</sup> "About." McCormack Baron Salazar | COCA Center of Creative Arts. Accessed July 25, 2018. <http://www.mccormackbaron.com/about/>.

All in all, government policies aided the destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham due to “urban renewal”, and in Tulsa through racially motivated terrorism. The destruction of Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa negatively affected the socio economic status of the African American community through loss of housing and destruction of businesses. The black communities in Durham and Tulsa were communities that could last forever on its own resources. This black success would soon come to an end due to racism and the government. The effect on the socio economic status of black people is negative because their housing is either destroyed or rent increases and they have to move out of their homes. The destruction of Black Wall street had a large impact in the destruction of Black wealth overall. This destroyed the black economy and essentially blacks had to start to build their wealth from scratch again. Some possible solutions to this problem are reparations through affordable housing in inner city areas for blacks affected by the destruction of Black Wall Street. Also through giving incentives, as in loans or other funding, for black startup businesses. Some further research that can be done on Black Wall Street in Durham and Tulsa can be about estimating the wealth of these black communities, if they were not destroyed.

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