

## Durham's Hayti Community Urban Renewal or Urban Removal?

### Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about Durham's Hayti community, which was once one of the most unique and successful black communities in America. Through reading, class discussion, and examination of *Main Street, Carolina's* digital history project on Hayti (<http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/hayti/>), students will learn how Hayti flourished from the 1880s to the 1940s and became known as the "The Black Capitol of the South." Students will then place themselves in the year 1958, when the Durham Redevelopment Commission was formed and proposed a plan to "renew" Hayti, which had fallen into disrepair by the 1950s. Students will participate in a mock public hearing in which they grapple with the pros and cons of the urban renewal proposal and ultimately, they will decide whether or not to implement the plan. Afterwards, students will explore the actual decision made to implement the renewal plan, as well as the impact urban renewal had on Hayti.

For related content, see also *Main Street, Carolina's* project on Durham's Black Wall Street at [http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/parrish\\_st\\_durham](http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/parrish_st_durham) and the accompanying curriculum at <http://www.civics.unc.edu/resources/docs/ParrishStreetLessons.pdf>.

### Grade

8

### Course

North Carolina: Creation and Development of the State

### North Carolina Standard Course of Study

- Objective 5.05: Assess the influence of the political, legal, and social movements on the political system and life in North Carolina.
- Objective 6.04: Assess the impact of World War II on the economic, political, social, and military roles of different groups in North Carolina including women and minorities.
- Objective 7.02: Evaluate the importance of social changes to different groups in North Carolina.
- Objective 7.04: Compare and contrast the various political viewpoints surrounding issues of the post World War II era.
- Objective 7.05: Evaluate the major changes and events that have affected the roles of local, state, and national governments.

### North Carolina Essential Standards for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies

- 8.H.1: Apply historical thinking to understand the creation and development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.2.1 Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts (e.g. war, slavery, states' rights and citizenship and immigration policies) on the development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.H.3.3 Explain how individuals and groups have influenced economic, political and social change in North Carolina and the United States.

- 8.H.3.4 Compare historical and contemporary issues to understand continuity and change in the development of North Carolina and the United States.
- 8.E.1.1 Explain how conflict, cooperation, and competition influenced periods of economic growth and decline (e.g. economic depressions and recessions).
- 8.C&G.1.4 Analyze access to democratic rights and freedoms among various groups in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. enslaved people, women, wage earners, landless farmers, American Indians, African Americans and other ethnic groups).
- 8.C&G.2.3 Explain the impact of human and civil rights issues throughout North Carolina and United States history.
- 8.C.1.3 Summarize the contributions of particular groups to the development of North Carolina and the United States (e.g. women, religious groups, and ethnic minorities such as American Indians, African Americans, and European immigrants).

### Materials

- Example Before/After Image of Urban Renewal, attached
- Durham’s Hayti Neighborhood, reading & questions attached
- Student laptops with Internet access (at least one computer for each 2-3 students)
- Access to the Main Street Carolina site, “They Hayti Project,” located at <http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/hayti/>
- Handouts for simulating Durham City Council Public Hearing:
  - Instructions for City Council
  - Instructions for Durham Redevelopment Commission
  - Instructions for the Coalition to Save Hayti
  - Instructions for Hayti Citizens for Change
  - Public Hearing Agenda (distribute to all students)
  - Durham Redevelopment Commission Proposal (distribute to all students)
  - Redevelopment budget and Hayti map (distribute to all students)
- The Redevelopment of Hayti, reading attached
- The Walls Have Voices, reading attached

### Essential Questions

- What is urban renewal?
- In what ways might urban renewal positively or negatively impact a community?
- Describe the Hayti community. What was unique about this community?
- What types of businesses were located in Hayti?
- What benefits of renewing Hayti were promised to the community?
- In actuality, what was the result of urban renewal on Hayti?
- Why is it important to learn about the history of Hayti? In what ways can we preserve the unique community and culture that existed in Hayti?

### Duration

- Two or more 60-90 minute periods
- Teachers with limited class time can shorten and eliminate activities as they see fit to work within the timeframe available.

### Preparation

- This lesson is centered around *Main Street, Carolina’s* digital history project “The Hayti Project, Digitally Reconstructing a Vanished Community,” located at: <http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/hayti/>. Ideally, teachers will arrange time in the computer lab

or another space where students can have access to the Internet and the MSC site. (Students can partner up on computers for this activity.)

- This site is best accessed using the Firefox browser, available at <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/>. Teachers should explore the site prior to class in order to better assist students as they browse the information.

- Teaching the history of Hayti involves discussing sensitive historical issues such as Jim Crow, segregation, and racism. While studying such history can be difficult, it is important for students to explore the whole history to gain a well rounded understanding of North Carolina's past and present. In order to study this history effectively, teachers must have established a safe classroom environment with clear expectations of respect, open-mindedness, and civil conversation.

## **Procedure**

### **Day 1**

#### **Introduction to Urban Renewal**

1. As a warm up, write the words "urban renewal" on the board and ask students to share what they think it is, what they know about the general concept of urban renewal, what words they associate with this phrase, etc.
2. After students have brainstormed, provide them with some basic information about urban renewal, such as:
  - Urban renewal refers to the redevelopment or rehabilitation of property in a city, usually as the result of a cooperative effort by private developers and local government.
  - Urban renewal swept across a number of cities in the United States and beyond starting in the 1950s. The basic concept was to demolish and rebuild major city areas that were seen as obstacles to economic development. For example, imagine an area downtown that is considered severely dilapidated (abandoned buildings, vacant lots, or even structures such as homes and businesses that are in use but are in disrepair). Urban renewal would involve replacing that section of town with updated architecture and amenities. Urban renewal may involve the demolition of structures, the redevelopment of structures, the relocation of businesses, and/or the relocation of people/individual homes. Renewal may also involve the building of larger structures (from a shopping mall to a park) and may include the creation of new roadways, such as large freeways.
  - In some cases of urban renewal, the concept of eminent domain is also involved. Eminent domain is when the government purchases property for public use. It is also used as a legal instrument to take private property for city-initiated development projects.
3. Next, project or handout the attached image representing an example "before and after" of urban renewal. Discuss:
  - Compare these two images. What do you notice?
  - What obvious improvements were made in this street's redevelopment?
  - What other changes do you think would take place, other than physical, after such a renewal process?
  - What might the impact of this change be on the community of people that existed here? (Make sure students consider positive and negative possibilities.)
  - Assume the windows you see on the second and third stories are people's homes. What do you think happened to them in this process? Do you think they still live on this same street? Why or why not?
  - Imagine you are a 78 year-old who has lived on this street your entire life. You know every shop owner and most of your neighbors. This is your community - your home. How would you feel if you were told you had to move out because the street was part of an urban renewal plan, regardless of whether you wanted to move or not? Imagine you were then unable to afford to live on the same street, since such beautiful improvements means higher prices. How would you feel?
  - Overall, what do you think are the positive and negative aspects to urban renewal?

- Teachers should create a “T” chart, with a “+” in the left column and a “-” the right column, on which to write student responses.) Ask clarifying questions to ensure students consider all aspects, positive and negative, to urban renewal and redevelopment.
- Urban renewal is seen by proponents as an economic engine and a reform mechanism, and by critics as a mechanism for control. It may enhance existing communities, but can also result in the demolition of neighborhoods. (For example, a “+” might be that urban renewal can turn previously dilapidated areas into beautiful new buildings, but a “-” is that community members who have made their homes and lives there can be disrupted in the process.)
- Teachers should also address the fact that while the image of urban renewal students examined does show a process of beautification, now all urban renewal plans follow through to actually result in such physical improvements.

#### **The Hayti Community in Durham, NC**

4. Tell students that they are going to be learning about the neighborhood of Hayti in downtown Durham, NC, an African American community that was eventually impacted by urban redevelopment and other issues during the 1960s. Ask students if they have heard of Hayti or already know anything about it. Project an image of the Hayti neighborhood, such as the photo of Hayti’s hotel, movie theatre, and donut shop located at <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/media/uploads/2010/01/g181.jpg>. Provide an overview of the community, such as:
  - Hayti became one of the most unique and successful black communities in America, where in the early 20th century some of the largest Black-owned and operated businesses existed. Hayti flourished from the 1880s to the 1940s and was recognized by prominent national Black leaders as the “The Black Capitol of the South.” Durham was the home of North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company, Mechanics & Farmers’ Bank, Lincoln Hospital, and over 200 other African American businesses. In fact, one of the streets bordering the Hayti community eventually became known as “Black Wall Street.” Further, in 1910, Dr. James E. Shepard founded what is now North Carolina Central University, the nation’s first publicly supported liberal arts college for African-Americans.
  - Ask students if any of them can identify what would have been special about this community during the 1900s. (Teachers are looking for a student who can point out the incredible adversity African Americans faced during the 1900s with Jim Crow laws. Yet, even in the face of such racism, many black individuals were still able to operate successful black businesses and form a thriving community.) If no student can note this, open the conversation again after they have completed their reading.
5. Pass out the attached reading and questions, “Durham’s Hayti Neighborhood.” Instruct students to read and answer the questions (either individually or in partners) then discuss their thoughts as a class.

#### **Exploring Hayti with Main Street Carolina**

6. Next, tell students that they are going to have a few minutes to tour Hayti, as it existed during the 1960s. In partners or groups of three, instruct students to go to “The Hayti Project” website at <http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/hayti/index.php/> and to click on “View Map” at the top of the page. Tell students that the map shows the Hayti community and the various markers on the map represent some of the businesses and residences that were located there. There are also several community properties noted, which are mainly churches. Explain to students that they can click on the various markers to learn more about the property. By clicking on “More Information” in the box that pops up, students can explore materials such as photos of the property, appraisal forms, and more. Tell students to take a brief amount of time (around 8 – 10 minutes) to take a cursory, virtual tour of some of the Hayti properties.

**Teacher Notes:**

- At this point, do not point out any additional information regarding the website or highlight anything regarding urban renewal. Discussion of what happened to Hayti should take place after the city council simulation later in the lesson. Likewise, students should not explore any of the additional links on the site; rather, they should only explore the map and the categories tagged on it.
  - Make sure that the box for displaying the “Structural Environmental Condition Project Area Map, 1961” is checked and that the transparency bar is slid all the way to the right. Eventually, students will use this bar to fade out the 1961 map to show the current map of Durham. This should not take place until after the city council simulation and the discussion of what happened to Hayti occurs.
  - Initially, all of the boxes for “Category” should be checked, but students can uncheck particular boxes to filter by the categories of residential, business, and community properties.
7. Once students have spent some introductory time exploring the site, ask them to share their general observations.

**Durham City Council Public Hearing: A Proposal for the Renewal of Hayti in 1958**

8. Next, tell students that by 1952, the once thriving Hayti neighborhood had become badly run down for many reasons. Because of World War II, there was a ban on building, and combined with a massive baby boom, a housing shortage existed in Durham. The neighborhood began to fall into disrepair. In addition, the prominence of NC Mutual fell in Hayti, as its popularity had become more mainstream, due partly to integration and a push toward “color-blind capitalism.” This, coupled with another great Northern migration and the death of C.C. Spaulding (originally the general manager and later the president of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company) in 1952 contributed to the demise of black lending in Hayti. Downtown manufacturing began to decline and with a change in perceptions of smoking, tobacco companies began to lay off workers, which further negatively impacted employment and business opportunities. As cars became a common household commodity, the suburban life grew and thus central city businesses began to struggle.

Durham’s Hayti began to be seen by government officials as a hindrance to the economic growth of Durham. They believed that its narrow and crowded streets prevented traffic from flowing easily in and out of Durham and that it thus failed to support the expansive city model which many believed Durham needed to follow to move into the future. Thus, it became a primary target by city officials for redevelopment. In 1958, Durham devised plans to redesign parts of the core of Durham to support economic growth and one of the neighborhoods slotted for urban renewal was Hayti. (Source: <http://www.ibiblio.org/hayti>)

9. Tell students that they are going to imagine that they are living in the year 1958 and that they will decide whether or not to approve the proposed plan for urban renewal in Hayti. Students will be participating in a public hearing simulation, in which the Durham Redevelopment Commission presents its plan for the renewal of Hayti. Two community groups – one in favor of the renewal effort and one against – will present their opinions on the plan in hopes to convince City Council how to vote. Set up the simulation by taking the following steps:
- Provide each student with a copy of the attached Public Hearing Agenda, the Durham Redevelopment Commission Proposal, the redevelopment budget, and the map of Hayti.
  - Divide the class evenly into four groups who will portray: City Council, the Durham Redevelopment Commission, the Coalition to Save Hayti, or Hayti Citizens for Change
  - Distribute the attached instruction sheets to the appropriate group and allow students 5-8 minutes to silently read the instructions and review the Durham Redevelopment Commission Proposal. After students have skimmed the instructions for their group and read the proposal, explain the following instructions and answer questions students may have:

- **Durham City Council:** (Teachers should assign a student with strong leadership skills the role of Mayor. The Mayor will be responsible for leading the public hearing.) Under the Mayor’s leadership, you will spend the next 20 minutes preparing for the public hearing you, as the city council, is holding in 1958. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive as much information and input as possible regarding the Durham Redevelopment Commission’s proposal to “renew” Hayti. Review the instructions and the redevelopment plan provided to you in detail. As a council, discuss your first impressions of the redevelopment plan. Then, review the meeting agenda listing the groups that will be presenting to you today. Infer what you think these groups may say to you today and what their stance will be regarding redevelopment. As you discuss each group, create 2-3 follow-up questions for each presenter that you will ask after their presentation.
- **Durham Redevelopment Commission, the Coalition to Save Hayti, and Hayti Citizens for Change:** You will spend the next 20 minutes developing a presentation to deliver at the City Council’s public hearing. Your goal is for the Council to either support or reject the redevelopment plan based on what your instructions say. You must figure out how to prepare an organized, creative, and motivational presentation. Also, you should spend some time reviewing the agenda and inferring what the other presenting groups might say. This will help you know what you are up against and also what you should say to contradict the groups who may oppose you. You will present in the order noted on the meeting agenda. You will have 3 minutes of uninterrupted presentation time, following which the City Council members will ask follow up questions.

**Teacher notes:**

- This activity is grounded in aspects of the actual redevelopment scenario that took place in 1958, but is not meant to provide a complete historical account of Durham’s redevelopment of Hayti. Rather, the purpose of this activity is to give students a general scenario to allow them to start grappling with the themes surrounding this history. Thus, much of students’ presentations will be based on their realistic inferences rather than factual data.
- Teachers should circulate throughout the groups as they work, helping them to make realistic inferences regarding this period of history that they use to build their arguments. Students should be prepared to “think on their feet” during the simulation and infer/provide as reasonable answers as they can to the questions City Council poses. While this will involve students making up certain aspects of their answers, their answers should still be realistic considering what they have learned thus far regarding Hayti history.
- This simulation is designed to be entirely student led. Teachers should assign a student to play the Mayor who will be in charge of moving the agenda along. The teacher should spend time with the City Council preparing them for their roles, particularly letting the Mayor know that he/she will lead the meeting by:
  - Calling the meeting to order, welcoming everyone to the public hearing, and stating the purpose of the meeting
  - Leading the Pledge of Allegiance
  - Calling up each group of presenters in the order that they appear on the agenda
  - After each presentation, thank the presenters for their time then open the floor for follow-up questions from the City Council (remind the City Council that they can refer to the questions they pre-selected, or raise new questions based on what they heard in the presentation)
  - After all groups have presented and been questioned by council members, and if time permits, the Mayor can call for final comments from the presenting groups (i.e. a one-minute rebuttal statement), or allow groups to ask questions of one another to impact the Council’s decision. If time does not permit, the Mayor should thank all presenters for their time and implement one of the following options for closing the hearing:
    - If time permits, council members will have an open discussion of what decision they would like to make regarding the proposal for the renewal of Hayti. This discussion should take place out loud so that the audience can hear, but no participation from the audience will be allowed.

- If time is limited, a quicker option is that each councilmember will state their current opinion of the proposal, noting how they would vote and discussing which of the presenters affected their opinion.
    - Let the Mayor know you will signal her/him regarding which option to implement at the end of the simulation.
  - During the simulation, assist the Mayor in moving things along if/when needed, but try to allow the students to have control of the simulation as much as possible.
  - For factual clarification, the “Coalition to Save Hayti” instructions mention White Rock Baptist church and the fact that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was scheduled to speak there in the future. In actuality, Dr. King did speak at White Rock, but not until 1960 (two years after the 1958 date this fictional hearing simulation is set during.) Teachers may want to clarify this after the hearing to ensure students understand the historical timeline beyond of the role play.
- 10.** The simulation will take approximately 30-45 minutes to conduct and debrief. Thus, it is likely that students will need to spend the remainder of class preparing for the simulation, with the actual simulation held on the following day of class. Teachers may want to instruct students to come dressed in character for the simulation (i.e., “business casual” meeting attire.)

## **Day 2**

- 11.** Have students get into their public hearing groups upon entering class and provide 5-10 minutes for them to review their presentations. Prior to class, arrange the room so that the Council members are facing the audience. Place an additional table and/or chairs between the audience and Council (facing the Council). This is where students will come to present.
- 12.** Once students are ready to start the simulation, the teacher should review expected behavior for the simulation, noting expectations such as:
- Remain respectful at all times and encourage one another.
  - Take the simulation seriously.
  - Listen when others are speaking. Do not discuss your presentation or rebuttals while other groups are presenting.
  - Maintain order and professionalism throughout the hearing, whether you agree with what is being said or not.
  - No name calling, eye rolling, smacking teeth, disruptive comments, etc.
  - Have fun!
- 13.** Ask the Mayor to call the meeting to order and conduct the simulation. After all groups have presented and been questioned by council members, and if time permits, signal the Mayor regarding whether time permits to call for final comments from the presenting groups (i.e. a one-minute rebuttal statement), or if groups can ask questions of one another to impact the Council’s decision. If time does not permit, the Mayor should thank all presenters for their time and at this point, the teacher should let the Mayor know which one of the following means of closing the activity to implement:
- The Mayor can lead the Council in an open deliberation regarding the redevelopment proposal. (Ensure students understand that in a realistic situation, this would not necessarily be the case.) Presenting citizen groups should only listen at this point. The deliberation can last until council reaches a unanimous decision, or if debate ensues, the Mayor can be instructed to “table the discussion until the next meeting.” If consensus is not met, reflect on this in the closing discussion.
  - If time is limited, rather than having the council deliberate, a quicker option is to have each councilmember state their current opinion of the proposal, noting how they would vote and discussing which of the presenters affected their opinion.
- 14.** Culminate the simulation with a discussion:

- What do you think of the opinions and/or decision represented by the Council?
- How would you vote if you were on the Council? Why?
- What are some of the most compelling arguments for renewal? Against renewal?
- In reality, what typically influences local government officials in decisions such as these?
- In actuality, what else may have affected this decision in 1958?
  - Discuss outliers such as: influences on council members, i.e. hope of getting reelected, bias, political loyalties, economic interests, etc.; the role of race and racism (i.e., some people believe that it is no coincidence that urban renewal coincided with the Civil Rights movement. As African American communities fought for equal rights during the 60s, governments found ways to disempower them); the prioritization of economic interests over cultural interests; etc.

### **The Effects of Hayti's Redevelopment**

15. Next, let students know that in actuality, Durham's City Council did support the Durham Redevelopment Commission's proposal. Pass out the attached reading, "The Redevelopment of Hayti" and instruct students to read silently, or read the article together as a class. As the article deals with some complex concepts, teachers should lead the class in discussion (rather than have students answer questions individually):

- Why did many of Hayti's residents support redevelopment?
- How did the redevelopment plan ultimately impact Hayti? In your opinion, what went wrong?
- What types of conspiracies does the article imply were at play? What is your opinion of this?
  - Teachers should use their discretion regarding how much information to share with students regarding concepts such as redlining, the accusations against urban renewal as being a systematic break-up and thus disempowerment of African American communities, etc.
  - Additional information to share with students:  
Despite the vigor of Hayti and its triumph in the face of institutionalized racism, the national and city governments were still white. And as downtown traffic was declining and the suburbs were growing in the 1950's, the white faces in power realized the state of Durham's deterioration. Their solution was to revitalize downtown business areas and "improve" the city with a new highway artery. The extension of 15-501 was to be constructed on a sweep of land that was in fact the crucial center of residential and commercial space in Hayti, and the improvements would be made at the cost of black-owned properties that would have to come down. The community was wary, but city officials were quick to assure them that they would be amply compensated for their homes, and a provision was created that required the relocation of businesses at the city's expense. Having been convinced that they would be taken care of, Hayti's residents could only watch as their homes were bulldozed, their property confiscated without due compensation, and their community promptly snuffed out. White control had seemingly trumped Hayti's success, previously a symbol of incredible strength and accomplishment in a severely hostile political and social climate. Gary Kueber, an "urban health consultant" who authors the blog "Endangered Durham" asserts that the demolition of Hayti was overtly racist. "While the leaders of Durham did many, many stupid things in the 1960s in their attempts to 'modernize' downtown and 'clear substandard housing,' this was the stupidest. The fact that much of the housing demolished was populated by African-Americans was a good reason not to give a damn what happened to the people who lived in that housing," he claims. Kueber describes today's Hayti as a district in which "businesses have gone to die," where crime is a significant problem, and children are discouraged from playing.

The old Hayti community was an example of an African American community able to achieve success, solidarity, and renown in the face of a powerfully white, oppressive world. However, the very nature of the area was a result of the south's extreme segregation policies and the continued dominance of Durham's white population, despite the economic power of the black community. Today, the neighborhood has fallen into disarray. The impact of the "urban renewal" project of the



1960s still defines Hayti, as the Durham Freeway runs parallel to Pettigrew Street, serving as a constant reminder of what once lay under the asphalt, and local homes and businesses sag under the weight of generation-old economic ruin. What was once Hayti's cultural center on Pettigrew Street, chock-full of bars, theaters, restaurants, and jazz clubs, was one of the first things to go. Now, the area is completely erased of such a lively scene; the land along Pettigrew is completely covered in the cement and blacktop of 147. (Source: <http://www.duke.edu/~cde8/polisci/index.html>)

### Comparing Hayti: Then and Now

16. Explain to students that some people today debate whether Hayti was a thriving community which was destroyed, or whether it was a neighborhood already due to fall based on its declining community characteristics. Regardless, the promises of urban renewal made to Hayti did not come true. Tell students that they are going to return to their tour of Hayti via the *Main Street, Carolina* website at <http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/hayti/index.php/>. Again, in partners or small groups of three, instruct students to click on "View Map" at the top of the page. (Make sure the box for the "Structural Environmental Condition Project Area Map, 1961" is checked. Students should also be instructed to check the box for "Current Street Names.") Point out that the mapped properties show Hayti as it existed before the urban renewal project was implemented. Tell students that they can compare Hayti in the years prior to urban renewal to the neighborhood as it exists today by sliding the transparency bar under the 1961 map back and forth. Explain that as they slide the bar to the left, the 1961 map will fade out and a current map of Durham will fade in. Give students a few minutes to play with this feature and ask them to discuss their observations with their partner. (Students can also zoom in and out to get a look at specific streets and properties as they compare the old map with the new one.) After a few minutes of partner exploration, ask students to share the differences they noticed and note these in a list on chart paper.
17. Next, tell students to again tour through some of the properties marked on the map, specifically pointing out to them this time that all of those marked are urban renewal properties. As students explore the markers this time, ask them to consider the images they see in terms of the urban renewal proposal. Are these all properties that are "blighted," run down, dilapidated, etc.?
18. Instruct students to click on the "Oral Histories" link at the top of the page and let them know that here, they will find several links for the oral histories of people with first-hand knowledge of Hayti. Allow students to pursue through the various oral histories, reading (and in some cases, listening to) the memories of Hayti shared. Instruct students to choose one oral history (or assign each set of partners one of the oral histories) and have them answer:
  - What is the person's name?
  - What did he/she share about Hayti (life, business, culture, renewal, etc.)?
  - How do you think this person felt about, or was impacted by, urban renewal and why?
  - If you could ask this person a question, what else would you want to know about Hayti and why?
19. After students have had time to explore the oral histories, ask them to share some of their responses to the above questions. Then ask students to discuss as a class:
  - In addition to collecting oral histories, what are some additional ways we can preserve the memory and history of Hayti?
20. After students have shared their thoughts, tell them that one of the ways an artist tried to celebrate and preserve some of Hayti's history and unique character was by painting a mural in the middle of the once bustling neighborhood. Provide the attached reading, "The Walls Have Voices: A Mural in Hayti Speaks for the Community," and instruct students to read it. Afterwards, discuss:
  - Why do you think Emily Weinstein wanted to create a mural representing "Old Hayti?"
  - Why did she enlist the help of Durham community members, including young people?

- According to the reading, why is a mural significant?
- Imagine our class has been put in charge of creating a mural for Hayti. Think back to the readings you have done, our discussions, your review of the Main Street Carolina website and the images, oral histories, documents, etc. located there. Based on everything you have learned, what would you deem important to include in the mural and why? (Teachers should note student responses on a piece of chart paper. Sample answers might include: paint a picture of Dr. King speaking at White Rock; include an image of the Royal Ice Cream Parlor sit-in, etc. Students can also repeat the scenes that were described in the reading.)

**21.** As a culminating assignment, tell students they will be honoring Hayti by creating their own classroom mural of the neighborhood. Take the brainstormed list that students created and assign each student or pair of students one of the image topics from their list. Provide art supplies and chart paper or bulletin board paper to each student/set of students and instruct them to artistically represent their topic on their paper. Explain that all of the images will then be hung together to create one large mural. (Once all of the images are hung, students can also add some designs across the seams of the paper to make the mural flow.) Once the mural has been completed, allow students to view it and culminate with a discussion:

- How would you describe the spirit of Hayti?
- What do you find most unique or inspiring about the Hayti community and why?
- What was lost as a result of the destruction of the Hayti community?
- (Referring to the mural students created...)If you didn't know anything about Hayti when you viewed this mural, what might you think or learn about the community based on this artistic rendering?
- Is our mural missing anything? Explain.
- Why is it important to learn about the history of Hayti and the accomplishments of the African Americans who started the community, owned and/or operated businesses there, thrived even during the Jim Crow Era, etc.?
- If you could teach someone about Hayti, who do you think needs to learn about this history and why?

**Teacher Note:** The actual mural and information regarding what it contains can be found at [http://haytithheritage.com/wordpress/?page\\_id=186](http://haytithheritage.com/wordpress/?page_id=186). Teachers may want to share this information with students so that they can compare what was put in the community mural to their own version.



Figure: Abdul Solhiq



Figure: Abdul Solhiq

Source: <http://inurastanbul2009.wordpress.com/workshops/law-no-5366-based-urban-renewal-processes-in-the-historic->

## Urban Renewal: Before and After

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Durham's Hayti Neighborhood

In the years after the Civil War, newly freed people looked forward to independence. It was during this time, in 1869, that Edian Markum, an African American self-proclaimed missionary for newly freed slaves, bought land at what became the corner of Pettigrew and Fayetteville Streets in downtown Durham, NC. He built a church and a school on the land and as years passed, a thriving African American neighborhood grew around it. The community would eventually become known as the Hayti neighborhood of Durham County, North Carolina. There are several possibilities for the origination of the community's name, but one explanation is that the name Hayti is derived from the Haitian Slave Revolution of 1804, whereby Haiti became the first Black led Republic in the world.

Throughout the 1900s, as states passed various "Jim Crow" laws to keep the races separate and to restrict the opportunities of African Americans, millions of African Americans fled the Jim Crow South seeking opportunity in northern cities. However, the black community of Hayti created its own success, even in the face of such adversity. Hayti flourished from the 1880s to the 1940s and was an island of African-American culture and business and prospered politically and socially as a self-reliant community. Over the years, over 200 African American businesses sprang up along Fayetteville, Pettigrew and Pine Streets, the boundaries of Hayti during its heyday. The community had its own schools, libraries, churches, barbershops, hospital, movie theatre, recreation center, hotels, and more – all owned and/or operated by African Americans.



*Founded in 1900, the African American Lincoln Hospital*

Parrish Street, which bordered the Hayti neighborhood, became nationally known as a hub for African American business activity, gaining the nickname "Black Wall Street." This was largely based on James Shepard, Aaron Moore and John Merrick's founding of the North Carolina Mutual Insurance

Company in 1899, a black owned and operated company that became the largest and richest African American business in the world at the time. Adding to the success of Hayti, Dr. James Shepard also started a school in the area in 1910, which eventually became North Carolina Central University. The university would become the first African American College in America to be state funded. By 1939, North Carolina's official state guide boasted of Hayti's "12,000 Negroes [who] live and operate their own business firms." Hayti was a freedmen's success story.

Hayti also developed a thriving music scene. One particular form of entertainment in Durham that gained national attention was the area's blues music, eventually referred to as "Piedmont Blues." During the late 1930s and 40s in particular, Southern bluesmen, predominantly African American, would follow the tobacco harvest. When farmers brought their tobacco to sell at auction houses in downtown Durham, bluesmen were there, playing on streets. Native musicians like Blind Boy Fuller and Bull City Red gained national acclaim.

Both W.E.B. Dubois and Booker T. Washington visited Hayti in 1910. Both spoke of the community as a model for all African American communities in America to follow. Washington described the "city of Negro

enterprises” whose citizens were “shining examples of what a colored man may become” and subsequently published an article in the national magazine *Independent*, titled “Durham, North Carolina: A City of Negro Enterprise.” W.E.B. Dubois also wrote of Durham:



To-day there is a singular group in Durham where a black man may get up in the morning from a mattress made by black men, in a house which a black man built out of lumber which black men cut and planed; he may put on a suit which he bought at a colored haberdashery and socks knit at a colored mill; he may cook victuals from a colored grocery on a stove which black men fashioned; he may earn his living working for colored men, be sick in a colored hospital, and buried from a colored church; and the Negro insurance society will pay his widow enough to keep his children in a colored school. This is surely progress.

~*The Upbuilding of Black Durham*, 1915

*Durham's African American Regal Theatre*

While the Hayti community may have been self-sufficient, they still demanded justice when confronting Jim Crow beyond the black businesses lining their streets. The Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People, organized in 1935 by C.C. Spaulding and Dr. James E. Shepard, played an important role in the sit-in movements of the 1950's-60's. In fact, one of the very first sit-ins happened in downtown Durham at the Royal Ice Cream Parlor on June 23, 1957. Rev. Douglas Elaine Moore, minister at Hayti's Asbury Methodist Church, lead a group of six other African Americans (three women, three men) and sat at the “white's only” counter. The protestors were arrested, but Rev. Moore, with the help of Durham lawyer Floyd McKissick, appealed the case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. This served as a prelude to the widespread sit-in movement of the 1960s.

Together, Hayti and Black Wall Street served as the center of black life in Durham. Elsewhere in North Carolina, in the depths of the Jim Crow era, race relations were as bad as they ever had been. But even during such dark days of segregation, Hayti was a place where African-Americans could eat in restaurants, practice their trades, and call each other “Mr.” and “Mrs.”-where they could stop being “colored,” and simply be people.

**Answer on notebook paper:**

1. Throughout the 1900s, what types of injustice did African Americans face (in law and in society in general?)
2. Why was Hayti a “freedmen's success story?”
3. Why would starting a business as an African American in 1940 have been harder than if you were white?
4. Even with so much stacked against them, what types of accomplishments did African Americans make in Durham and Hayti?
5. What do you think it took on the part of the Hayti community to thrive in such an unjust society?
6. What do you most admire about Hayti and why?

**Sources:**

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**Durham City Council**



**AGENDA**

*Public Hearing for June 7, 1958*

I. Welcome

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Hearing on the Proposal for the Redevelopment of the Hayti Community

**- PRESENTING GROUPS -**

- Durham Redevelopment Commission
- The Coalition to Save Hayti
- Hayti Citizens for Change

IV. Open deliberation on Proposed Redevelopment Plan

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## Durham Redevelopment Commission



### Proposal for the Redevelopment of the Hayti Community, Durham, 1958

The Durham Redevelopment Commission proposes renovations to 200 acres of Durham in the area known as Hayti. This area is blighted and is characterized by substandard streets and dilapidated structures. Our proposal seeks to improve these conditions and to restore the area of Hayti to useful productivity.

- **Funding**

We estimate the cost of renewing Hayti to be less than \$600,000 (see attached budget). However, if City Council approves this plan, the City will not be responsible for the entire cost. The federal government offers urban renewal grants, thus we can obtain two thirds of the funds required to complete this “clean up” from a federal grant.

- **Streets & Parking**

The streets throughout Hayti are too narrow and crowded. This prevents traffic flow from conveniently maneuvering throughout downtown Durham, negatively impacting businesses and tourism. We propose to renovate the streets, widening them to allow for more traffic. Further, we propose adding better parking accommodations, to ensure visitors to downtown Durham can conveniently park and then conduct their business, shop, visit, etc.

- **Improved and Expanded Lots**

Currently, the land in Hayti is over-crowded. Many of the structures that exist are eyesores, not to mention unsafe and unfit for residents and businesses. We propose removing such structures in order to expand the lots (and as noted above, the roads leading to them) so that they will support an expansive city model that will allow Durham to move into the future. Any person whose home or business is in the redevelopment zone will be provided equal housing and fair compensation for their homes.

- **East-West Expressway**

Our plans also involve building a new expressway that will open up transportation into and out of downtown Durham, which will help improve accessibility to downtown businesses. Currently, many businesses are leaving the downtown area for the suburbs, and thus the economy of downtown Durham is growing weaker and weaker. To improve the economy, we must create an environment conducive to doing business. Our proposed East-West Expressway will offer a multi-lane road providing easy and convenient transportation throughout downtown.

## **Instructions for the Durham City Council Members**

You and your fellow council members are holding a public hearing today regarding the proposed redevelopment of Durham's Hayti neighborhood. The Durham Redevelopment Commission will present their **Proposal for the Redevelopment of the Hayti Community** at the hearing, followed by several community groups who will express their opinions on the proposal.

Whether or not to redevelop Hayti has been a very controversial issue and your job today is to lead the meeting and listen carefully to all of the information and opinions presented. At the end of the hearing, it is your responsibility to make a decision regarding whether to approve or reject the proposal. Remember that you must make a decision for the common good of Durham.

### **PREPARE FOR THE HEARING:**

1. Review the **Proposal for the Redevelopment of the Hayti Community**. Discuss your first impressions of the proposal with your fellow council members, as well as any changes you may like to see made. Consider:
  - What are the possible positive effects this proposal could have on Hayti and Durham as a whole?
  - What are the possible negative effects this proposal could have on Hayti and Durham as a whole?
  - What questions do you have about this proposal? What information do you feel is missing?
2. Also, as a group, review the Durham City Council public hearing agenda which lists each group that is signed up to present to you today. Infer what you think each group's stance will be on the proposal. Create at least two questions to ask each presenting group after their presentation. (These questions may change based on what you hear in the presentations.)
3. Once it is time for the hearing to begin, one of you will assume the role of the Mayor and call the meeting to order. The Mayor will welcome everyone, lead the Pledge of Allegiance, and review the purpose of the meeting. Then, the Mayor will call each group up (in the order as they are listed on the agenda) to provide their 3 minute presentation regarding the redevelopment of Hayti.
4. After each presentation, each City Council member will have the opportunity to ask questions of the presenting group. You and your fellow council members may refer to the questions you previously created, or ask questions based on new information you heard. Remember, you need to gather all of the information you can in order to make an informed decision.
5. Once all groups have presented, the Mayor will thank all presenters for their presentations and begin an open council session in which you and your fellow members deliberate whether to approve or reject the Proposal for the Redevelopment of Hayti. (You will discuss your thoughts out loud, but the presenters can only listen without comment as you openly deliberate your decision.) As city council, you may have different ideas regarding the proposed redevelopment plan. You must work through this using respectful debate, negotiation, and compromise, and attempt to come to a consensus.



## **Instructions for the Durham Redevelopment Commission**

Your group represents the Durham Redevelopment Commission, who is proposing the redevelopment plan for Hayti being debated today. You, the members of the Commission, firmly believe that the redevelopment plan is the best opportunity for progress that downtown Durham has seen in years and your goal is to convince the Durham City Council to **APPROVE the redevelopment plan**. You believe that this proposal is an ideal way to strengthen the economy of downtown Durham, not to mention the quality of life for Hayti residents.

While Hayti was once a thriving neighborhood, the Commission feels it has become badly run down and is in need of desperate clean up. The area is over-crowded and the structures located throughout the community of Hayti (homes and businesses) are in shambles. No new buildings have been constructed over the past years and there aren't many quality housing options for residents. Banks seem to not be lending to potential homeowners in Hayti anyway, so the neighborhood structures continue to deteriorate and there is no positive growth occurring. The inhabitants of this area live under conditions which are unsanitary and unsafe and the entire community is a "blight" on downtown Durham.

The streets in Hayti are also in disrepair, not to mention that they are very narrow, confusing, and over-crowded. This deters people from coming to downtown Durham to conduct business, shop, visit, etc., all of which is having a negative impact on downtown Durham's economy. Such poor streets also present major safety hazards to both residents and motorists.

While some current residents will need to relocate based on this plan, they will be provided equal housing or fair compensation for their homes. It is understandable that some people may feel hesitant about moving, but they should view this as an opportunity. They can leave the run-down and unsafe area they currently reside in and find a nicer place to live. Also, Durham will prosper based on their sacrifice. Current Hayti community members must be moved for the good of themselves and the good of the city.

In this day and age, when businesses are moving out of downtowns and into the suburbs, the economy of downtown Durham is in danger. Allowing this large area of downtown Durham to worsen is a waste of space and potential. Your group believes that renewing areas such as Hayti is the best way to move Durham, its economy, and its citizens into the future. Without a renewal plan, Hayti is doomed to get worse and ultimately, fail. If this plan is approved, we can give this community the chance to "bloom again."

### **PREPARE FOR YOUR PRESENTATION:**

1. Work together to develop a 3 minute presentation to deliver at the Durham City Council public hearing. Your presentation should:
  - a. Begin with an introduction and overview of your proposed redevelopment plan.
  - b. Using the information above as a guideline of your group's views, *expand* this information into an argument in which you clearly state what you expect the council members to do regarding the proposed redevelopment plan, including how the funding you are requesting will be put to good use.
  - c. Answer the following questions in your presentation...
    - Why do you want council members to approve the redevelopment plan?
    - How will the passing of the redevelopment plan positively impact the city of Durham and its Hayti community?
    - In what ways will the redevelopment plan be effective? What opportunities does the redevelopment plan offer Hayti residents and Durham businesses?

- Why should council members vote to approve this plan for renewal rather than support those who are against it?
- d. End with a convincing conclusion that will make the council remember your presentation and approve your plan.
2. As you develop your presentation, consider what the other presenters who disagree with the plan might say in their presentations. Be prepared to argue why voting in favor of the redevelopment plan will have a positive impact on Hayti and Durham.
  3. The City Council members will ask you questions after your presentation. Anticipate what questions they might have of you so that you are prepared to answer. (You'll need to "think on your feet" and answer their questions to the best of your ability.)
  4. Select 1-2 group members to present your stance to the City Council members. The rest of the group will be responsible for assisting in answering questions the City Council members will ask you after your presentation. Remember, your goal is to get the City Council to **APPROVE** the proposed redevelopment plan. Good luck!!

## **Instructions for the The Coalition to Save Hayti**

Your group represents homeowners, community members and business owners in Hayti who do not support the Durham Redevelopment Commission's plan for urban renewal. Your goal is to convince City Council to **REJECT the redevelopment plan**. Many of you have lived and worked in this area your whole lives and you are determined to do whatever it takes to defeat this plan and save your homes and your community!

Hayti has a long and inspirational history. From its beginning, Hayti has been a safe haven for African Americans and a place where blacks could prosper, even in the face of Jim Crow laws and racism. In recent history, over 200 black businesses have thrived in Hayti, even with so much stacked against African Americans in the mainstream community. Your group strongly believes that the rich culture and history of this neighborhood must be preserved, but this "renewal" plan will only result in the loss of Hayti's unique characteristics.

While it might be true that some of Hayti needs repaired and "spruced up," the plan proposed by the Durham Redevelopment Commission is NOT the way to go about it. Your group believes that approving the proposal will be a disaster, as it will result in the systematic destruction of the Hayti neighborhood, property by property. If you read between the lines of this plan, the Hayti community spirit will be lost and hundreds of buildings – from homes to churches – will be demolished. Your group wants to know what type of renewal can come from building a highway right through the Hayti neighborhood. Even the buildings that aren't slated for demolition will end up sitting next to a busy road. How is that going to improve the appearance of Hayti?

Your group fully supports a "clean up" of Hayti, but you believe this should be done in the best interests of the community, with a special emphasis on what the needs of the current home and business owners are. Why not take the same \$600,000 requested by the Durham Redevelopment Commission and with input from a committee of Hayti residents and business owners, repair and renovate existing buildings in order to preserve the integrity of the community? Rather than send a bustling highway through the Hayti neighborhood, build a park or a Hayti history museum. Hayti is and has always been a unique district with a distinct character and this must be preserved.

If the plan proposed by the Commission is approved, over 9,100 African Americans stand to be removed from the area. For example, consider White Rock Baptist Church, a center of the Hayti community since its conception by Mrs. Margaret Faucette in 1866, and also the spot where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. himself is scheduled to speak soon. This church lies in the path of the new highway proposed in the renewal plan. And this is only one example of what Hayti stands to lose if this plan is approved. Your group feels it is important to remember that it was African Americans who built the Hayti community to begin with – during times when everything was stacked against them. Are we really going to allow the government to come in and demolish it in this way?

Residents of Hayti have been misled and told that this project will allow Hayti "to bloom again." Your group strongly disagrees. Rather than calling this project "urban renewal," your group believes they should call it what it actually is: urban REMOVAL.

### **PREPARE FOR YOUR PRESENTATION:**

1. Review the Proposal for the Redevelopment of the Hayti Community and discuss the various ways it will have a negative impact on Hayti. Work together to develop a 3 minute presentation to City Council. Your presentation should:

- a. Begin with an introduction and overview of your group's feelings regarding the renewal plan. Using the information above as a guideline of your group's views, *expand* this information into an argument in which you clearly state what you expect the council members to do regarding the proposed redevelopment plan.
  - b. Answer the following questions in your presentation...
    - Why do you want council members to reject the redevelopment plan?
    - How will the passing of the redevelopment plan negatively impact the city of Durham and the Hayti community? In what ways will the redevelopment plan be ineffective?
    - What might be a better way to improve life in Hayti?
    - Why should council members vote to reject this plan for renewal rather than support those who are against it?
  - c. End with a convincing conclusion that will make the council remember your presentation and reject your plan.
2. As you develop your presentation, consider what the other presenters who support the plan might say in their presentations. Be prepared to argue why voting in favor of the redevelopment plan will have a negative impact on Hayti and Durham.
  3. The City Council members will ask you questions after your presentation. Anticipate what questions council members might have of you so that you are prepared to answer. (You'll need to "think on your feet" and answer their questions to the best of your ability.)
  4. Select 1-2 group members to present your stance to City Council members. The rest of the group will be responsible for assisting in answering questions the City Council members will ask you after your presentation is finished. Remember, your goal is to get the City Council to **REJECT** the proposed redevelopment plan. Good luck!!

## **Instructions for the Hayti Residents for Change**

Your group represents a group of Hayti residents and businesses who hope to convince city council to **APPROVE the redevelopment plan**. Unlike the members of the Coalition to Save Hayti, you believe this is a sensible opportunity to breathe life back into Hayti and to give the community a fresh start.

The once thriving Hayti neighborhood is not what it used to be. The homes and streets have become rundown and each year, crime seems to rise. The days of sitting on the front porch and chatting with neighbors have been replaced by unsafe and unsanitary streets. When a house is actually for sale in Hayti, few people are interested in purchasing property in the area - no one wants to live where crime is high and the landscape is so unsightly. If the redevelopment plan is passed, residents currently living in Hayti are going to have a lot of great options for better housing. Home owners will be paid fair market prices and will then have the option to buy or rent the newly built homes. New and modern apartment complexes are going to be built as well, providing space for everyone to have a clean and attractive place to live.

The plan is also great for people who have businesses in Hayti. The Durham Redevelopment Commission has promised to provide a new site for any current business that is part of the urban renewal plan. This means that a shop owner currently trying to run a business in an old, broken down building will have a brand new, modern space to use after redevelopment. Having a nice shop, and having that shop in a much improved area, means that business is going to boom again. Thus, the urban renewal of Hayti is going to result in a wonderful new community as all of the old buildings that are falling apart are replaced with new structures.

Hayti Residents for Change love the history of the Hayti community as much as the members of the Coalition to Save Hayti. But, your group believes that if we continue to let the landscape of this neighborhood deteriorate, the history of progress is going to be overshadowed by failing businesses and worthless property. Rather than spend time fighting the redevelopment of Hayti, your group feels Hayti community members should look at this as an opportunity. Residents can look forward to finding a brand new home elsewhere in Durham with the assistance and money they will be provided by the government.

Your group wants to return Hayti to the beacon of African American progress famous blacks such as W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington heralded it to be. The best way to do this is through urban renewal.

### **PREPARE FOR YOUR PRESENTATION:**

1. Review the Proposal for the Redevelopment of the Hayti Community and discuss the various ways it will have a positive impact on Hayti. Work together to develop a 3 minute presentation to City Council. Your presentation should:
  - a. Begin with an introduction and overview of your feelings regarding the renewal plan. Using the information above as a guideline of your group's views, *expand* this information into an argument in which you clearly state what you expect the council members to do regarding the proposed redevelopment plan.
  - b. Answer the following questions in your presentation...
    - Why do you want council members to approve the redevelopment plan?
    - How will the passing of the redevelopment plan positively impact the city of Durham and its Hayti community? In what ways will the redevelopment plan be the best thing for Hayti?
    - Why should council members vote to approve this plan for renewal rather than support those who are against it?
  - c. End with a convincing conclusion that will make the council remember your presentation and vote to approve the renewal plan.

2. As you develop your presentation, consider what the other presenters who are against the plan might say in their presentations. Be prepared to argue why voting in favor of the redevelopment plan will have a positive impact on Hayti and Durham.
3. The City Council members will ask you questions after your presentation. Anticipate what questions council members might have of you so that you are prepared to answer. (You'll need to "think on your feet" and answer their questions to the best of your ability.)
4. Select 1-2 group members to present your stance to City Council members. The rest of the group will be responsible for assisting in answering questions the City Council members will ask you after your presentation is finished. Remember, your goal is to get the City Council to **APPROVE** the proposed redevelopment plan. Good luck!!

## The Redevelopment of Hayti

In 1958 the Durham Redevelopment Commission was formed, which eventually passed a proposal to “renew” the Hayti neighborhood. The project was begun by Durham’s planning director, Paul Brooks, who enlisted students in University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Department of City and Regional Planning to draft a proposal for urban renewal in Durham. This proposal planned for a 200 acre “blighted” area of Hayti to be renovated for \$600,000. Convinced of its merit, the Durham City Council eventually funded seven projects at a cost of more than \$8.6 million local funds. The Hayti project was called “Project 2,” and is typified in the official report to the Durham City Council as, “the logical way to remove the blighted and substandard areas of our cities.” These projects could not have taken place without a unique offer from the federal government that provided two thirds of the funds required to complete the “clean up.” Over 9,100 African Americans stood to be removed from the area, but many Durham residents were in favor of the project.

Residents of Hayti, in particular, were told that the project would allow the neighborhood “to bloom again.” They were promised better or equal housing and fair compensation for their homes. Though Hayti’s rich cultural fabric could not be ignored, much black business in Durham had moved, and the area was perceived to be deficient.

Demolition of the Hayti-Elizabeth Street neighborhood began in 1961, following a proposal by Ray Wenzlick and Company of St. Louis. The company had photographed and appraised hundreds of homes and businesses in the Hayti district to prepare for their ultimate destruction. A map was made in 1962 that plotted each property targeted in the plan. By the end of the project, 4,057 households and 502 businesses were demolished. The new housing was sub-standard at best, the rail service suspended, and “the pain of losing one’s built environment was greater than anyone had anticipated.”

In place of the homes, businesses, community centers and churches that populated Hayti, an expressway was built to carry cars from the newly built Research Triangle Park to Raleigh. The first parts of the Durham Freeway, originally known as the East-West Expressway, opened in 1962, and the project moved at a cripplingly slow pace into the late 1960s. Many roads which serviced Hayti’s businesses were torn up for extended periods of time, thus making them less accessible. This pushed consumers even further in the direction of the suburban shopping centers and away from downtown. According to most accounts, the construction of the Durham Freeway through Hayti put a stranglehold on the neighborhood’s successful local businesses. Hayti began to lose its cohesiveness due to the construction, leaving the community and black businesses as a whole to falter.

The expressway and six other projects grounded in Hayti cost a cumulative \$41.6 million, including 4,057 household and 502 businesses across Durham which were condemned and forced to relocate. The project ended up taking roughly 14 years, with very few investors coming in to build on the expansive lots created. Low-cost apartments replaced historic neighborhoods, and a feeling began to develop in Durham that landmarks were being destroyed at an alarming rate in the name of urban revitalization.

It is clear that the original renewal effort was not in the best interests of Hayti and that the construction ultimately eliminated an iconic neighborhood. The project became known as “urban

removal.” Besides the obvious demolition of neighborhoods, the process created what were essentially black ghettos that kept black voters out of white voting areas.

By 1962, the anger of black communities around the country was palpable, and though lunch counters were officially integrated in Durham by 1960, the integration struggle continued through 1969. Many believe that it is no coincidence that urban renewal coincided with the Civil Rights movement. As Durham’s African American communities fought for equal rights, they were impoverished, shunted into ghettos and systematically displaced. What was left of the Hayti neighborhood was poor, destitute, and flanking a highway.

The promises of progress had not come true—the shock of urban renewal left a city in tatters.

Source: <http://haytithheritage.com/wordpress/>



## **The Walls Have Voices: A Mural in Hayti Speaks for the Community**

From <http://www.duke.edu/~cde8/polisci/index.html>

Smack in the middle of what was once Hayti's commercial heart stands a stretch of brick wall covered in colorful paint. Emily Weinstein's "Old Hayti Community" mural is a larger-than-life portrait of what the neighborhood once looked like. "I had seen, at another mural across town, a handful of kids underfoot, spraying graffiti, getting into trouble. I thought, if those five kids had so much fun, what could happen with 200?" So Weinstein recruited a group of young students from various Durham public schools to create a work for the Hayti community. She describes the process of creating the Hayti mural as one that thoroughly involved the whole neighborhood, both artistically and thematically.

"It was a very big wall surrounded by very inner city- type schools. If kids would wander up and say, 'What are you doing?' I would tell them, 'I'm giving you a paintbrush and telling you to paint.' The kids hung out with me for two months. [Their] relatives came into town and would set up a picnic across the street to watch them paint. And I had tremendous support from the community. Everyone would come up and say, 'Can I paint?' I never turned anybody down. What was important was that people would come up and say who needed to go in, what needed to come out. Taxi drivers would drive by and say what they thought about it. I had people walk up from hither and thither and say, 'Hey, don't put that in, he's not as relevant.' It was very meaningful to people here in town now, that know the history and remember it. The people in the area were a valuable resource. There was a running conversation, I'd say."

The wall painting depicts a number of historical Hayti icons. The Biltmore Hotel was one of the first Black-owned hotels in the South, and drew celebrities and political figures from around the country. The movie theater was another focal point of Hayti's culture, remembered by many as a haven for youth on weekend evenings. St. Joseph's Church is one of the few standing relics of old Hayti, and is now adjacent to the Hayti Heritage Center. "N.C. College" refers to what is now North Carolina Central University, the first state-sponsored college for black students. Even the N.C. Mutual Life building looms in the background, a reminder of the proximity and influence of Black Wall Street. The figures, though perhaps unrecognizable to the untrained eye, are familiar to many of Hayti's residents.

The great significance of a mural is much more than the simple decoration of a building. In the muralist tradition, artists have decorated public spaces for centuries in the hopes of projecting an image of the surrounding space. In this sense, pictorial murals such as Weinstein's are deeply rooted in the community that surrounds them. They are intended to speak both for and to the people- they represent an ideal to outsiders passing through, and seek to be an image with which their own neighbors can identify. Traditional murals fuse history with present, visualizing hope while alluding to the struggle of the past. For the students and residents of the neighborhood, the "Old Hayti" mural created a forum for the exchange of memories, and the ultimate product is one that reflects multiple voices. It serves as an enduring testimony to Hayti's history, to the community's identity, and to the hope it holds for the future.

Sadly, there are few other indications of Hayti's old glory. The building on which the mural is painted is just one end of a complex of tired-looking businesses. Rent is high, business is low. Though the effects of the area's mistreatment and inattention are still very salient, the bright swaths of color on the side of the building leap out at passersby, visually claiming ownership of this land and advertising the identity engrained in its memory. It pays homage to the greatness of Hayti's peak as a cultural center, but in doing so it recognizes the dramatic difference between Hayti today and the Hayti of the past, and thus sub textually calls attention to the social disaster that was executed to the effect of dissolving the hard-earned strength that originally characterized the area.

Source: <http://www.duke.edu/~cde8/polisci/index.html>