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# The Black Grapevine

## African-American Spending Habits

By Ekua Mends-Aidoo

In a recent article it explained that African Americans suffer “not from the lack of money, but the inability to manage it.” This quote can be directly attributed to the fact that based on worker income alone African Americans produced \$586 billion in 2004. This figure was faintly smaller than the overall GDP of Brazil in 2006 and also 80% of Russia’s GDP in 2005, even though their populations are 4 to 5 times the size of the population of African Americans. In comparison it has been said that the income rates of African Americans in 2004 would have been ranked as the “15<sup>th</sup> largest GDP internationally out of 177 ranked,” even though the unemployment rate is 10.3

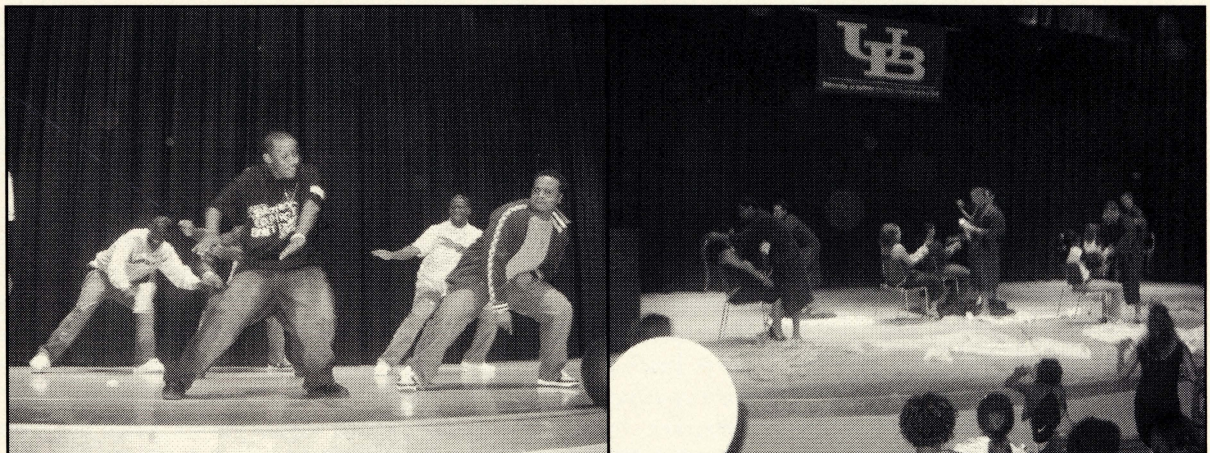
percent.

These figures come as no surprise as one takes a look at consumer spending habits of African Americans. Basic necessities such as shelter, food, and clothing were ranked high amongst the list, yet African Americans spent exceptionally more on clothing than all other ethnic groups. Among our favorite purchases are cars. When observing the rates of transportation and vehicles, again African Americans spent exceedingly more than other ethnic groups did, spending approximately \$45 billion. Unfortunately, the only area in which African Americans’ spending has been declining is on books and other educational

materials. A total purchase of books has declined since 2001 going from a net purchase of \$356 million to \$303 million.

The priority of African American spending is obvious; educational resources ranks low while other material possessions are at the top of the list. If African Americans realized our dominant spending power and capability, we could influence the future generations and communities to be more successful as a whole. If we reduced the over consumption of depreciable materials and invested more in education, it would benefit our growth and maximize our potential as a whole.

## Sickle Cell Charity Auction



On Saturday, September 30, 2006, the Black Student Union in conjunction with The Enlightened Women of Alpha Beta Sigma Sorority, Incorporated held the Annual Sickle Cell Charity Auction. A total of \$2419 was raised, which will be contributed to the ongoing efforts to “break the sickle cycle.” Both organizations sincerely thank all the participants and other supporters that made this event as successful as it was. They also look forward to your continued support in future events.



# Black Wall Street

A Summary of Dr. Leroy Vaughn's "Black (Negro Wall Street)" from the book Black People and their Place in World History

By Darnell Cummings

The "Black (Negro) Wall Street" was the name given to Greenwood Avenue of North Tulsa, Oklahoma during the early 1900's. Because of strict segregation, Blacks were only allowed to shop, spend, and live in a 35 square block area called the Greenwood district. The "circulation of Black dollars" only in the Black community produced a tremendously prosperous Black business district that was admired and envied by the whole country. Oklahoma's first African-American settlers were Indian slaves of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes": Chickasaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles. These tribes were forced to leave the Southeastern United States and resettle in Oklahoma in mid-winter over the infamous "Trail of Tears." After the Civil War, U.S.-Indian treaties provided for slave liberation and land allotments ranging from 40-100 acres, which helps explain why over 6000 African-Americans lived in the Oklahoma territory by 1870. Oklahoma boasted of more All-Black towns and communities than any other state in the land, and these communities opened their arms to freed slaves from all across the country. Remarkably, at one time, there were over 30 African-American newspapers in Oklahoma. Oil was soon discovered and Tulsa rapidly grew into a thriving, bustling, enormously wealthy town of 73,000 by 1920 with bank deposits totaling over \$65 million. However, Tulsa was a "tale of two cities isolated and insular", one Black and one White. Tulsa was so racist and segregated that it was the only city in America that boasted of segregated telephone booths.

Since African Americans could neither live among Whites as neither equals nor patronize White

businesses in Tulsa, Blacks had to develop a completely separate business district and community, which soon became prosperous and legendary. Black dollars invested in the Black community also produced self-pride, self-sufficiency, and self-determination. The business district, beginning at the intersection of Greenwood Avenue and Archer Street, became so successful and vibrant that Booker T. Washington during his visit bestowed the moniker: "Negro Wall Street." By 1921, Tulsa's African-American population of 11,000 had its own bus line, two high schools, one hospital, two newspapers, two theaters, three drug stores, four hotels, a public library, and thirteen churches. In addition, there were over 150 two and three story brick commercial buildings that housed clothing and grocery stores, cafes, rooming houses, nightclubs, and a large number of professional offices including doctors, lawyers, and dentists. Tulsa's progressive African American community boasted some of the city's most elegant brick homes, well furnished with china, fine linens, beautiful furniture, and grand pianos.

A 19 year old Black male accidentally stumbled on a jerky elevator and bumped the 17-year-old White elevator operator who screamed. The frightened young fellow was seen running from the elevator by a group of Whites and by late afternoon the "Tulsa Tribune" reported that the girl had been raped. Despite the girl's denial of any wrongdoing, the boy was arrested and a large mob of 2000 White men came to the jail to lynch the prisoner. About 75 armed African Americans came to the jail to offer assistance to the sheriff to protect the prisoner. The sheriff not only refused the assistance but also deputized the White mob to disarm the Blacks. With a defenseless Black community before them, the White mob advanced to the Greenwood district where they first looted and then burned all Black businesses,

homes, and churches. Any Black resisters were shot and thrown into the fires. When the National Guard arrived, they assisted the others by arresting all Black men, women, and children, and herding them into detention centers at the Baseball Park and Convention Hall. As many as 4,000 Blacks were held under armed guard in detention. On May 31, 1921, the successful Black Greenwood district was completely destroyed by one of the worse race riots in U.S. history. Dr. Arthur C. Jackson, a nationally renowned surgeon known as "the most able Negro surgeon in America", was shot at the Convention Hall and allowed to bleed to death. By the next morning the entire Greenwood district was reduced to ashes and not one White was even accused of any wrongdoing, much less arrested. The race riot of Tulsa, Oklahoma was not an isolated event in American history.

During the "Red Summer" of 1919, over 25 race riots were recorded (white mobs attacking black neighborhoods). After the Tulsa riot, the White inhabitants tried to buy the Black property and force Black people out of town. No Tulsa bank or lending institution would make loans in the riot-marred Greenwood district, and the city refused all outside assistance. However, racial pride and self-determination would not permit the Greenwood owners to sell, and they doggedly spend the entire winter in tents donated by the American Red Cross. Rebuilding was a testament to the courage and stamina of Tulsa's pioneers in their struggle for freedom. Most of the buildings along the first block of Greenwood Avenue were rebuilt within one year. In 1926, W. E. B. DuBois visited Tulsa and wrote: "Black Tulsa is a happy city. It has new clothes. It is young and gay and strong. Five little years ago, fire and blood and robbery leveled it to the ground. Scars are there, but the city is impudent and noisy. It believes in itself. Thank God for the grit of Black Tulsa."



*The Black Student Union*  
*presents its*

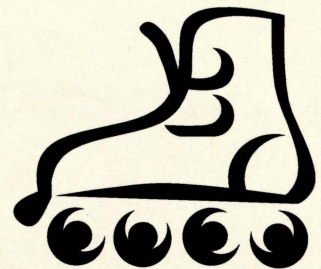
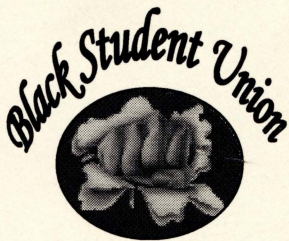
# *Annual Skating Jam*

*October 27th, 2006*

*@ New Skateland*

*8PM-11PM*

*More Information Coming Soon*



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