* The Rise and Fall of Sororities

A topic I’m interested in looking into is the rise and fall of sorority membership over the last decade or so. Sororities historically reaped in large pledge classes, but in recent years, they have been struggling to maintain membership. I believe this is due to a change in culture, where GenZ strays away from mainstream stereotypes. This would be a good data driven project, because there is comparative data to be found between smaller private and larger state schools, schools in the northern half of the country versus schools in the southern region, local versus national chapters, etc. I am wondering if the type of sorority favored by new members has changed. For example, are newer pledges more service oriented versus socially minded? Would non-Greek service fraternities play a role in smaller sorority pledges? What impact has the pandemic had on membership? Are retention numbers staggering as well? I believe to find a shift in sorority recruitment and membership, and the types of sororities that are benefitting, will paint a better picture of the cultural mindset GenZ has.

* Winter Park gentrification

Winter Park is a small village just outside of Orlando, Florida. Historically, the city has been significantly divided by a set of train tracks. On one side of the tracks were the bustling shops, eateries, and hotels, visited by upperclass white folks and operated by African Americans. The town’s working class African American population traditionally lived on the other side of the tracks. In recent years, gentrification has beseeched Winter Park, seeing tear downs of historic homes in favor of newer, million dollar contemporary homes that sit empty, waiting to be purchased. A question I have is how significant has the change become over time? Has the nearby college buying up property contributed in a significant way to this? Are the people that buy the million dollar tear downs living in Winter Park, or is this a second home? Data on how many African American persons living in Winter Park (and the historical black neighborhood of Hannibal Square) can be found in censuses taken over the years. Data can also be found in real estate and property documents, as well as whether or not property value has increased. Furthermore, the Hannibal Square History Museum will have information as well. I expect to find Hannibal Square being overtaken by white, upperclass individuals, and the historic African American population being driven out of the city.