

Chapter 1: Introduction

Through a multimedia presentation, this thesis explores how black segregated parks staged programs and daily activities that strengthened black cultural identity and expression in Lexington, Kentucky, during the era of legal segregation. Selecting from Lexington's 10 segregated parks and playgrounds, I scrutinize the space, images, and memories of Douglass Park, which was established in 1916 and became the focal point of Lexington's black park system. In the 40 years prior to integration in 1956, Douglass Park enriched black life in multiple dimensions, despite racism from white communities in the South. Between doll shows, horseshoes, and Thursday's talent night, Douglass Park harbored a space for black self-expression and aesthetic appreciation, which insulated black communities from a world that so intensely devalued a black aesthetic.

Unlike many white communities in segregated Lexington who enjoyed broad access to public entertainment in theaters, nickelodeons, amusement parks, and dance halls (Waller 1995), black communities had limited options for recreation and leisure. In an era without air conditioning, television, and the widespread use of automobiles, segregated parks, even the smallest playgrounds, offered the principle spaces for black communities to play, 'let off steam,' and communicate a sense of community. Because no current scholarship adequately addresses segregated parks, I begin my investigation with four simple, but immensely important questions. First, how did black communities historically use

these parks? Second, what difficulties did black communities experience in developing and using these spaces? Third, how did this use impact, benefit, and uplift black communities? Fourth, in what ways can we discuss and present this history such that the reader has the most intimate understanding and appreciation of this park system?

When we leave academic scholarship and entertain current popular literature on Lexington, we find no adequate descriptions of Douglass Park, or any of the smaller, formally segregated parks, all of which still exist today. The 1995 *Insider's Guide to Greater Lexington and the Kentucky Bluegrass*, claiming to contain the most thorough descriptions of Lexington attractions for local residents, cites Woodland Park, Lexington's traditional white park, as an important cultural and historical point in the local geography. Douglass Park, on the other hand, is best known for its annual Dirt Bowl Basketball Tournament, and by omission, contains no particularly important history; Douglass Park is rendered only as a spectacle and a place to get dirty (Walter and Miller 1994). Even John Wright, a popular historian of Lexington, misses the history of Douglass Park, while praising Woodland Park (Kerr 1984, Wright, J. 1984).¹ Since an entire history is obscured through these representations, this project endeavors to document, preserve, and showcase the social significance of Lexington's black parks.

To answer the questions posited above and investigate the relationship between leisure and recreation, aesthetics, and black cultural uplift within Lexington's black parks, this thesis is organized into six chapters. The following

chapter presents the reader with a general history of these parks, specifically Douglass Park. I will synthesize primary and secondary resources, so that the reader will understand how these parks evolved historically, the extent to which park administrators faced racism in designing park activities, and the significance of these parks in the daily lives of black communities. With this first section, the reader will attain a detailed historical knowledge of Douglass Park and Lexington's segregated park system more generally.

The second component of the Chapter 2 engages a larger body of theoretical literature and proposes a more nuanced perspective for appreciating segregated parks. Blending ideas from new African-American urban historiography, cultural studies, and new media studies, I will move beyond the prohibitive 'ghetto thesis' that has confined analyses of segregated institutions. This section will discuss how black recreation leadership, particularly the Colored League, appropriated ideas from the Reform Park Movement that strengthened black identity and supported daily acts of 'infrapolitics.' This thesis argues that these spaces provided a vehicle for expressing and communicating *aesthetics*, which in turn invigorated black communities. I define aesthetics as a process of reclaiming identity in a daily act of self-possessing space; a process of articulating hidden transcripts through motion, speech, dress, and other forms of representation. Culminating in this discussion of aesthetics, and concluding the chapter, I describe a research methodology that justifies the use multimedia, which is a pervasive aspect of this project.

This thesis utilizes oral and photographic history methodologies to collect 'data' about Douglass Park. One can see how these methodologies could feed a media project, which Figure 1 describes. These methods of collecting data also dramatically steer the direction of the project. For example, as I was interviewing Saunda Richardson, who is the niece of the former Colored Park Board administrator, Lucy Estill, we made a surprising find. Although my attempt was to explain how black park leadership managed the recreation programs in Douglass Park, we discovered tucked away in the corner of the her living room a portrait of Ms. Richardson's father, Smoke Richardson, and his orchestra.² On closer inspection we concluded that the photograph depicted the orchestra in the 1940s on the Charles Young Community Center's stage, the second largest black park in Lexington. Using this photograph in other oral histories, I discovered that Smoke's Orchestra entertained black audiences at formal dances at the Center throughout the 1940s. Not only does this image, and the stories it reveals, support my claim that parks fostered black aesthetic expression, it also impacts large sections of this project, as evidenced in the video chapter, and is a metaphor for how interlinked this project is in both content and in form.

The bulk of thesis work's empirical content employs multimedia. Just as Douglass Park has offered a central gathering place for communities for over 80 years, this project offers a video, audio, and internet space for both the academic community and general public to recreate in, and learn from, this unique public history. Much like in summer Sunday afternoons in Douglass Park where families leisured in their church finery, this project showcases a community aesthetic

Flow Chart for Media Production in the Daily Aesthetic

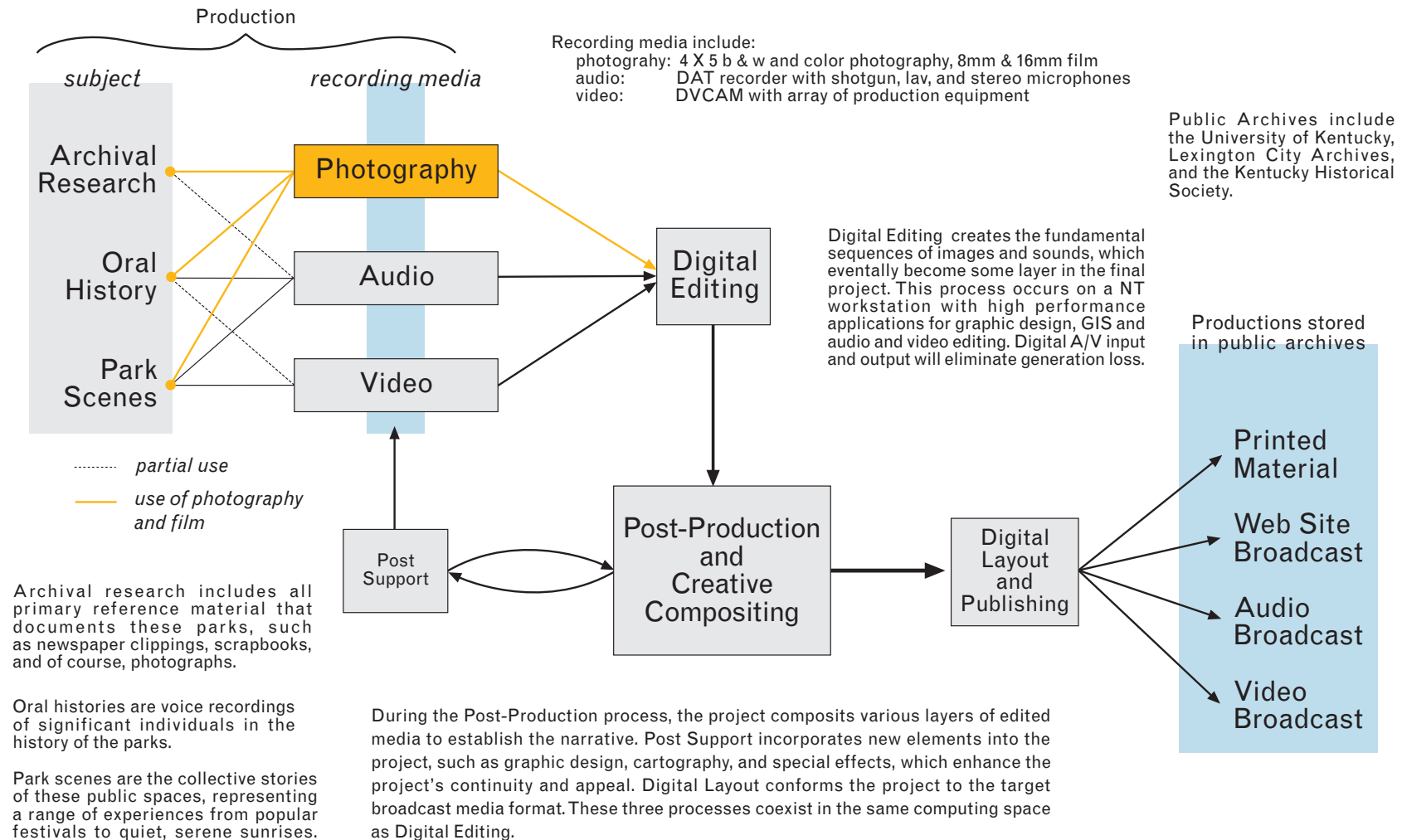


Figure 1. Media Production Workflow

through an array of vividly expressive media. Although we can appreciate these spaces via text, we often cannot adequately express the imagery and sounds of these parks through text alone. Through a website, a video documentary, and a radio program, this thesis will provide a more thorough and nuanced understanding of these parks, and the people who used them, than an academic narrative alone could provide. Unlike many definitions of multimedia that describe a collage of different media types flattened into a single platform or format, this project orchestrates independent media formats into a larger, holistic narrative.³ Although this project's website (Chapter 3), radio (Chapter 4), and video (Chapter 5) programs can exist independently, their overlay communicates a story greater than the individual programs. Harnessing the recent explosion of media technology, this project presents an innovative model for academic research and presentation.

At the onset, I offer a few items of caution about this project. First, since the multimedia presents provocative narratives in video and audio formats, the media itself should not dull our interpretive capabilities; rather, multimedia invites the reader to explore the multidimensional character of the park and the black community it served. Even though this project enables readers to see and hear many of the park's users through oral and video histories multimedia technology does not resolve the ever present question of 'Who Speaks?' Despite the ability to see and hear the subjects of this narrative speak in various forms of media, this project edited their stories into a predetermined structure; hence, like any presentation, this project is already a re-presentation. The multimedia is not

intended to resolve the meaning of these parks, but rather to enhance the reader's relationship with them and their history. With so little academic or popular attention given to these parks, or their historical geographies, any acknowledgment that they even exist will shatter the inertia of silence in our public historical record.

Chapter 2: Some Text

All public parks established and maintained for the recreation, pleasure and welfare of the white population in cities of the second class shall be held, managed and controlled by a "Board of Park Commissioners (White)" of the city wherein the parks are located, and all public parks established and maintained for the recreation, pleasure and welfare of the colored population in cities of the second class shall be held, managed and controlled by a "Board of Park Commissioners (Colored)" of the city wherein the parks are located. Each Board shall be a corporation with perpetual succession.⁴

From 1942 to 1956, six Kentucky cities had state mandated segregated park systems, as the above article in the *Kentucky Revised Statutes* indicates. However unsettling this episode of segregation appears to us today, it is unremarkable knowledge for the many African-Americans who came to adulthood in this period and navigated through daily acts of racism. It is unremarkable for those many black people who knew that they could not easily share white parks well before 1942. This was unremarkable for those people who looked out across the urban landscape in the 1920s and 1930s, if not before, and knew that whites enjoyed more parks, occupying larger spaces, and with better facilities. Indeed, the segregated landscape emerged with a startling depth across Kentucky previous to this 1942 state law; Louisville parks were unquestionably divided by 1924, Lexington by 1916, and Owensboro in 1894 (Russell 1990, Wright, G. 1992, 1985).

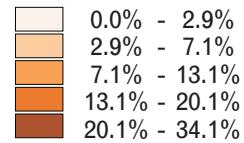
Lexington offered a unique social landscape for the development of segregated parks. As the map in Figure 2 shows, Lexington was the urban focal point for a large percentage of black communities by 1930. Unlike many western rural counties with a large percentage of African-Americans, Fayette County had

Kentucky's Segregated Parks and 1930 Black Population

In 1942, Henry Ward, a congress person from Paducah, drafted a law in the Kentucky legislature that segregated urban park systems in five of Kentucky's largest cities. The law mandated that, "all public parks established and maintained for the recreation, pleasure and welfare of the colored population shall be held, managed and controlled by a Colored Park Board of Commissioners of the city wherein the parks are located." Although many cities across the Commonwealth had segregated parks prior to 1942, Henry Ward's legislation was the first law under segregation that gave power and resources to black communities to organize and develop recreation and leisure programs appropriate for black communities. Louisville was excluded from this law, although the city had segregated parks. The largest black park in Louisville was Chickasaw Park, established in the 1920's. All of the largest black urban parks, Chickasaw in Louisville, Stuart Nelson in Paducah, and Lexington's Douglass Park still exist today.

Source: 1930 U.S. Census

Percent of Total Population as Black



After opening Kenlake State Resort Park on Kentucky Lake in the mid-1940s, the State Parks Department built Cherokee State Resort Park a few miles down shore. With a beach, a boat house, twelve cottages, a restaurant, and a full-time staff of over 15 people, Cherokee State Resort Park was the first and only black resort park in Kentucky. A 1952 Kentucky State Highway map touted the park as the finest 'colored' vacation site in the South. Cherokee closed during integration in the 1950's, to the disappointment of many black communities. Kenlake remained open and received cottages from Cherokee. In 1998 the Murray State University Sculling Team renovated the property to house the Team's trophies. The renovation did not include any historical recognition of this unique park.

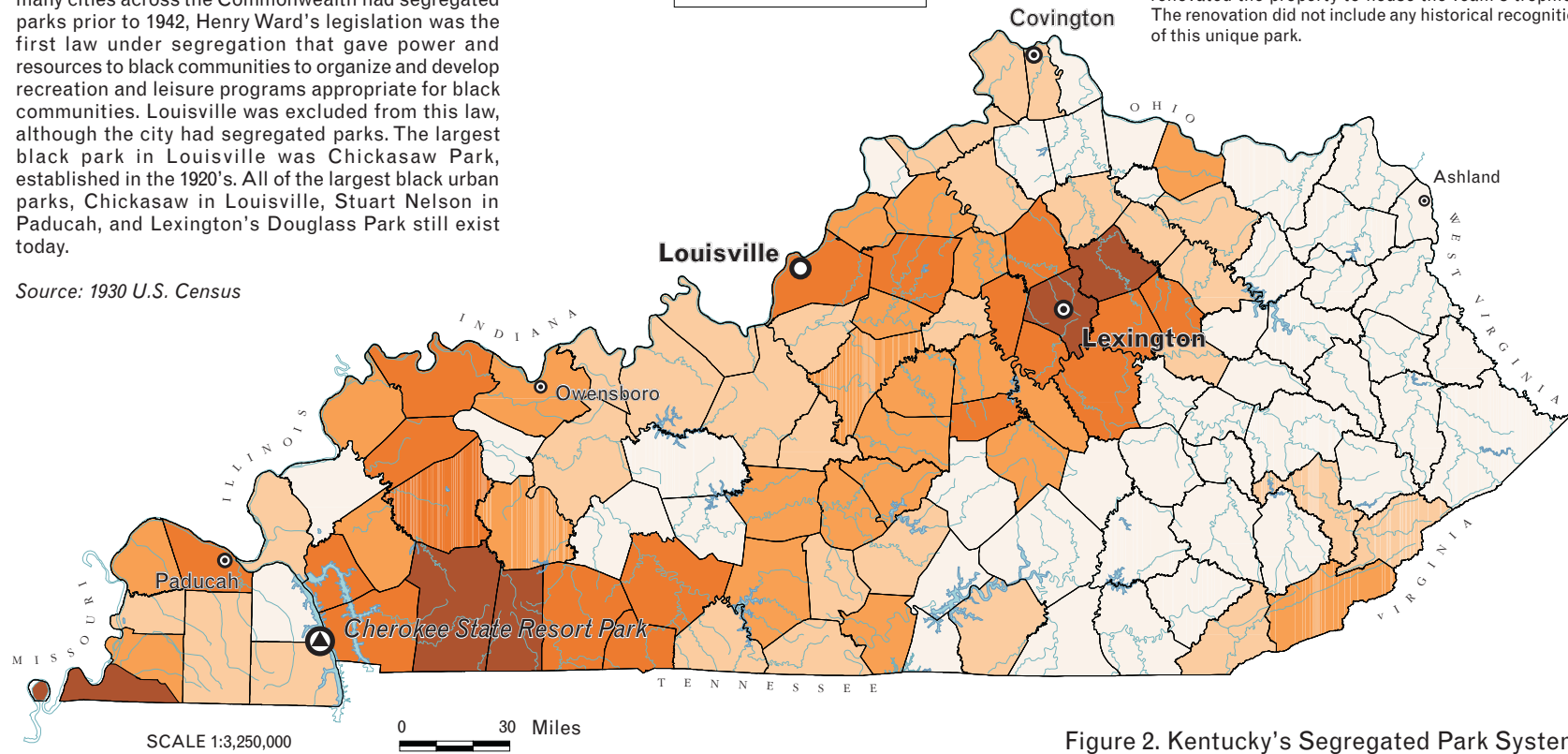


Figure 2. Kentucky's Segregated Park Systems

a city: Lexington. Although Louisville was, and is, a larger city than Lexington, Lexington and the surrounding counties had a larger proportion of African-Americans. This regional concentration, coupled with a mid-sized city, might explain why, by 1956, Lexington had the largest black park system in the State.⁵

After 1916, racial segregation in Lexington's parks was clearly defined, but prior to the creation of Douglass Park, evidence of segregated recreation is less available.⁶ After the Supreme Court's 1896 ruling in Plessy vs. Ferguson, which established "separate but equal" legislation, and the 1904 passage of the Day Law in Kentucky, which forbade any school from admitting both black and white students, segregation pervaded much of Kentucky's social space (Lucas 1992, Williamson 1986, Wright G. 1992). Williamson however claims that the last wave of segregation legislation, occurring between 1913 to 1915, had the least significance to black communities (Williamson 1986). For those blacks who could not enjoy any public recreation places in Lexington until 1916, and for those people who lived in smaller towns with no city-provided spaces, segregation had a significant impact on their collective lives.

George Wright, a noted historian on African-Americans in Kentucky, suggests that parks were generally integrated in the nineteenth century, although with separate areas for blacks and whites. However, he also suggests that conditions varied across the State, with little uniformity in when and where parks became institutionally segregated (1985, 1992). For example, in Louisville, parks were not legally segregated until a city ordinance was passed in 1924, but for many

years prior to this date the white community routinely and unproblematically enforced segregation.⁷ Cranz touches briefly on segregation in public parks and concludes with Wright that regardless of the melting-pot theory of society deployed by city officials in urban public parks, racial segregation in parks went unquestioned, because it was not considered problematic (Cranz 1985, Wright, G. 1985). In the southern states, a region missing from Cranz's analysis, Wright explains that by 1900, and especially by the end of the first quarter of this century, cities began enforcing strict racial segregation in parks (Wright 1985).

At the time of Douglass Park's 1916 dedication, both black and white leaders testified that the park was an expression of the favorable political climate between the communities.⁸ White civic leaders claimed that they recognized the specific needs of recreation and amusement in the black community, while the black leaders posited the new park as evidence of progress for their community.⁹ Black Lexingtonians now had a public homeplace for their communities; they were however, in a constant struggle over how this homeplace was defined. Contrary to this facade of progress, both Cranz and Wright agree that segregated parks were generally regressive, because they overly sensitized racial difference, opening these spaces and the people who use them to trenchant stereotypes (Cranz 1985, Wright, G. 1985). As we will discover, Douglass Park intensified Lexington's racialized public geography, and Lexington's separate parks were not materially equal. After we explore how the city officials devalued Lexington's black parks, we will discuss how black communities rose above this devaluation.

Homeplace Defined Without

Lexington officials used many strategies to devalue blacks and manipulate the space of these parks to represent an inferior image of 'blackness.' Not only were black communities getting fewer and smaller parks compared to white communities, the city attempted to portray black parks as mismanaged, filthy places for over forty years after the creation of Douglass Park. The city contracted planners to devise grossly inequitable segregated recreation spaces; they underpaid park workers and under-funded black park facilities; and perhaps most subtly, they attempted to control the aesthetics of black parks through maintenance and landscaping. Investigating these inequalities helps give meaning to the resiliency of black cultural identity, despite discrimination, just as it enables us to understand how these spaces supported a homeplace for black communities across the Bluegrass.

The *1930 Report for Public Recreation in Lexington* illustrates the difference that segregation makes. This plan is among Lexington's first comprehensive overviews of existing black and white park spaces and outlines basic design philosophies and planning projections to 1970. The *Report* delineates themes similar to Cranz's reform park and Schuler's analysis of the function of parks in the expanding urban landscape (Cranz 1982, Schuler 1986). The *Report* explains that recreation programs and park spaces were necessary for proper public health and social development within Lexington's growing urban environment. At the time parks were seen as purifying, 'breathing' spaces for the stagnant air and pollution in the city. Because city officials viewed recreation as a positive, healthy

experience for Lexingtonians, the city needed appropriately healthy spaces. The plan heralded the automobile as a new focus for park design and located large, open, and rugged spaces outside the city, to which one could drive and become renewed by a stroll through a wild expanse of nature (City of Lexington 1930).¹⁰

This investment into a rambling wilderness did not exclude black Lexingtonians; the *Report* traced racially distinct recreation spaces onto Lexington's landscape. The *Report* described two major segregated parks: 100 acres of bottom lands on the Elk Horn Creek located in the extreme northwest of the city for a black park, and the 500-acre preserve on Lake Ellerslie on the southeastern edge of town designated for white use. Not only are the comparable sizes disparaging (on the scientific pretense of measuring acres per person, the 1930 *Report* rationalized that the smaller black community required less space), but their extreme geographies, both located at opposite corners of the city, indicate the desperate need to prohibit interaction and maintain strict segregation between black and white Lexingtonians (City of Lexington 1930). Although these parks never materialized, the *Report* left unremarked the fact that blacks would be confined to swampy bottom-lands, while whites strolled through a pastoral woodland at the lakes edge. One can infer that blacks were considered less than civilized, closer to an untamable wildness, and possessed a vulgar aesthetic.

The City utilized other methods to devalue black leisure spaces. In particular, the city underfunded the black park system. From 1916 to 1956, Lexington parks operated within a state-mandated two-park system, each with separate city funded budgets, one white and the other 'colored.' The

administration that controlled the black parks during this 40 year period was the Colored Board of Parks, which was largely autonomous from the White Board.¹¹ The Board was generally composed of five members who maintained operating budgets, appropriated funds and created bonds to help purchase new park property, and designed the philosophy and use of black parks. Furthermore, the Colored Board members attained one of the highest positions in local government available to African-Americans during segregation.

The city budget detailed park employees' wages for each system beginning in 1932, although the Board members could not be compensated for their services. That blacks have been historically underpaid in most occupations compared with whites is not surprising, the budgets clearly show how this was institutionalized, even for workers in the same positions. Indeed despite Plessy, the Kentucky Statutes¹² indicates that city could devise any budget it found appropriate for the separate Boards; no provision existed that guaranteed parks would be equal. For the 23 years that the budget enumerated wages for the two park systems, aside from the police that patrolled the various parks, only the employees at the Charles Young Community Center, a park created in 1930, had wages comparable to white employees in similar positions. When the city built pools in the 1930s, one white and one colored, Douglass Pool employees made in some years half as much as similar positions at the white pool. We do not have to read long into these budgets to realize that the philosophy of separate but equal did not matter in Lexington.¹³

The Board of Park Commissioners (White)¹⁴ devalued the black park system in two other interesting ways. First, the White Board devalued meetings between the boards within their monthly minutes, and second, it attempted to control the aesthetics of black parks through maintenance and landscaping. For over 12 years of their existence, the minutes show that the White Board never complimented the Colored Board; there was, instead, only ridicule. Unfortunately the minutes from the Colored Board no longer exist. When the Colored Board appears in the minutes of the White Board, as would happen if one had a complaint with the other, the Colored Board is discussed in a farcical and condescending tone. In 1944, the White Board formed a special committee to meet with the Colored Board concerning the financial difficulties of the latter,

...but the [Colored Board] w[as] not very definite about what they wanted. After quoting Chinese proverbs and much discussion on the side, by Prof. Caulder and Hattie Rowe [of the Colored Board], it was brought to light that the Colored Board was under the impression that they had not received their part of the \$20,000, which was appropriated by the city for park maintenance before the two Boards were appointed.¹⁵

The minutes continue to explain how the White Board found a flaw in the Colored Board's accounting. After realizing the problem, the Colored Board left "much appreciated." In 1948, the White Board sent a scolding letter to the Colored Board indicating that the White Board did not approve of the "undesirable conduct at dances at the Charles Young Community Center."¹⁶ The White Board suggested that the Colored Board seek the advice of the National Recreation Association on proper colored recreation. The minute entries show that the White Board represented the Colored Board as a misguided, if not immoral, organization.

Finally the White Board tried to portray black recreational spaces as inferior by controlling the physical appearance and aesthetic of black parks. Because of certain provisions in the State law, Kentucky's White Boards managed general maintenance of all city parks and could charge Colored Boards for black park maintenance. In Lexington, throughout the White Board's minutes, sporadic text indicates that the Colored Board did not like this arrangement. The Colored Board felt that they were overcharged for simple services and lawn care. For example, James Jones, a former Colored Board Commissioner, remembers an occasion when the White Board attempted to charge the Colored Board \$20 to borrow a shovel for one day.¹⁷

In March 1949, the Colored Board indicated that they would no longer pay for overcharged maintenance services and that the White Board should suspend their work in black parks. This antagonism between the Boards dissolved into a stalemate, and the City Manager held an emergency meeting with both Boards, where he appealed to the White Board to consider lowering their fees. Miss Pherigo, the Executive Director of the White Board, claimed that fees could not be lowered without compromising the White Board. Resolution occurred when the White Board agreed to consult outside opinions for lawn care services; these opinions vindicated the White Board. Miss Pherigo sent a formal letter to the Colored Board in late May, 1950, indicating that a lawn crew will visit the black parks, and because the parks were deplorably overgrown with weeds, the Colored Board would be liable for any damages that occurred.¹⁸ For the remaining six years, similar conflicts ignited between the Boards; the White Board openly

manipulated their dominant position over the Colored Board to sustain, if not a paternalistic control, then an image that the Colored Board incompetently and ineffectually managed their parks.

These exchanges between the Boards indicate the continual process and struggle to define spatial identity: to define how one will be represented, from park locations to the very grass on the ground. They also punctuate the subtle maneuvers used to devalue black space, undermine a black aesthetic, and foster myths in white minds. Such a myth could be characterized as "here we give the black folks their own parks, even their own management, and they still can't take care of them. They just must be inferior people." But in truth, the Colored Board resisted their dependent relationship with the White Board and fought to control its own parks' upkeep and appearances, but this privilege was often denied. Lexington's black communities, however, had other strategies to stage resistance to white supremacist ideology.

Homeplace Defined Within

The movement to establish Douglass Park began with a \$50,000 bond issued in 1913 to acquire two parks. Distinguished members of the black community pressured the Mayor and the Board of City Commissioners in 1914 to apply half of the bond toward the procurement of a park for black communities.¹⁹ Douglass Park was purchased in 1915 and located off Georgetown Pike, fully one and one-half miles from the center of town, while the other half of the bond purchased Duncan Park on 5th Street, in the center of the city. The Douglass Park property was part

of a 43-acre tract of land purchased for \$20,000 from the successful local grocer, E. L. Martin. The entire 43 acres was not included in Douglass Park. As explained by the city commissioners, the city would sell 25 acres, the revenue from which would purchase black parks elsewhere in the city.²⁰ Regardless of the city commissioners' intentions, a second park for black Lexingtonians did not emerge until the city acquired the four-acre Charles Young Community Center, which became the second largest space after Douglass Park exclusively for black communities (Pherigo 1944).²¹

Douglass Park was located just outside the city limits, in what the time was a largely rural area (1921 map of Lexington, City Archives). Although I have found no photographs that depict the park in its earliest years, maps in Figures 3 and 4 show aerial photography of the park in the years of 1931 and 1993, respectively. Even by 1931, the park was still situated in a prominently rural setting. However, 62 years later the city had fully surrounded the park. As illustrated in Appendix A, Douglass Park's recreation programs shifted from many small-scale and diverse activities in 1954, such as with a band stand, a croquet court, and a wading pool, to a few large-scale sports complexes by 1993. This evolution is consistent with Cranz's argument that urban parks became generally more sports oriented after the 1950s. Despite the urban encroachment and shift in leisure programming, the park remained, and, in fact, flourished, as the increase in acreage would suggest. Because of the intensity of black participation in the during its earliest years, this space remains a vital element of black public life.

Aerial Photography of Douglass Park, 1931

Source: Lexington City Archives

Fifteen years after Douglass Park opened the two prominent methods of visiting the park were walking and using the city trolley system. The trolley line ended at the entrance of the park and a sidewalk skirted Georgetown Street to Julius Marks Tuberculosis Sanatorium. In 1931, a paved road does not enter the park. One can easily locate the clay tennis and basketball courts, the playground, and the baseball field represented on the 1954 map. The pool was completed eight years later in 1939.



Figure 3. Aerial Photography of Douglass Park, 1931

Aerial Photography of Douglass Park, 1993

Source: 1993 U.S.G.S. Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads (DOQQ)

By 1993, Douglass Park was surrounded. A mobile home park developed to the northeast, industrial areas line the northern and southeastern edges, the public housing to the south, Charlotte Court, expanded its reach. The sanatorium property to the north was purchased by a church congregation and built a large assembly to the immediate west of the abandoned hospital. The neighborhoods to the west received paved roads by 1993 and visitors to the park had plenty of places to park their automobiles. Although many of the trees that originally stood in the park on its opening day have since disappeared, three locations within the park support the robustly aged, original deciduous trees: the first 300 feet east of Georgetown Street, the line of trees in the obsolete golf course, and to the north of the Dirt Bowl Tournament Courts. The added property to the north was owned by a tree nursery from the 1930's until the 1970's.



Figure 4. Aerial Photography of Douglass Park, 1993

Douglass Park's grand dedication to Lexington's 'colored citizens' occurred on July 4th, 1916. A quartet from Russell High School, a city school for the black community, threaded music between addresses given by Rev. Robert Mitchell, Rev. O. E. Jones, and John B. Snowden, whose speech was entitled, "The Spot Where I Was Born." In an act of paternalism not inconsistent with the ideology of the day, a mayoral representative gave the first speech formally presenting the park as a gift to W. H. Ballard, a local black business leader, who symbolically accepted for Lexington's black communities. The newspaper article announcing the new Douglass Park to Lexington was careful to add that the ceremony that day was, "managed entirely by the committee of colored citizens appointed to arrange for the celebration."²² Indeed, the individuals who strove to create Douglass Park were significant members in the black community, including E. W. Chenault, E. D. Willis, Jordan Jackson, who was Chairman of the committee, and J. B. Caulder and W. H. Ballard, both of whom later became members of the Colored Board.²³

Douglass Park did not fall into any one category during segregation; it held multiple uses for black communities. It was a place where people could 'let off steam' and communicate common frustrations, as well as a place to bring a family, or a congregation, for a picnic. As the park supported community organizing, it also provided a spectrum of other programs, ranging from recreation for adults and children, summer carnivals and parades, church and family reunions, and band concerts and talent and entertainment programs. Douglass Park regularly held competitions and tournaments between park and

amateur leagues on the weekends, which were inspirations for countless children whose self-esteem was constantly undermined by racial stereotypes. When one walked into Douglass Park, one experienced not just games, reunions, or speeches; these were all fused together.²⁴ These programs composed the fabric of Douglass Park, where politics and activism were woven into the daily spaces of recreation, family, spirituality, and pleasure. In these activities, black communities forged their cultural politics, and in these politics, black life articulated an aesthetic: a way of occupying space in manner, language, and dress that supported identities of resistance.

Bringing different black communities together to recreate and discuss commonalities and differences, sustained this cultural political momentum. This fusion of recreation and politics was institutionalized through the triad of church, recreational activities, and community events. Every third week in August was Church Day at Douglass Park, where congregations across the Bluegrass would gather to share and discuss church related ideas. Because many smaller cities outlying Lexington did not provide black parks, congregations chartered buses from cities like Richmond, Paris, and Versailles and drove to Douglass Park for these large events.²⁵ Community activities also brought many black communities in contact with one another. One week in August in 1932, over 120,000 people visited the park system. During this week, community singings were held in all the parks, with a quartet contest the following week, a beauty contest in Douglass Park, a hike from Prall Street Playground to Jonestown, and a County Fair at Douglass Park:

Three black parks existed in 1929:

Douglass Park, Douglass High School Playground, and Carver Playground.

In 1998, all black parks still exist, except Douglass Playground, which closed during integration.

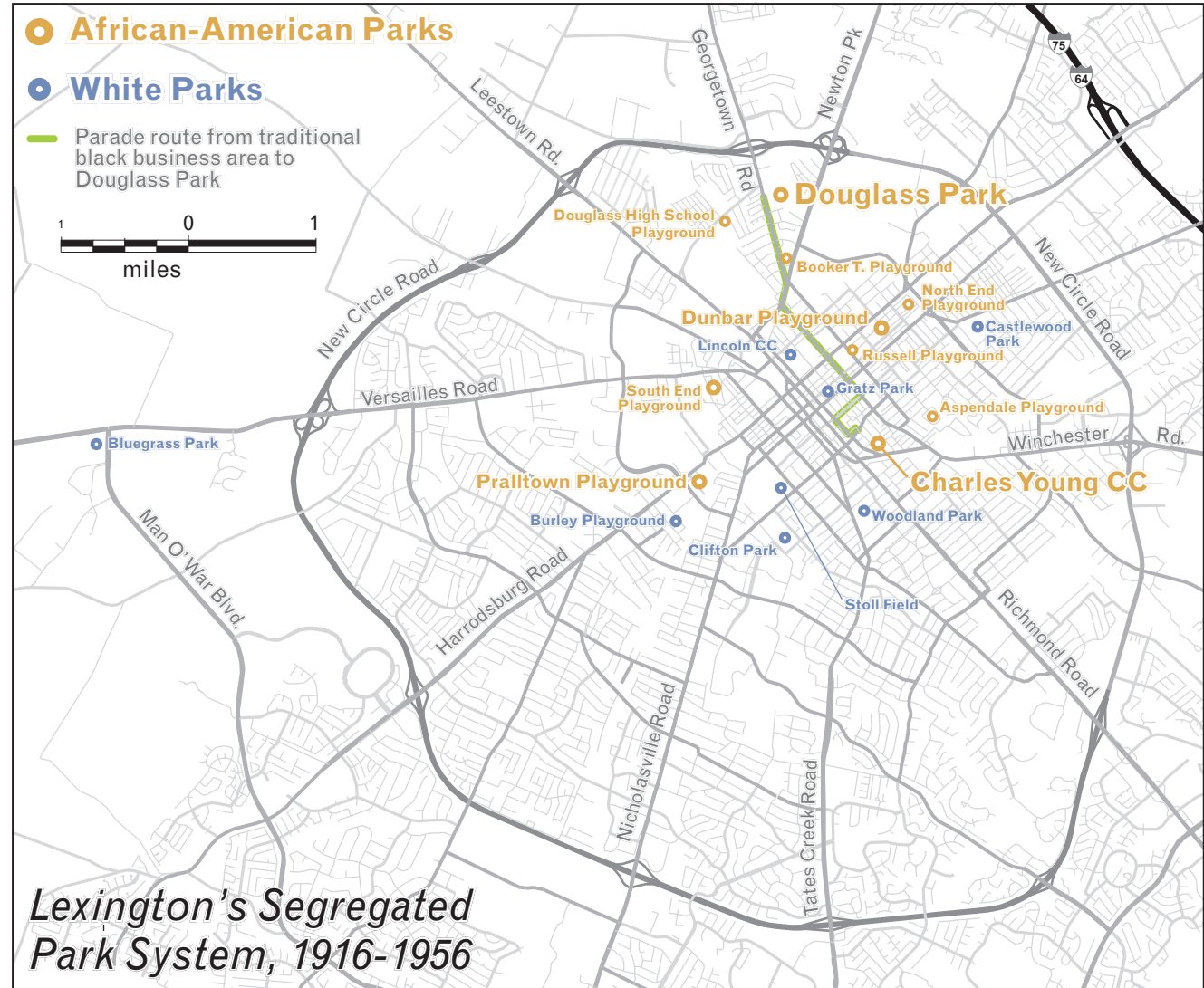
South End Playground was initially called Derodes Playfield.

Lexington had the largest and most extensive collection of black parks in Kentucky, and even surpassed some larger Southern cities, including Atlanta Georgia (compare to Bayor, 1996).

Although this map represents all of the black parks in Lexington prior to integration, it does not show all of the corresponding white parks. Those white parks listed here were the largest and most popular during the period. Only Woodland Park, Castlewood Park, Burely Playground, and Gratz Park still exist today.

These historic parks composed the fabric of Lexington's segregated recreation and leisure spaces. They are mapped onto a 1996 road coverage for the city to illustrate a core historical geography and to locate these parks today.

source: Lexington City Archives;
1929 and 1947 Recreation Maps



Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

Figure 5. Lexington's Segregated Park System, 1916-1956

Migration to Douglass Park from Surrounding Cities and Black Fayette County School Playgrounds

School Playground Acreage

Cadentown	.25
Coletown	1
Douglass High	4
Fort Springs	.15
Maddoxtown	1
Pricetown	1
Uttingertown	.25

Douglass Park served more than Lexington's black communities. Because Douglass Park was the largest black park in the Bluegrass Region, many black communities from surrounding cities visited the park for important social functions and holidays. During segregation, these communities would charter buses if needed to attend the 4th of July festivities or participate in regional sports tournaments. Similarly, the county playground programs that spanned Fayette county would migrate to Douglass Park for organized recreational events and county fairs.



This map was created from Kentucky Department of Transportation and U.S.G.S. geographic coverages, and 1990 US Census data. I manipulated the coverages and data in ESRI's ARC/INFO and created the new coverage, *Black County Schools in Fayette County*. The source of these school locations are from a 1943 Fayette County Map prepared by Cecil C. Harp Engineer for Mrs. Meriwether, whose intent was to map "county colored playgrounds". The Lexington City Archives has the original map. Roads that did not appear on the 1943 map of Fayette County were removed; roads in surrounding counties approximate a 1943 configuration. The black population derives from 1990 statistics, and represents only a frame of reference. I exported the map into Adobe Illustrator for final layout and publishing.

Figure 6.
Migration to Douglass Park

The county fair held at Douglass Park all day Friday was quite a gala affair. Much interest was displayed on the part of patrons and participants. Never before in the history of playgrounds has there been such a festivity.²⁶

In the summer of 1943, Douglass Park routinely held the “City-Wide talent program” that presented acts from the smaller playgrounds. After Douglass Park received a pool in 1939, playground leaders held “bathing beauty contests.” Charles Young Community Center frequently held dance contests and sock hops.²⁷

Leisure sports also helped to fuse various black communities together. Because Douglass Park had the best clay tennis courts in the State for blacks, and a 9-hole golf course for blacks leagues (sponsored by black businesses in the State), annual championship meets were held in the park. Teams from around the State would travel to the park for these occasions. Besides golf and tennis leagues, Lexington’s black park system had volleyball, basketball, baseball, and even ping-pong, horseshoe, and checkers leagues that held weekly games. Smaller playgrounds, such as in North End, South End, and Prall Street, had small tournaments that brought together local, neighborhood youth.²⁸

Maps in Figures 5 and 6 locate the black city and county parks and playgrounds that comprised the black park system, whose programs all converged upon Douglass Park. Whether they came from the playgrounds that often joined the churches and schools of black hamlets throughout Fayette County, or from black neighborhoods within the city, black communities all intermingled in the park.²⁹ Because the park offered the largest black public leisure space with the

most programs than in any of the surrounding counties, Douglass Park was, in the words of oral history interviewees, “THE place to go.”³⁰ Indeed, Douglass Park was immensely popular, enough so that Waller (1995) suggests that the opening of the Park precipitated the fall of the black-owned Gem Theater in downtown Lexington, which catered to the black community. Although all of the county playgrounds have long since vanished from the landscape, every black city park and leisure space still exists today.

Perhaps the greatest event that brought black communities together to share ideas, express common concerns, and celebrate black life, was the 4th of July holiday. Although all parks had special activities on this day, Douglass Park was the center for the black community.³¹ Black communities from places like Richmond, Versailles, and Winchester, drove school buses into Douglass Park, bringing golf clubs, tennis rackets, record players, picture albums, and a full day’s worth of food to barbecue. They would discuss their hometowns, families, and issues about black life.³² If Lexington’s black park system could be defined as a homeplace, as a site of shared cultural politics for only one day, it was the 4th of July.

Douglass Park on the 4th of July not only assembled together diverse communities, it also fused and bound together a program of politics, recreation, reunion, and religion. In the hum of thousands of people, one could focus on the keynote address on racial pride, visit an exhibition, participate in a competition, or exchange a recipe. Through the 1940s, many of the 4th of July holidays were organized with the help of the Emancipation Day Association and the Community

Service League. They programmed events focused on uniting issues in black communities. In 1921, Dr. E. E. Underwood gave a speech on the “Contemporary Negro”; in 1930, there were programs created to teach children to become involved in community affairs; in 1935, W. H. Ballard gave a speech on the history of Independence Day from the black perspective; and in 1944, Rev E. H. Allen gave a speech on “Confidence, Trust, Economy, and Industry.”³³ An extract from Dr. Underwood speech reads:

The Declaration of Independence stands out in bold relief as the greatest state paper ever before written, equaled only by the emancipation proclamation, which followed nearly a century later, giving full fruition to the principles enunciated by Thomas Jefferson.³⁴

One key aesthetic production on the 4th of July was the parade from one homeplace to another, right past white eyes:

The colored people under the auspices of the Emancipation executive committee of which Rev. E. T. Offutt is chairman, have arranged a big Independence Day celebration and parade to Douglass Park Monday. The line of march will mobilize at the corner of Short and Deweese. A brass band will head the procession, followed by uniform orders and war veterans of all wars. The various Sunday schools will be represented in trucks decorated bearing the name of the school. The old veterans of the Civil War will ride in autos provided for them. The parade will start promptly at 11 o'clock, going down Deweese to Main, west on Main to Jefferson, north on Jefferson to Third, west on Third to Georgetown, and to Douglass Park.³⁵

Such parades displayed cultural symbols, codified beliefs and represented political principles, and flaunted them in front of the world, in front of white criticism and discrimination. Parades captured space and allowed a performance of identity, staged as an aesthetics of resistance. This parade was not an isolated

event, as black communities often paraded from the black businesses downtown to Douglass Park.³⁶ We have to look at these parades as reflections of the pride and respect black communities had for Douglass Park. Douglass Park was a critical focal point for the lives of black communities across the Bluegrass, just as much as it sustained, and was dependent on, a daily cultural politics opposing the dehumanizing effects of racism.

Whether we look at Douglass Park as a single special event or as collection of daily experiences, it was a homeplace that wove together politics and activism with recreation and pleasure. It also wove together black communities across the Bluegrass, as much as it wove together Lexington's neighborhoods through smaller parks. It was a space where communities could celebrate black life and share grievances and tactics for survival; it was a place for building cultural identity, and a space of solidarity prior to integration of the parks in 1956.³⁷ When we understand that the daily act of *living* and *expressing* these spaces - in speech, dress, pleasure, and politics - gave meaning to these important parades and holidays, we move towards understanding an aesthetics of black parks.

The Child of Today is the Citizen of Tomorrow

From the turn of the century, larger segments of the population found increasingly more leisure time and local officials worried about how and where these communities would exercise this freedom. As early as 1899, with no public park in Lexington, a newspaper editorial reported that, "there is no place where one can spend a quiet Sunday afternoon in a healthy way. In consequence, the

young men on Sunday afternoons make a practice of drifting about town and going into places they ought not go.”³⁸ After 20 years and the establishment of three white parks and one black park, the City was still consumed by the cloud surrounding the public’s idle time. Lexington’s local newspapers calculated that the population in 1920 had 250,000 leisure hours per day (or 5 hours per person) that the public would spend in corruptible idleness, if not channeled through supervised public recreation. Officials adhered to a simple argument, “the anti-social and criminal instinct does not flourish very well in the atmosphere of wholesome recreation and physical well-being.”³⁹

Lexington parks thus became integral components for sustaining community welfare, and similar to the national playground movement of the era (Cranz 1995), recreation leaders viewed structured play and leisure as legitimate agents for social prosperity. These structured activities were not the monolithic sport programs we associate with recreation today; rather, they spanned an array of physical, passive, and aesthetic programs, both in white and black parks. Cranz labeled this direction in park programming as the Reform Park movement, which, “in organizing activities like music weeks, community days, community singing...street play, holiday celebrations, community drama, pageantry, and neighborhood talent programs, [recreation leaders] sought to ensure a wholesome expression of community life and the socialization of residents to a common core of American values” (1982: 68).

When we apply Cranz’s reform park movement to Lexington’s development of black park leadership, some important questions arise. First, did this reform

park ideology surface in black recreation as it did in white recreation? If so, which American values were taught? Did black recreation leaders absorb this commitment to social reform and rephrase Crazz's statement to read, 'through recreation...black leaders sought to ensure a wholesome expression of black community life and the socialization of residents to a common core of African-American values?' Did black communities also express concern over the leisure hours of black residents?

At the turn of the 20th century, private interests governed all recreation spaces in Lexington. The Lexington Civic League organized its first campaign in 1900 to secure public recreation space for Lexington communities. Although the League professed to attend to local inequities, "accepting of all matters and classes of people in the community" (Pherigo 1944: 2), it put particular emphasis on providing park spaces that could instruct Lexington youth, but also the public more generally, on the proper mode of citizenship (Pherigo 1950, Porter 1988). The League helped establish the segregated Park Boards in 1904 and supported the Colored Community Service League after the creation of Douglass Park. The League coordinated all city recreation for both black and white parks until 1931, when the League was transformed into the Department of Playgrounds and Recreation (Pherigo 1944).⁴⁰

The League offered three major justifications as to why park spaces benefited Lexington's communities. First, adequately distributed parks throughout the urban environment provided an alternative to the dangerous street culture detrimental to youths. Second, a program of constructed public recreation

improved the public's physical health, and it socialized the public to more civil and enlightened attitudes. Anna Pherigo, a long-time Executive Director of the Board of Park Commissioners (White), summarized the League's philosophy:

Public play and recreation should raise the standard of physical, mental, cultural, and moral life of the individual and through the individual the standards of life of the community...[And] should produce...a higher standard of culture; a finer sense of civic duty and responsibility; and restoration to normal health for certain diseased children and young people.⁴¹

The third justification for park spaces arose when comprehensive plans for city recreation first began in 1930; parks became sanitizing and purifying components for the urban environment as they circulated the stagnant and polluted air of the city, opened up the city to sunlight, and provided clean water and pools for the working class, which had limited access to bathing facilities (City 1930, Pherigo 1944).

Compared to Cranz's 'pleasure ground' parks and Lexington's private leisure spaces prior to 1900, this reform park shifted the design priorities from the landscaped, pastoral, nature-as-scenery attractions of the previous century to more utilitarian, formulaic, and socially programmed park spaces.⁴² These new parks were established to instruct as much as to refresh a disadvantaged public. When we realize that this instruction occurred in a segregated park system, taught by black leaders in a black context, the seeds of opposition are fertilized. The social utilitarian ideas that permeated the creation of white parks became transformed and recontextualized into a black context with the creation of black parks.

Lexington's first white park was the West End Playground in Irishtown dedicated on June 17, 1901. The League organized many local business elite and municipal officials in the formation of this park space. Charles H. Stoll negotiated the procurement of the land from Southern Railway; local building suppliers donated the materials for a pavilion; the Eastern State Hospital green house donated ornamental flowers for landscaping; and the Lexington Railway Company furnished lights to keep the park open until late evening. (Pherigo 1944). The press lauded the creation of this park, because the installation of a water line from the city reservoir provided the park, and subsequently Irishtown, with clean, filtered water. The park provided one of the poorest white settlements in the city a suitable alternative to the putrid, contaminated local well water, and alcohol, which was recklessly over-indulged.⁴³

A similar situation occurred with the establishment of Douglass Park 15 years later. Indeed, Douglass Park received fresh water in the form of a wading pool.⁴⁴ More importantly, the park launched the Colored League and its attempt to socialize and improve black communities. Perhaps the most important impact of the Colored League was in its teaching programs. Throughout the year, the Colored League trained black recreation leaders within Douglass Park and in 1938 sent representatives to the Conference of Colored Recreation Workers in Columbus, Ohio.⁴⁵ The Colored League raised money for black recreation, and as the 1920 article reads, "the colored committee [Colored League] indicates that it will raise \$4,500 for work among their own people."⁴⁶ The Colored League also developed a "Moonlight" school to teach disadvantaged black adults to read,

which was a program unique to the Colored League.⁴⁷ In 1921, a local newspaper reported that, “[the Colored League] requested notable individuals to conduct an institute to train and enlist local leaders among colored people in community recreation, music and drama.”⁴⁸

As early as 1919, the Colored League held monthly forums in Douglass Park. The annual report of 1919 shows some of the concerns that League addressed:

- Organize money to obtain a lawyer to prosecute the acquitted murderer of black man.
- Generate bond money to support better colored schools.
- Push to establish better public facilities across the city for black communities.
- Work with Emancipation Day Committee, chaired by Rev. E. T. Offutt, pastor of Pleasant Green Baptist Church, with J. B. Caulder and E. W. Chenault as members, to help synchronize Emancipation Day activities across region and State.
- Work to secure more parks for black communities, because parks are as important as schools.⁴⁹

Charles Young Community Center was also an important site for addressing community problems. At the community center black community leaders addressed issues such as teen pregnancy, broken families, and poverty. Neighborhoods mobilized social problems and held forums at the Community Center to find solutions to these social issues. In fact, the Center invited prominent black educators and leaders from Kentucky State College and Fisk University, to help find common strategies to overcome community problems.⁵⁰ All of these activities indicate that the black community proactively improved their collective lives through teaching and social action.

Similar to white park programming, the Colored League and Board instituted activities that socialized children, and black users more generally, to a proper mode of moral, civic, and interpersonal conduct. Through game play, sports and contests that demanded physical interaction among participants, users would learn the value of self-control and discipline, values that could be applied to daily life. Because these ideas of properness, self-control, and discipline were taught in black parks within a black context, they offered radically subversive identities for blacks during the oppressive weight of southern racism. Instead of learning to adhere to subordinate identities, black individuals learned how to express and assert a positive self-image, which gave substance to daily oppositional and uplifting strategies for facing a racist world. Although black park leadership valued the natural setting and beauty of their parks, they equally valued the constructive and positive park programming offered black communities.⁵¹

For both park systems, park building no longer depended on the purely scenic, pastoral settings of the landscape. Rather, the reform park sought to manage unwholesome 'natures' and tendencies thought to commonly inflict urban youths and the working classes; however, for black parks, this ideology offered a radical uplifting of black identity. In these spaces charged to cure the destructive predilections of youths, the unhealthy habits of the masses, and the pestilence occurring in congested urban areas, this movement codified nature not as the pleasantly landscaped garden characteristic of the Olmstead legacy, but as an unwanted skin a progressive urban culture needed to shed. The growth of the Leagues and the enactment of the Boards of Park Commissioners to administer

the park spaces as maintenance for a public and civic purity, not as urban ornament, testifies to the reappraisal of nature, shifting it from the landscape to the individual. Nature was no longer bucolic but anthropomorphic, it was no longer held in the purview of an admirer of a distant scene; it became visceral, clinical, inscribed on and managed at the individual body through a highly structured program of recreation, instruction, and interaction. When the body is black however, we have discovered a potentially subversive moment with the introduction of radical uplifting strategies for asserting identity in black parks.

Towards an Aesthetics of Black Parks

A progressive historiographical approach, broadly documented in a 1995 double-edition of the *Journal of Urban History*, advocates a reinvestigation African-American history, one that moves from a focus on the powerlessness and victimhood of black life, to an examination of how black communities struggled and resisted racist domination. Instead of viewing blacks as, “victims of white racism or slum pathologies,” the new African-American history “conveys a sense of active involvement, of people empowered, engaged in struggle, living their lives, and shaping their futures” (Goings and Mohl 1995: 285).

Robin Kelly is cited as an important scholar who broadens the concept of agency in black communities to include more subtle and subversive forms of resistance. Goings and Mohl regard Kelly as describing a, “tradition of ‘infrapolitics’ - a pattern of daily behavior, an oppositional culture, more or less overt, in which African-Americans demanded respect and recognition in

uncounted daily encounters in the streets, on the streetcars and buses, on the job, in the courts, and elsewhere” (1995: 285). What is missing from Goings and Mohl’s analysis, however, is the recognition of the role of aesthetics in this oppositional culture. What needs to be understood is that infrapolitics, those daily acts of resistance, are embedded within daily processes and performances of occupying space, representing the body, and articulating aesthetic positions. Douglass Park sheltered and fostered these expressive and uplifting exclamations of identities. Before we can inspect the ‘aesthetics of infrapolitics,’ we must first discover how black communities could learn and transfer these infrapolitical strategies within their segregated parks through a comparison between white and black park leadership.

We cannot understand how black communities forged oppositional tactics unless we conceptualize how communities sculpted and represented these tactics. We will not discuss aesthetics as a theory of art, nor as an elitist concern with appearances. Rather, I will define aesthetics as a process of reclaiming identity in a daily act of self-possessing space; a process of articulating hidden transcripts. As many recent identity theorists have examined, identity is a process, a performance (Butler 1990), simultaneously imposed from without as well as generated from within communities. In addition, this identity culminates in a place through historical contexts; in other words, identity is a process articulated through place *and* history (hooks 1990). Thus identity is always meshed in representation: codified in language, dress, and body actions situated in a context of time and place. For marginalized people Throughout U. S. history,

there has been a concerted effort by dominant groups to fix and impose an identity on these people, 'to put them in their place.' Contradicting these forces however, was a necessarily vibrant recoil of oppositional cultural production.

bell hooks aids this analysis with her essay, "An Aesthetic of Blackness" (1990). She guides our definition of aesthetics as "more than a philosophy or theory of art and beauty; it is a way of inhabiting space, a particular location, a way of looking and becoming" (1990: 104). Dewey argues for a similar concept of aesthetic understanding when he moves away from the object, the museum, and the theory of art to recover, "the continuity of esthetic experience within normal processes of living" (1932: 10).⁵² But what is important for hooks is the mobilization of aesthetics into a moment of cultural production and the reclamation of *self* from the dehumanizing effects of racism. She argues that despite the inadequacies felt by black communities in the South during segregation, there was a strong focus on racial uplift through artist expression and cultural production. Cultural expression was a mechanism of combating the stereotypes imposed on black communities from white supremacist ideology. She explains succinctly,

Art was seen as intrinsically serving a political function. Whatever African-Americans created in music, dance, poetry, painting, etc., it was regarded as testimony, bearing witness, challenging racist thinking which suggested black folks were not fully human, were uncivilized, and that the measure of this was our collective failure to create 'great' art.⁵³

hooks emphasizes that cultural production in black communities, although minimized in white minds, was a necessary component of black daily life that

helped mediate the harsh world of segregation. Indeed, the processes of identification, of articulating an aesthetics, were, and still are, vital methods of decolonizing black cultural life from the myths, stereotypes, and inferior positions imposed from racist ideologies (hook 1995).

In Kelly's opening paragraphs in his essay, "'We are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South" (1993), he explains the double-sided nature of black working-class resistance. On the one hand, we have an appearance of consent, yet on the other hand there exists an opposition with historical depth, perhaps not obvious to white eyes, but powerfully resonant in black minds. This process of resistance realizes the position of black life in the equation of domination in the segregated south and operates on a dialectic of self-preservation and subversion, a dialectic nonetheless wrapped up in aesthetic production. Kelly documents those daily acts of resistance, often coded, disguised, and fleshed over in irony, that empower black identity.

A strong link between aesthetics and resistance in Kelly's analysis is his metaphor of buses and streetcars as a theater. He uses this metaphor of theater in two ways, both as a site of performance and as a site of conflict. The theater of performance is where all eyes are watching – whether the black individual will accept subordination and stay in his or her 'place' in the back of the bus, or will act out in speech, pose, eye contact, and where the body chooses to sit. The theater of conflict arises when the representative of city authority, the driver, would often use aggressive measures to force blacks to act, or stay, in place, to

support the myth that blacks were inferior. Because of the seating alignment of the bus, it was in effect a stage with dramatic-like qualities. Kelly emphasizes that blacks learned to resist and survive through strategically negotiating these daily performances (1993). Acknowledging strategic uses of performance recognizes that historical actors as multipositional (Lewis 1995). Understanding that these actors manipulate their identity and positionality, however subtly or dramatically, can contradict the balance of white power (Kelly 1993).

In this realm of performance, a crucial site of resistance is the body itself. The 'body' hinges on the struggle over who will define whom. Kelly argues that working-class blacks occupied spaces of pleasure to transcend, "the world of assembly lines, relief lines, and color lines," to express and experience that the, "black body [can be] celebrated as an instrument of pleasure rather than an instrument of labor" (1993: 83). Articulation of the body in dress and speech sustains a cultural politics of opposition whether it is done in the relatively secure environments of segregated dancehalls, churches, or parks, or whether it is done in a radical inversion of white social norms in a public performance, such as did zoot suiters. In these spaces of pleasure, blacks could voice concerns, achieve personal solidarity, and, if only temporarily, dis-engage their bodies and memories from the trenchant regime of racism. Kelly provides a convincing argument for investigating these spaces of pleasure:

Even modes of leisure could undergrid opposition...for members of a class whose long workdays were spent in backbreaking, low-paid wage work in settings pervaded by racism, the places where they played were more than relatively free places to articulate grievances and dreams. They were places that enabled African-Americans to

take back their bodies, to recuperate, to be together...Knowing what happens in these spaces of pleasure can help us understand the solidarity black people have shown at political mass meetings, illuminate the bonds of fellowship one finds in churches and voluntary associations, and unveil the *conflicts* across class and gender lines that shape and constrain these collective struggles.⁵⁴

It is an easy leap to suggest that parks were spaces of recreation and pleasure; places for 'letting off steam,' expressing common concerns, and recapturing their bodies in sport and play. Indeed, Douglass Park and other parks in Lexington were such spaces for black communities. Because of the fusion between the private and public social spheres, these parks were more than just spaces of pleasure. They were where families of all classes intermingled, where programs were established to help children appreciate racial pride, and where adults learn the importance of community and family. These spaces also merged the spiritual with the secular, as many programs were created and managed by significant religious leaders from surrounding black communities. Most important, through these programs and patterns of intermingling, parks were the staging grounds for adopting infrapolitical strategies and fine-tuning an aesthetics of resistance. Parks were where people could shield themselves from white supremacist ideologies, freely express themselves, and develop comfort and security in a unique cultural politics. These spaces could engage programs that socialized children and young adults into a cultural system, which taught them to navigate daily performances that contradicted the dehumanizing aspects racism.⁵⁵

That parks were spaces and stages for interweaving expression and politics is seen not only in the black community, for aesthetic expression in white

parks often directly addressed and devalued blacks. During the 1930s, the white park system organized children from smaller playground leagues and staged a rash of virulent minstrels shows that debased a black aesthetic. A 1930 local newspaper article reads,

The Park Minstrels [show] ... will be given at Woodland Park Auditorium. Singing, dancing and fun-making with all the atmosphere of the old-time minstrel show, will be presented.... In order that everyone may enjoy the antics of 'Mr. Bones' and 'Mr. Interlocutor,' together with their tap-dancing and mammy singing cohorts, all activity at the Lexington playgrounds will be suspended Tuesday night.... The Park Minstrels is expected to be one the most elaborate undertakings that playgrounds have presented.⁵⁶

Indeed the newspaper reports following this event claimed that this show entertained 2,500 people, the largest event in the white parks that summer.⁵⁷ In spite of this aggressive humiliation, black parks staged empowering representations of African-American history during this same period. Adapting narratives from the then popular black historical pageant, "Milestones of Our Race," black park leadership created plays for black children actors and audiences in Douglass Park. Along a time continuum spanning Africa, slavery, emancipation, and fighting in World War I, this adaptation sought to portray positive elements of black history.⁵⁸ We can only imagine the antithetical images of blackness these children had in their separate parks.

Although these black spaces and activities often supported a moralizing elite class trying to uplift the lower classes, we must appreciate collective effort to rise above racism. Before we give an undue amount of nostalgia to these spaces, it behooves us to remember that there were internal and external conflicts in

black parks. Internally, there were differences in male and female programs, differences in programs between parks, and even rivalries between park neighborhoods. Externally, there were white eyes, city authorities, and the White Park Boards. There were tremendous struggles to define what black parks meant. However the conflicts played out on the ground, these parks collectively sustained daily interaction, expression, and learning of infrapolitical strategies. They were anchors for black cultural life, across the Bluegrass region. In a world of southern segregated black and white divisions, these parks were a homeplace for black social life, where distinctions between family and became less apparent, especially on holidays and reunion days. We must look at these parks, despite internal conflicts, in the context of race in the South more generally and as a homeplace in particular:

Homeplace has been a site of resistance. Its structure was defined less by whether or not black women and men were conforming to sexist behavior norms and more by our struggle to uplift ourselves as a people, our struggle to resist racist domination and oppression.⁵⁹

In the final section, I will argue for preserving and broadcasting this homeplace outside of the academy.

Broadcasting the Homeplace

Since I am discussing aesthetics, it seems appropriate to document these aesthetic products through imagery and audio. More than just document these products, this project broadcasts them beyond traditional scholarship and communicates Douglass Park to an audience outside of the academy through

television, radio, and internet broadcast technology. The *content* of the media, and the foundation of this project, arises from a solid oral history methodology. Oral history offers the best opportunity to discover the undocumented daily patterns of life in these parks. The Southern Oral History Organization summarizes its importance:

Oral History records personal stories and experiences. Interviews can offer us insight into history that is not preserved in documents, as well as the perspectives of people previously silenced by the absence of written materials. Most importantly, oral history affords people interviewed the opportunity to interpret their own life, and to add private memories to the collective historical record.⁶⁰

As we have learned, the history of Douglass Park is not conveniently summarized in any library; rather, it exists in the memories of the multitude of individuals who, on a daily basis, lived, played, and worked in the park. For this reason, an oral history methodology is imperative.⁶¹ This project has collected and preserved their stories and forwards the oral histories as ‘data’ to reinforce and ground the secondary resources discussed in the previous sections.⁶²

More than data though, these histories have voices that are greater than their literal transcription, which is the standard procedure of processing oral history recordings. The spoken word contains not only text but cadence, intonation, and inflection. These attributes are not nontextual, but rather are contextual as they suffuse the expressed word with nuance and consequence. The text does not stand alone: it has a voice that gives it meaning and difference. Without this difference – without this aesthetic context – the identity of the subject is fractured from his or her message; thus, transcriptions have expressive limits.

For African-American history, which has been long absent from the larger public historical record, it becomes important to keep the voices with the text, to keep identities with their messages (Lewis 1995).

In recognition of this need to maintain the subtlety and integrity of recorded histories, many oral history organizations have recently suggested the inclusion of multiple methods of recording oral histories, such as with videography and digital media. Furthermore, these organizations have advocated the preservation and presentation of these histories in the democratic space of the internet, with the goal of conveying as much nuance of subject as possible to the reader.⁶³ Much like the parks of this project, the internet is a 'public' space, provided one has the technological means of access, and allows the broadcast and reception of any content that can be digitized, including photographic, oral, and video histories.⁶⁴ Fusing the recent explosion of affordable broadcast technology with an oral history methodology that records the marginalized histories of common peoples, the internet and multimedia challenge the academic historians to write outside of their narrow professional niche and engage the communities they study. How would a historian give history back to public they study? The next three chapters address this growing need to discuss and present public history in accessible and multimedia formats (see Figure 1).

Before exploring the multimedia content, this project needs to align its media content within broadcast technology. Because this project broadcasts via three major mass media technologies – television, radio, and the internet – we will move beyond mass media and argue, through Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*

(1988), for a place-based media representation of politics and culture. Since the current representations of Douglass Park, or segregated parks generally, are nonexistent or meager in either popular or academic formats, and because libraries are pregnant with unread theses, this project must broadcast the story of Douglass Park.⁶⁵ But can this project parse through the litter of commercial and surficial broadcasts and still have a meaningful impact? As David Harvey notes:

It is hard ... not to attribute some kind of shaping role [of society] to the proliferation of television use. After all, the average American is reputed to watch television for more than seven hours a day, and television and video ownership (the later now covering at least of half of all U.S. households) is now so widespread throughout the capitalist world that some effects must surely be registered.⁶⁶

Harvey alleges that the television is a necessary format for the postmodern world, because it pervades society, compresses time and space, and sews together an endless collage of depthless images, the 'registered effects' of which are social fragmentation and indifference to sociopolitical circumstances. I would hope that this project does not have such a shallow impact. He also posits that television, because of its widespread use, has become a crucial mechanism in sustaining mass cultural tastes and consumerism. Harvey assigns the television, and any media, to the dual role of perpetuating social fragmentation and synthesizing large-scale consumerist desires. This apparent contradiction indicates the divisive control of late capitalism over contemporary society, where every cultural manifestation ultimately propagates capitalism (Harvey 1990: 61).

Although Harvey quickly dismisses any technological determinism associated with television, he unfortunately does not clarify that it, like all the

forms of media he criticizes throughout his book, is a medium through which a system of representation is broadcast. Indeed media can and does insidiously sow capitalist ideologies throughout society, but he does not examine how this process occurs, nor does he acknowledge that media can also subversively, if not openly, attack dominate ideologies. When Americans watch their seven hours of television each day, they participate in representations of reality, which could range from a nationally syndicated sitcom, a public station, to a local independent cable program.⁶⁷ When Harvey analyzes media, he does so selectively, overlooking how communities might marshal media for resistance. Although Harvey invests an analytic premium in a theoretical model where culture is determined by capitalism, such that media is the technological conduit between the capitalist apex and the proletariat base, I view this construction as overly rigid and prohibitive. Ultimately, I hope to show that community based media can dismantle this 'architecture of domination.'

Chomsky and Herman offer some significant insights into the political economic forces of mass media in *Manufacturing Consent*. Through their detailed empirical study of the media enterprise, they place the function of the media into a propaganda model that "suggests that the 'societal purpose' of the media is to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and state" (Chomsky and Herman 1988: 288). In this model, they describe a system of filters in which events become manipulated and redistributed to support the sociopolitical agenda of the corporate elite. They primarily claim that the pattern of corporate ownership of

broadcast and mass media technology filters and controls what composes the 'public interest' and objective reality.

They explain two factors that connect this large-scale corporate ownership of media with propaganda and the management of public discourse. First, mass media technology has always been capital intensive and governmentally regulated which excludes all but the most wealthy individuals or companies from producing media content for broadcast. Secondly, mass media is a hugely profitable venture where a small number of mega-corporations own, or have substantial investments in, the majority of media. Under these circumstances, they explain, it becomes the corporate elite's imperative to both insulate their hegemony from criticism as well as maintaining a profitable operation. Hence the analogy of 'manufacturing' a compulsory 'consent' to a vision of a social order; one that funnels public discourse away from the structure of domination and propagates servile consumerist ideology throughout society (Chomsky and Herman 1988: 3-14).

Both books end on a central thesis: capitalism exerts a divisive control over contemporary culture and public discourse. But one important distinction separates these approaches. Chomsky and Herman are careful to interpolate how media technologies and scales of operation provide methods of resistance to corporate visions of the social order, which is an issue Harvey does not clarify. *Manufacturing* explains that resistance to a mass media ideology exists within the proliferation of local, broad-access media technology, especially during the past thirty years. They advise that to progress towards democracy, it is essential that media must become involved with place-based representation of politics and

culture. Although some uses media technology are oppressive, other uses can offer liberating systems of representation that broaden public discourse to reveal those invisible subjects and hidden places that dominant ideologies have attempted to overwrite, if not obliterate.

Does a model exist for this place-based representation of politics and culture, and can we apply its methodologies to this project? Appalshop in Whitesburg, Kentucky presents such a model (Hannah 1996). For 30 years, Appalshop has produced radio, video, and film programs that promote a positive image of Appalachia and combats the many negative stereotypes in popular media, which explore, almost applaud, Appalachians expressing their unique identities in their homes, schools, churches, and festivals; expressing themselves in *their* place. Appalshop's media speaks to both residents of Appalachia and the greater U.S. public more generally, and broadcasts their content on a multitude of public radio and television stations across the nation. Since 1996, Appalshop has operated a website that explores the cultural significance of, and provides educational resources on Appalachia.⁶⁸ Although addressing different geographies, Appalshop and this project have the same multimedia methodology; where Appalshop explores and promotes the geography of Appalachia, this project focuses on the smaller, but equally diverse geography of Douglass Park, and Lexington's segregated park system.

Chapter 3: Website

<http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA>

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These links represent the major sections of the website. Except for the historical images and voices, all content was created by this project. Because the website is never a static document, this site will change and develop additional resources. A *What's New* link will have germane news and developments.

Chapter 4: Radio

a douglass park radio program

This 13-minute radio program first aired on University of Kentucky's student-managed radio station, WRFL, in August, 1997. The first 2-minute program is a Public Service Announcement for the following video documentary. The later 11-minute commentary threads oral history interviews into an audio portrait of Douglass Park. As compared to Chapter 4, this audio program only discusses events in Douglass Park prior to 1956. The format of this audio narrative is a standard stereo CD-ROM.

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION FOR LISTENING TO AUDIO

Chapter 5: Video

a douglass park documentary project

In the spring of 1916, D.W. Griffith's film, *Birth of a Nation*, opened to an unprecedented attendance in Lexington's segregated theatres (Waller, 1995). The central thrust of this highly praised movie glorified the self-preservation of white racial purity in the post-reconstruction South. Flowering within this volatile atmosphere, Douglass Park opened on July 4th, 1916, to an equally impressive audience of over 5,000 African-Americans. As an 82-year-old rejoinder to *Birth of a Nation*, this 20-minute video documentary explores the 80-year history of Douglass Park.

Filmed in the summer of 1997, this video first screened in September of the same year at the Lexington Free Public Library in conjunction with the annual Lexington Roots and Heritage Festival. Since Douglass Park remains a vital space for African-American community expression, the first half of the video investigates the current summer festivals of Super Sunday and the Dirt Bowl Basketball Tournament.⁶⁹ The second half of the documentary identifies significant moments in the park's historical geography and discusses the activities of the Colored Board of Park Commissioners and their impact on segregated recreation. The format of the video is VHS.

SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENTATION FOR VIEWING VIDEO

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Too much historical appreciation has been given to traditionally white parks, and has left African-American history absent from the 'official transcripts' of the urban landscape. The drive for this project arose from my experiences in Lexington, where one park in particular had fallen into the shadows of local histories and government recognition. Although Douglass Park has meaning and history consistent with any white park, surprisingly few individuals have documented the importance of the park. Most people, almost exclusively white, knew little about the park, especially that it was created in 1916 by the City after demands by a coalition of Lexington's black communities. Nor did they know that Douglass Park was an invaluable focus point for public events for black communities across the Bluegrass. Finally, they did not understand that Douglass Park, and subsequent black city parks, were managed by black administrations within the city government for 40 years. Despite an era of oppressive segregation, Lexington's black park system became an anchor and inspiration for black social life, not just in Lexington, but for communities across the Bluegrass.

The black friends with whom I discussed this project understood the importance of Douglass Park; they knew through their parents' and grandparents' experiences. They knew the strength that this park offered black communities. They knew that although Douglass Park was the largest park for the blacks in Lexington during segregation, it was part of a larger black park system that linked together all of Lexington's black communities. Like black school systems,

churches, and other components of black social life, these parks became vital locations for sustaining racial pride. From this observation, I have argued that parks were instrumental in codifying hidden transcripts and infrapolitical strategies and were the grounds for testing and fine-tuning methods of contradicting daily acts of racist oppression. These were the spaces of recapturing the body from the object of hatred and terror in white eyes and reinventing black forms cultural expression.

Weaving together narrative and multimedia, I have accomplished three goals. First, I have documented an important, yet overlooked, African-American public historical geography. Second, I have presented the documentation in an engaging and innovative multimedia project that can educate and entertain audiences in both the academy and the larger public community. Third, I hope to have demonstrated that despite an extremely oppressive and dehumanizing environment, people can still express unique and empowering identities that celebrate their daily aesthetic.

More specifically, I have exposed the concerted attempts to devalue black leisure spaces by city authorities. Not only were black communities getting fewer and smaller parks compared to white communities, the city portrayed black parks as immoral and inferior images of 'blackness.' The website aids this argument by providing an interactive map and photographic gallery that compares the various facilities and activities in these park. I have explained how Douglass Park, and the larger black park system, cohered a collective identity and cultural politics for black communities that would contradict a trenchant regime of racism. We

discovered that these parks did not fall into any one category during segregation; they staged multiple uses for black communities. As these parks supported community organizing, they also provided a spectrum of other programs, ranging from recreation for adults and children, summer carnivals and parades, church and family reunions, and band concerts and entertainment programs. The video and audio program, as well as the oral histories document these assertions. Finally, in Chapter 2, I investigated recent African-American urban historiography, cultural and aesthetic theory, and the rise of the Colored League to provide a context for locating infrapolitical strategies. Black park leadership modified ideas of the reform park movement, applied them within a black framework and uplifted black communities.

From a community activist perspective, this project strives for the recognition both inside and outside of the academy, that this park system offered spaces of pleasure, reunion, and solidarity.⁷⁰ This project combined both an oral and video history methodology, and synthesized the content of these interviews into three media formats: radio, video, and a website. The fundamental assumption in using multimedia is as follows: if this project can give a greater variety of rigorous, yet entertaining, narratives about these parks to audiences both within and without the academy, then the greater this project's worth to communities who use these parks, and the greater the public historical record.

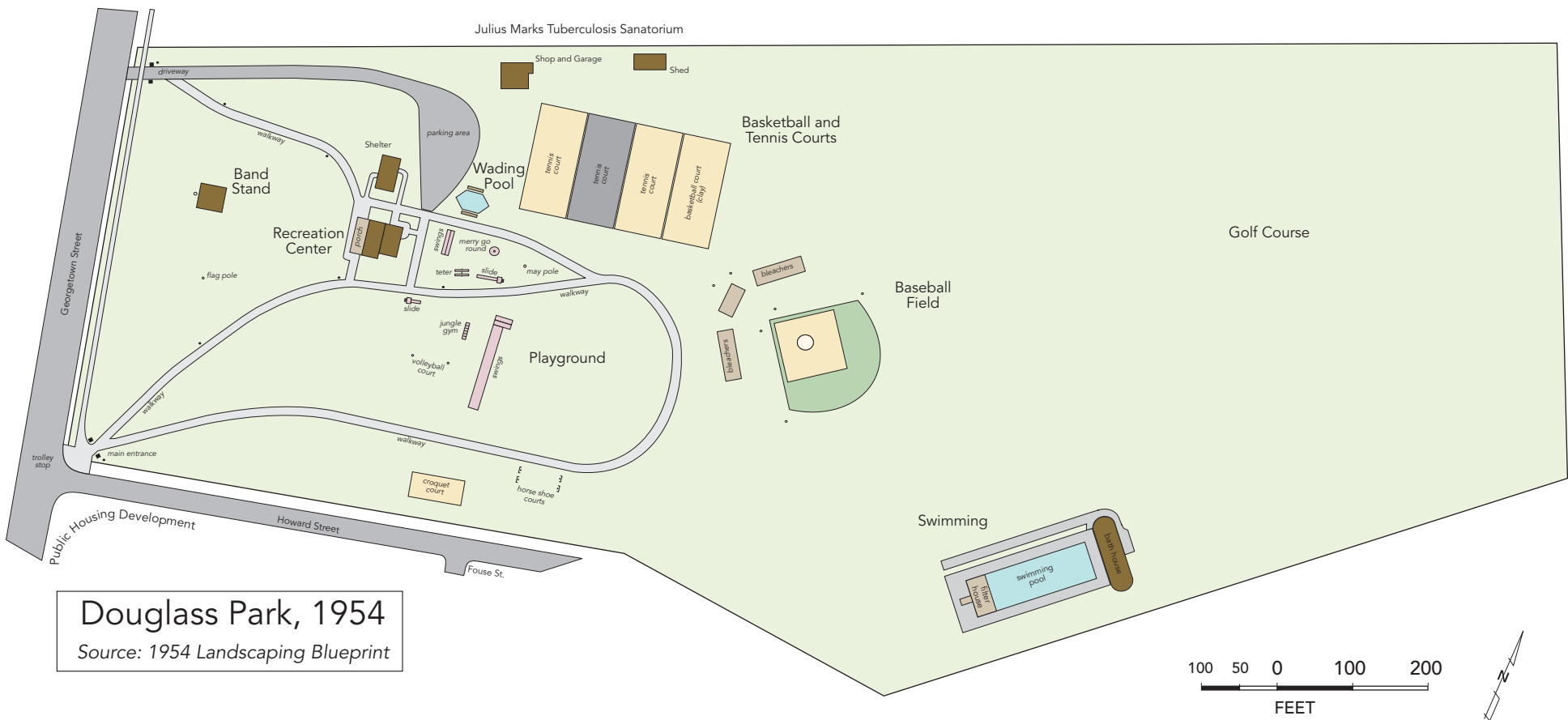
Multimedia offers a unique advantage to communicating scholarly work to a larger audience beyond the campus. Since every mode of representation introduces a certain 'noise' to interpretation, introducing multiple formats

increases the probability that more readers will gain a greater knowledge and appreciation of the subject. All formats, by themselves, include elements that potentially obfuscate the interpretive process; for example, a traditional thesis adds academic jargon; a radio program adds the texture of sound; a video adds a camera position; and a website adds the mysteries of linkages. Yet when we orchestrate all four together, we reduce the noise of the individual format to better illustrate the whole; we triangulate toward a richer understanding of place and history. This is the goal of *The Daily Aesthetic*; to better communicate the homeplace of Douglass Park.

As much as this thesis is an academic document, it also strives to charter alternative paths for artistic expression. Does the inclusion of digital media, and the internet, help, or hinder this pursuit? Noll speculates:

The [recent] widespread availability of personal computers with software to compose music, to choreograph ballets, to animate movies, and to paint pictures will result in a new form of citizen artist who will be able to distribute art over the [internet] to the entire planet as an audience. (1997: 13)

Through a measured argument and assessment of similar claims in prior media revolutions, Noll cautions us to remember that we are not digital beings, but human creatures who need intimate human interaction. Like the reform parks of a century past, we still need to play and learn in proximal space, not an imagined or virtual reality; we must inhabit the human body, not its 3D representation. This project agrees with Noll's acute reservations and ends with a simple appeal: *go get yourself into a park.*

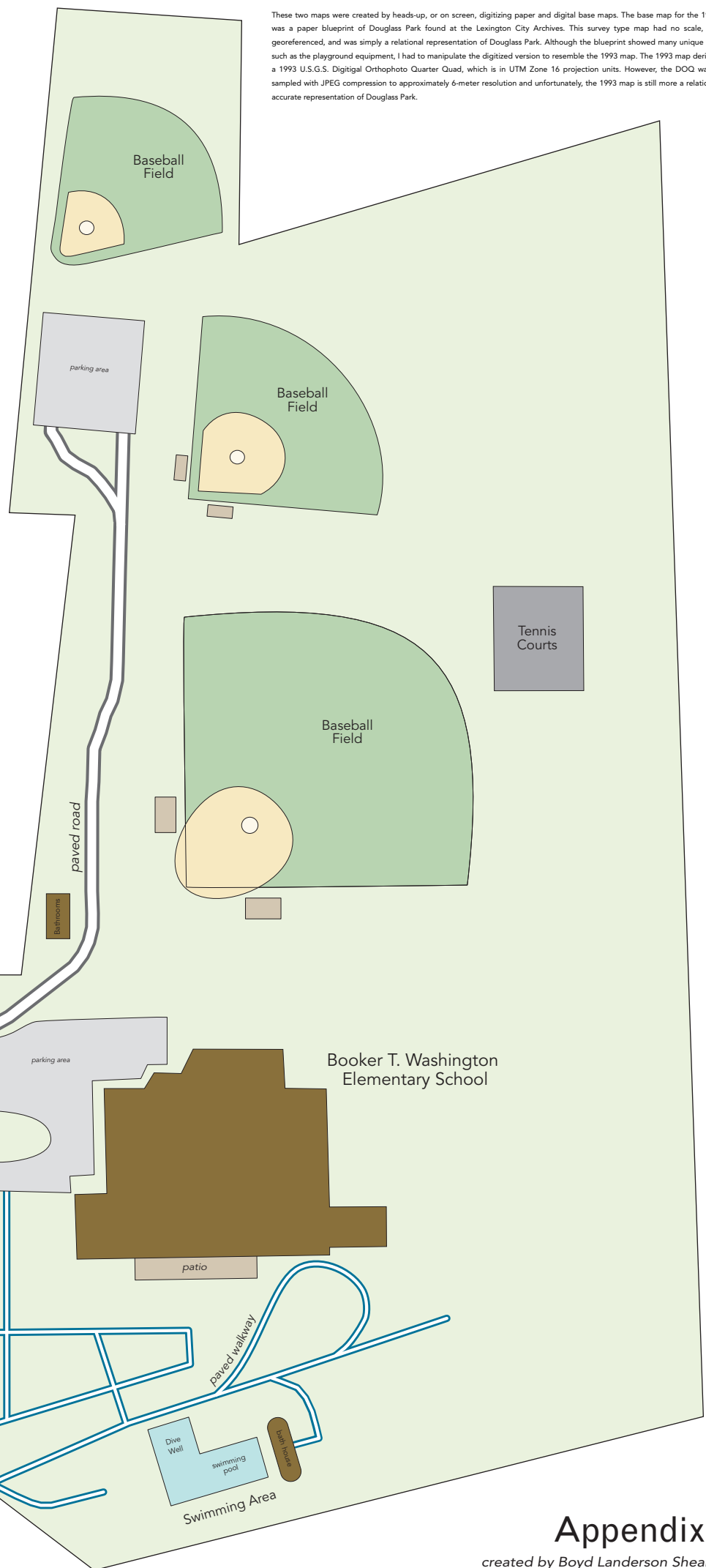


Douglass Park, 1954

Source: 1954 Landscaping Blueprint

The Evolution of a Landscape: Douglass Park, 1954 to 1993

These two maps illustrate how time and recreational tastes change a landscape. In 1954, Douglass Park had a large proportion of its area used as a golf course, had more tennis courts than basketball courts, and did not have large parking lots. The band stand, recreation center, and playground composed the heart of the park. By the 1993, the park had almost doubled its acreage and different recreational programs marked their existence on the landscape. Most striking in the 1993 map is the additional area. The City of Lexington expanded the park to its 1993 border in exchange for building the Booker T. Washington Elementary School in the center of the park in 1971. The school marks a second dramatic change in the park's geography. This new area to the northwest became primarily a baseball complex. The third obvious difference in these maps is the spread of pavement and parking spaces, indicative of the increased use of the automobile and lack of available public parking outside of the park. The golf course was abandoned after African-Americans could use larger and better maintained city golf courses. Tennis, croquet, and horse shoes fell into the shadow of basketball by the 1990s. The heart of Douglass Park today is the two basketball courts that hold the annual Dirt Bowl Tournament, which began in the park in the early 1960s. The name of this event originated from organizing competitive basketball leagues on the dirt courts represented on the 1954 map (Cunningham, March 1997). Douglass Park is the only park in Fayette County that contains a public school within its borders (City of Lexington, 1997).



These two maps were created by heads-up, or on screen, digitizing paper and digital base maps. The base map for the 1954 map was a paper blueprint of Douglass Park found at the Lexington City Archives. This survey type map had no scale, was not georeferenced, and was simply a relational representation of Douglass Park. Although the blueprint showed many unique features, such as the playground equipment, I had to manipulate the digitized version to resemble the 1993 map. The 1993 map derives from a 1993 U.S.G.S. Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quad, which is in UTM Zone 16 projection units. However, the DOQ was down-sampled with JPEG compression to approximately 6-meter resolution and unfortunately, the 1993 map is still more a relational than accurate representation of Douglass Park.

Douglass Park, 1993

Source: 1993 USGS Aerial Photography

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John Will Brown, Lexington, Ky., January 5 and 6, 1996.
Melvin Cunningham, Lexington, Ky., March 16, 1996.
Stanford T. Roach, Lexington, Ky., April 19, 1996.
James O. Jones, Lexington, Ky., December 19, 1996.
Audrey Grevious, Lexington, Ky., April 23, 1997.
Charles Quillings, Lexington, Ky., July 21, 1997.
See oral history index at: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/source.htm>

Public Documents

Lexington City Directories, 1925-1955.
Kentucky Revised Statutes, 1940-1956, 1995.

Additional Support:

University of Kentucky Appalachian Center, computational support
Ari Palos, Videographer and On-line Editor,
a douglass park documentary project
Sandra Richardson, provider, *The Lucy Estill Papers*
George Gentry, saxophonist, *Trees*
University of Kentucky, website host, *The Daily Aesthetic*
Kentucky Oral History Commission, funding
Kentucky Humanities Council, inspiration

Endnotes

¹ Herald-Leader: July 26, 1981, D-1; July 26, 1982, B-1; and July 12, 1984, D-1.

² Photo located at: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/fayette/cycc2.htm>

³ Multimedia is often defined two ways: many media types, like text, audio, and video integrated into one format, such as onto to CD-ROM or the internet; and many forms of media delivery integrated around a concept or narrative, such as integrating TV, radio, and the internet to convey a set of ideas. This project utilizes both definitions of multimedia (Carlson 1996).

⁴ *Kentucky Revised Statues*; chapter 97.400, 1942. These second-class cities were Ashland, Covington, Lexington, Newport, Owensboro, and Paducah.

⁵ And in many cases, more space than other southern cities. If we compare acreage, Lexington had more black parks than Atlanta in 1930 (see Bayor 1996).

⁶ Since Lexington had no city-owned public parks before 1902, and the existing leisure spaces were privately managed, with no obligation to the public, this thesis will not entertain a detailed investigation of segregated recreation prior to Douglass Park. (Lexington City Archives, park files).

⁷ Wright gives some examples of how a floating definition of segregation in park spaces erupted in some prolonged bitter exchanges between the black and white communities. See Wright (1985: 274-80) for a good example of this exchange in an Olmsted designed park in Louisville, KY.

⁸ *Herald*: July 5, 1916, p.8 C-4.

⁹ *Herald*: July 5, 1916, p.8 C-4; Lexington City Archives, park files: report 1917, Board of Park Commissioners.

¹⁰ Although this thesis engages the ideas of 'nature.' it does so non-rigorously. The definition here given is that 'nature' is a socially constructed relationship between communities and the landscapes they inhabit. Often nature is defined as a scale; some system greatly disproportionate to the scale of the human body. For instance, federal park creation with the Yellowstone Park under President Grant has justified its efforts via the preservation of the grandiose scale these national treasures exhibited. This presents the idea that nature is the largest mountain, widest river, deepest canyon, and some geography too huge for the human body to surmise: a macrocosm. Contrasting this idea of nature are the more recent public television programs, most notably *Nature*, that investigate the miniature geography of nature; now nature is a microcosm of complexity. Without proving this argument, I suggest that nature in the reform park era and in these parks

became mapped on the body and was a condition to manage and control at the scale of the human body.

¹¹ The Colored Board was bound to contract maintenance from the White Board. This will be discussed later in the project.

¹² *Kentucky Revised Statutes*; chapter 97.470, 1940.

¹³ Lexington City archives: *City of Lexington Budget Reports*, 1932-1956.

¹⁴ The Board of Park Commissioners (White) was how the minutes referred to the white board. The 'colored' Board had the "(Colored)" appended in a similar fashion.

¹⁵ Lexington City Archives, park files: Minutes, 1944, Board of the Park Commissioners (White).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Minutes, April, 1948, Board of the Park Commissioners (White).

¹⁷ Mr. Jones, December 19, 1996.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Minutes, 1949-1955, Board of the Park Commissioners (White).

¹⁹ *Herald*: March 14, 1914, p.6 C-1.

²⁰ *Herald*: March 10, 1915, p.8 C-1.

²¹ For images of Charles Young Community Center, see: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/fayette/cycc.htm>

²² *Herald*: July 5,, 1916, p.8 C-4.

²³ Although we cannot provide a detailed list of all these influential people, we can give brief vignettes to illustrate their importance to the community. E. W. Chenault trained black soldiers for the Governor Bradley's Office (*Lexington Leader*. May 26, 1898, p.8 c.3). Ed Willis, was the editor of the black Lexington *Weekly News*, who, among other things, led protest against, and advised whites to consider banning the film, *Birth of a Nation*, by D. W. Griffith, in 1916, just as the black community banned the screening of the Johnson-Jeffries boxing match in Lexington, as well as not booking Johnson at the Colored A & M Fair. For a more detailed analysis; see Waller (1995: 153-154). Jordan C. Jackson was an attorney born in 1849 off Georgetown Pike. He was active in Republican Politics, was appointed as an alternate for the delegate-at-large to the Republican National Convention held in Cincinnati in 1876, delegate-at-large to the Minneapolis Convention in 1892, worked with Internal Revenue Service for many years after 1875, was a principle

advocate against the Separate Coach Law in Kentucky, and his wife, Miss Belle Mitchell (maiden name) was a strong promoter of Lexington Colored Orphans Home (*Lexington Leader*, October 7, 1893 p.1 C-7, and *Lexington Leader*, June 21, 1898 p.6 C-4). J. B. Caulder and W. H. Ballard become park board member.

²⁴ Mr. Brown, January, 1996. See: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/orals.htm>

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Herald*: August 28, 1932.

²⁷ *Herald*: August 22, 1943. Mr. Cunningham, March, 1996.

²⁸ *Herald*: August 22, 1943. Mr. Brown, January, 1996; For images of golf, see: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/fayette/dp6.htm>

²⁹ Compare this project with W. W. Bruce Kellogg, John. 1982. The Formation of Black Residential Areas in Lexington, Kentucky, 1865-1887 *Journal of Southern History* 48 1. For online maps, see: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/maps.htm>

³⁰ Mr. Cunningham, March, 1997. Mr. Seals, March, 1997. Mrs. Grevious, April, 1997. Mr. Quillings, July, 1997.

³¹ Mr. Brown, January, 1996.

³² Mr. Cunningham, March, 1996; and Mr. Roach, April, 1996. Not that we should question our oral interviews, but the *Herald* does report great migrations to Douglass Park. (*Herald*: July 3, 1935; and July 5, 1940).

³³ *Herald*: July 5, 1921; July 3, 1930; July 5, 1935; July 5, 1944.

³⁴ *Herald*: July 5, 1921

³⁵ *Herald*: July 5, 1920.

³⁶ Besides other 4th of July parades, there was a parade for Douglass Park's dedication:

Fred Douglass Park, the first public park for colored people ever opened in Lexington, was dedicated yesterday afternoon with elaborate exercises, preceded by a parade fully a mile in length and managed entirely by the committee of colored citizens appointed to arrange for the celebration. A crowd estimated at 5,000 filled the park and heard the program of addresses and music which had been arranged...[A]ll the addresses express[ed] the spirit of appreciation

of what the officials of Lexington are trying to do for its citizens, and were expressive of the good will and public spirit felt by the colored citizens of the city (*Herald*: July 5, 1916, p.8 C-4).

There were parades for returning W.W.I and II soldiers (*Herald*: January 4, 1920; and July 3, 1942).

³⁷ Mr. Brown, January, 1996. Mr. Cunningham, March, 1996.

³⁸ *Herald*: November 30, 1899.

³⁹ *Herald*: May 9, 1920; and *Leader*: May 16, 1920.

⁴⁰ Although the League managed recreation in Lexington's Parks, the city still bought and owned the parks. The League was the de facto administration of the parks. The Lexington Civic League eventually became the Community Service League, affiliated with the National Recreation Association. The Colored Community Service League was also called the Bureau of Colored Work, or the Colored Committee, under the Civic League. Although the names often changed, the philosophy and people did not. For clarification, *League* refers to the larger Lexington Civic League, and later organizations, and the *Colored League* refers to the black component of the larger League. In 1920, H.G. Rogers, then Director of the League, cited the growth of the Lexington Civic League as especially progressive for Lexington since only two other cities in South had leagues in 1901, Louisville and New Orleans (*Leader*: May 14, 1920). For a detailed look at these Lexington organizations, consult: *Leader* December 19, 1919; *Leader*: December 21, 1919; *Leader*: January 15, 1920; *Herald*: January 4, 1920; *Herald*: May 7, 1920; *Leader*: May 16, 1920; *Herald*: April 6, 1920; *Leader*: May 2, 1921; For a tour of the different segregated parks for each League, see: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/fayette/fayette.htm>

⁴¹ Pherigo, Anna S. *History of Lexington Playgrounds, 1900-1944*. Lexington, Kentucky: City of Lexington, 1944: 5.

⁴² City Archives, park files: anonymous recreation assessment, c. 1910. For a more general, national perspective on design elements, see Cranz (1989: 97). This new approach to park development advocated by the League contrasts greatly, if not antithetically, to the ideas of the Lexington Railway Company in 1899 which appealed to the wealthy tourist and middle classes, not the social conditions of the urban poor or city youths (*Leader*: March 28, 1885; *Herald*: November 30, 1899).

⁴³ *Herald*: June 16, 1901, p.3 C-1.

⁴⁴ Mr. Jones, December 19, 1996.

⁴⁵ *Leader*: March 27, 1921; Lexington City Archives, Lucy Estill Papers.

⁴⁶ *Herald*: January 17, 1920.

⁴⁷ The Colored League lobbied unsuccessfully to pass a \$75,000 bill in the Kentucky General Assembly to fund this program (*Herald*: May 11, 1920).

⁴⁸ *Leader*: March 27, 1921. A prominent Bishop from Chicago was scheduled to give a speech to the Colored League on April 8, 1930, Appomattox Day.

⁴⁹ *Herald*: January 4, 1920.

⁵⁰ Mr. Cunningham, March, 1996.

⁵¹ Audrey Grevious, April, 1997.

⁵² Interestingly, Dewey (1934) suggests that the more difficulty or adversity that exists in the “processes of living” the more valid the aesthetic experience and production. Although this suggestion is perhaps too romantic to argue, it does support black community aesthetic if we assume that their lives experienced more hardship than the general population. Answering the question of who live the hardest though is not the goal of this project.

⁵³ hooks 1990: 105.

⁵⁴ Kelly 1993: emphasis original, 84-85.

⁵⁵ This is not a untenable claim, given the context of parks in first thirty years of the 20th century.

⁵⁶ *Herald* and *Leader*: August 10, 1930. For images and further description see: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/fayette/fayette.n.htm>

⁵⁷ *Herald*: Augustt 13, 1930; *Leader*: August 15, 1930.

⁵⁸ *Leader* and *Herald*: January 22, 1924. See also Lexington City Archives Lucy Estill Papers for script of adapted play. For audio of script, see: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/orals.htm> file number 6.

⁵⁹ hooks 1990: 47.

⁶⁰ <http://www.unc.edu/depts/sohp/soho.html>

⁶¹ Indeed, the justification for oral histories is well documented on the internet and in methodological literature. See: the Oral History Organization:

<http://www.baylor.edu/~OHA> and Ritchie, 1995.

⁶² For a detailed list of oral histories used in this project, see:
<http://www.uky.edu/Projects/TDA/source.htm>

⁶³ Kentucky Oral History Commission:
http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/khs/outreach/oral_history.htm and the Oral History Association: <http://www.baylor.edu/~OHA>

⁶⁴ To get to a park, one has to walk to it. The growth of the internet since 1990 exhibits the multitude of individuals visiting and exchanging ideas via the internet. By 1997, an estimated 60 million people used the internet on a regular basis, and it is predicted that over 300 million users worldwide will be on the internet by 2000 (Cairncross 1997). Note: this project will not justify using the web beyond the forgoing observation. Since major academic organizations, corporations, affiliations, and government operations have a presence on the internet, as well as millions of scholarly and popular publications, the web is fastly becoming ubiquitous. With improving compression algorithms, larger bandwidths, and in 2002 when the FCC mandates that all domestic television stations broadcast in the digital realm, the internet, television and all broadcast media will converge and pervade for many more aspects of our daily lives. To justify using the web for scholarly research is similar to arguing the use a book.

⁶⁵ This is a tenuously supported claim. The University of Kentucky Library collection of theses and dissertations conducted a short and informal query into the use of student theses. Since the library had not tracked the use of theses from the library's inception, only an estimate was given for the entirety of the theses collection. Less than half of all theses, not dissertations, it was estimated, were ever checked out of the library. The thesis and dissertation stacks were the least visited areas of the library (Source: Mrs. J. Brown, Director M. I. King Library Circulation. March, 1997).

⁶⁶ Harvey 1989: 61.

⁶⁷ For example, one of the most popular sitcoms of the 1990s was Seinfeld, at <http://www.seinfeld.com/seinfeld.html> and <http://www.nbc.com> . PBS is the US's largest public broadcasting network at <http://www.pbs.org> and a local independent cable program would be those programs the cable companies must broadcast to their community in association with their FCC license.

⁶⁸ See: <http://www.uky.edu/Projects/Appal> However, other organizations present important models. See: WGBH's *Frontline*: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/> ; and Southern Regional Council's *Will the Circle be Unbroken* at <http://www.unbrokencircle.org>

⁶⁹ Why is the Dirt Bowl termed such? When basketball became a popular sport in the park, the players used the waning space of the volleyball and tennis courts, which were the only accommodating space for basketball in the park. These courts were clay; hence the name Dirt Bowl. Douglass Park was the first park in the state to develop the Dirt Bowl Tournament and is currently sanctioned by the NCAA. (Mr. Brown: April, 1997; Mr. Cunningham: March, 1997).

⁷⁰ A few dedicated scholars have acknowledged and strove to represent important landscapes of African-American history beyond the context of academy. With assistance from the Kentucky Historical Society Highway Marker Program, Dr. Laretta Byars established a historical marker for the Lexington Colored Orphan Industrial Home, and Dr. Gerald Smith placed a historical marker for the first grounds of the Lexington Colored Fair Association. These are indispensable representations of a history often forgotten. The dedication occurred February 18, 1996 in Lexington, KY.