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 1990 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 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).