



BEGINNINGS
OF A
CRITICAL
LANDSCAPE
INVESTIGATION

?

2021

A FIELD IN LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY'S
EAST END.



SHROPSHIRE AVE.



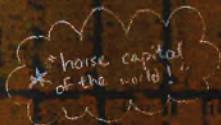
AFTER MOVING TO
THE CITY* TO STUDY LAND
USE + THE HORSE INDUSTRY
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KY, I
WOULD PASS BY THIS FIELD
MOST DAYS ON MY WAY DOWNTOWN.

*Why was this area so flat
and underdeveloped despite
being so close to the middle of town?*

IT WASN'T
LONG BEFORE SOMEONE TOLD ME
THIS USED TO BE THE SITE OF
LEXINGTON'S ORIGINAL THROUGH-
BRED RACETRACK.

BUT WHY DID IT MOVE?...

E. FIFTH ST.



...AND WHY DOES IT FEEL SO EMPTY HERE,
ALMOST LIKE IT'S HAUNTED?

A PROMINENT GEOGRAPHER
WROTE IN 1996,

"Landscape" is not so much experienced as *seen*. If landscape is thus a way of seeing, Peter Jackson has therefore concluded, "then there are potentially as many ways of seeing as there are eyes to see." Potentially, perhaps. But this ignores the fact that "landscape" is a relation of power, an ideological rendering of spatial relations. Landscapes transform the facts of place into a controlled representation, an imposition of order in which one (or perhaps a few) dominant ways of seeing are substituted for all ways of seeing and experiencing.

SO WHAT ARE THE
"FACTS" OF THIS PLACE?
WHAT POWER RELATIONS IS THE LANDSCAPE REPRESENTING (AND CONCEALING)?

1934

CRISIS!

THE GREAT DEPRESSION HAS REACHED THE BLUEGRASS, + THE TRACK IN THE EAST END HAS HELD ITS LAST MEET. THE ASSOCIATION IS BANKRUPT (WHICH HAS HAPPENED BEFORE), SO THE BUSINESSMEN IN ITS RANKS DO WHAT BUSINESSMEN HAVE ALWAYS DONE BEST IN THIS COUNTRY — BAIL THEMSELVES OUT WITH ~~THEIR OWN~~ (PUBLIC) MONEY.

\$ \$ \$

\$

\$

\$



THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

SNIPS



Famous racehorse Man o' War (who is commemorated in Lexington's landscape as the namesake of a major ring road) and his less-famous groom, Will Harbut. By the mid-20th Century, black jockeys had been all but pushed out of thoroughbred racing but still provided most of the LABOR in the industry. Many of them survive as haunting presences in the gaps of our archives.

(SEE: JIM CROW...)

IN TO PURCHASE THE BUILD SOME OF THE FIRST PUBLIC HOUSING IN THE U.S. AS PART OF THE NEW DEAL! A YEAR LBR, SOME OF THE SAME KY ASSN. MEMBERS ARE ABLE TO FINANCE A NEW TRACK IN THE RURAL PART OF THE COUNTY* AWAY FROM THE WORKING-CLASS, MIXED-RACE EAST END.

(*THEY NAMED THE NEW ONE KEENELAND + IT EXISTS AS THE CENTER OF LEX'S HORSE RACING LAND — SCAPE TO THIS DAY)

KEENELAND ASSOCIATION
(A CORPORATION)

Dated as of February 20, 1937

THREE SECURITY DIRECTOR

landscape structures social reality; it represents to us our relationships to the land and to social formations. But it does so in an obfuscatory way.



Apart from knowing the struggles that went into its making (along with the struggles to which it gives rise), one cannot know a landscape except at some ideal level, which has the effect of reproducing, rather than analyzing or challenging, the relations of power that work to mask its function. WHAT IS IT?

1958 - 2006:

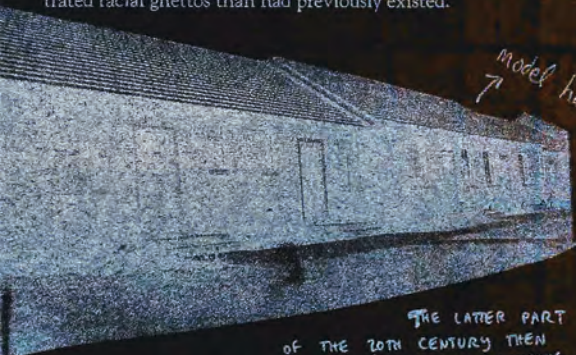
URBAN RENEWAL + BROAD
TRANSFORMATIONS IN HOUSING
POLICY (NATIONALLY + LOCALLY)



(HAS?)
SOCIAL HOUSING HAD THE POTENTIAL TO HEAL MATERIAL HARMS
+ BUILD POWER FOR THE WORKING CLASS ACROSS LINES OF
RACE, GENDER, ABILITY, ETC. HOWEVER, EARLY ON IN THE
20TH CENTURY MANY EFFORTS WERE CO-OPTED
BY THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY.

(of the
Public Works
Administration)

One important drawback to the Housing Division
was the agency's decision not to disrupt pre-existing racial patterns of
neighborhoods. In effect, this meant building housing for African Americans
in deteriorated sections of cities where they already lived. The purpose of the
strategy was to avoid white backlash, but the practice reinforced existing pat-
terns of residential segregation, sometimes even creating more highly concen-
trated racial ghettos than had previously existed.



model housing!

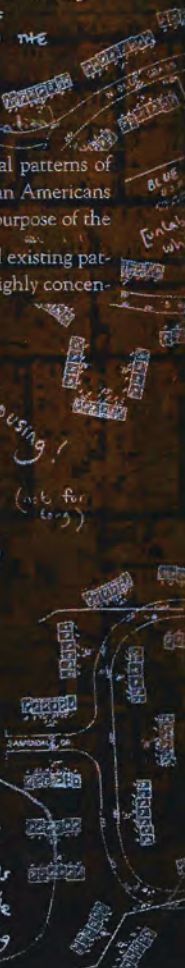
(not for
long)

THE LATER PART
OF THE 20TH CENTURY THEN
SAW MASSIVE DISINVESTMENT IN SOCIAL HOUSING,
AND BLUEGRASS-SPENDALE (AS THE PROJECTS ON
THE OLD RACETRACK LAND CAME TO BE NAMED) DE-
TERIORATED + WAS RACIALLY CODED AS "THE
GHETTO", UNDESIRABLE FOR REAL ESTATE.

NEAR THE TURN OF THE 21ST CENTURY,
THE ENTIRE DEVELOPMENT WAS FLATTENED
+ REPLACED W/ SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES
TO BE PRIVATELY OWNED, NAMED "EQUESTRIAN
VIEW W."

In 2006, the year that horse Meydan City fetched
\$11.7 million at the Keeneland yearling auction, the
median household income in the area was less than \$30K. *

Lexington's
East End was
erased from the
official horse racing
landscape...



1936

The original foundation stone for the Leasington Municipal Housing Corp. still sits under a utility sink at the LHA offices.

(Los Housing Authority)



These are histories whose consequences we live with so intimately that we can overlook their presence. But we never escape them.

????

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE HORSE-
RACING INDUSTRY WILL NOT BE TOLD
FROM KEENELAND, WHICH RELIES ON
A HIGHLY SPECIFIC (WHITE, UPPER CLASS,
CONSUMERIST) IDEA OF
"HERITAGE" IN ORDER TO
CONTINUE ACCUMULATING WEALTH.

HOWEVER, ONE COULD BE TOLD FROM THE EAST
END OF LEXINGTON, WHERE
INSTITUTIONS LIKE

AFRICAN CEMETERY NO. 2

Earliest recorded cemetery in
Lexington to be organized, owned,
and managed by African Americans.
The site has been in existence
since 1869. Trustees of Benevolent
Society No. 2 successfully operated
cemetery. Many individuals buried
here were important leaders in
the community. See over.

Presented by African Cemetery No. 2, Inc.

ALREADY EXIST
TO TELL
STORIES ABOUT
THE INDUSTRY'S
FOUNDATIONAL LABORERS,
MANY OF WHOM ARE
BURIED HERE... *

Cosponsored by
The Kentucky
African American
Heritage Commission

(* perhaps
this is why
I feel a
haunting presence
in the
landscape)



ANOTHER POTENTIAL SITE IS THE GARDEN DEDICATED TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN JOCKEY ISAAC MURPHY, WHO ACTUALLY LIVED OFF OF E. THIRD STREET AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY WHERE THE PARK IS NOW (▲). THIS PROJECT CAME TOGETHER AFTER YEARS OF ADVOCACY BY LOCAL RESIDENTS AND IS A REMINDER OF THE EAST END'S HISTORIC PLACE IN THE BROADER HORSE-RACING LANDSCAPE.

BUT OTHER HORSE-RELATED SYMBOLS IN THE LANDSCAPE, SUCH AS A MURAL ON A NEW LUXURY CONDO DEVELOPED ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE GARDEN + SIGNIFYING THAT GENTRIFICATION HAS ARRIVED TO LEXINGTON'S EAST END, MOBILIZE EQUINE "HERITAGE" TO TRY AND EXTRACT HIGHER RENTS.

SO WHAT DO WE DO?

Suggested reading:

www.AfricanCemeteryNo2.org !!!

www.PhoenixRisingLex.org

Pellom McDaniels, *The Prince of Jockeys*

Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land* ★

Katherine Mooney, *Race Horse Men*

Richard Schein, "Normative dimensions of landscape," in Wilson & Groth (eds.), *Everyday America*

Maryjean Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*

Harvey Molotch & John Logan, *Urban Fortunes*

Lisa Lykins, *Building Public Housing*

Josh Poe & Jessica Bellamy, "Plantation urbanism," in *Radical Housing Journal* 2.2 ▲



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