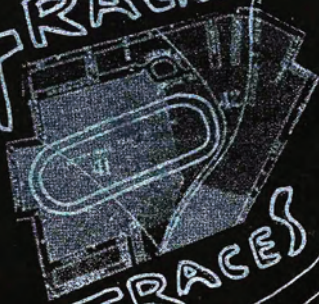


TRACKS



TRACES

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?*

E. FIFTH ST.

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?...



my bike

\*horse capital  
of the world!

...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.



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.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SWOOPS IN TO PURCHASE THE

RACETRACK LAND IN ORDER TO 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 MIXED-RACE EAST END.

(SEE: JIM CROW...)

(\*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 DILIGENT

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.

(to this day, the land where the racetrack used to be is flatter than the surrounding neighborhoods)



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?)

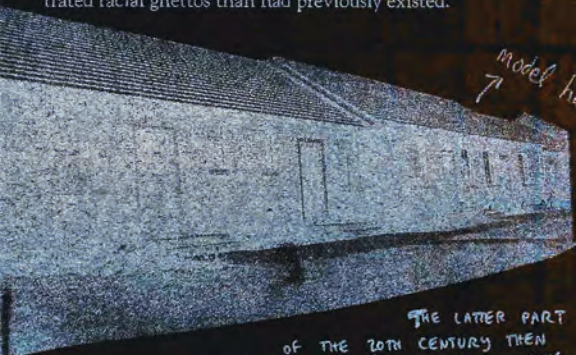
1958 - 2006:

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.

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.



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. \*

model housing!  
(not for long)

Lexington's  
East End was  
erased from the  
official horseracing  
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)



\* TODAY IT IS LESS: \$27K

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

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

### 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.

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 HORSERACING 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](http://www.AfricanCemeteryNo2.org) !!!

[www.PhoenixRisingLex.org](http://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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