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***The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956***

oral history interviews

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record ID: [last name]-[date of interview]

video history project:

*a douglass park documentary project*

20:00 minutes

The Daily Aesthetic project website:

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

Project Director: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

sponsored by:

***Kentucky Oral History Commission***

***Lexington City Archives***

***University of Kentucky Department of Geography***

***University of Kentucky Special Collections***

primary archives:

***University of Kentucky Special Collections***

***Lexington City Archives***

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Brown-040297

interviewee: **Mr. John Will Brown**  
former Director of Recreation; began in parks in 1941; retired 1983

date: **April 2, 1997**

length: 82m

location: Mr. Brown's residence

interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents* (times approximate)

0minutes	Name and brief description of family
2m	Programs Mr. Brown began in park system and philosophy of recreation
6m	General description of park activities; Church Day
8m	Baseball and Football programs
13m	Condition of recreation across Lexington, KY
14m	Booker T. Washington School in Douglass Park
16m	Early Leisure recreation in Douglass Park; Bands in Lexington!
20m	First recreation job in park system
25m	(with map) description of individual parks in black park system
29m	Participation between different parks facilities
33m	Douglass Park programs for children and adults
38m	Segregation and integration of parks and Dunbar High School
48m	1939 all-star basketball team from Dunbar High School
49m	Special events in park system (Easter Egg Hunt, Penny Day, Fashionettes)
55m	Story of experience refereeing (only black referee) in Knott County, Kentucky
58m	Referring experience for Colored Sports Leagues
1:04h	(with pictures) music in Spiegel Heights and Charles Young Community Center description of Mrs. Lucy Estill and Prall Town Playground
1:12	Passive recreation; music as beauty recreation
1:14	Personal philosophy
1:17	Festival in Charles Young Community Center

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Berry-092496

interviewee: **Mr. Julius Berry**  
former employee of park system; and first Africa-American  
Citizen's Advocate for Lexington, KY

date: **September 24, 1997**

length: 80m

location: Lexington Government Center

interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents*

Experience growing up in neighborhood black park; Basketball between parks; integration of parks; experience as Lexington Citizen's Advocate

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Butler-092696

interviewee: **Mr. Hansford Butler**  
date: **September 26, 1996**  
length: 60 minutes  
location: Lexington City Archives  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents*

History of leisure activities in Douglass Park; 4th of July in Douglass Park; other leisure activities in Lexington, KY

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Cunningham-031297

interviewee:           **Mr. Melvin B. Cunningham**  
                                  Director of Charles Young Community Center

date:                   **March 12, 1997**

length:                 35 minutes

location:              Charles Young Community Center

interviewers:         Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
                                  Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents*

- i.           general personal history
- ii.          history of working at Charles Young Community Center and Douglass Park
- iii.         Douglass Park as meeting place for local community and middle Bluegrass region; a certain brotherhood
- iv.         activities in Charles Young Community Center
- v.          winter activities; recognition by local leadership
- vi.         adult recreation and present day use
- vii.        historic use of Center
- viii.       concept of recreation: personal health and community welfare
- ix.         Dirt Bowl history and importance 25 years ago in Douglass Park; Mr. Cunningham's role in getting the basketball tournament started

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Delaney-052997

interviewee: **Lillian Gillespie Delaney**  
former Douglass High School teacher and playground director  
date: **May 29, 1997**  
length: 85m  
location: Ms. Richardson's residence  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

*contents (times approximate)*

0m	personal history
4m	first teaching experience
9m	first experience working in parks, 1943
11m	park matrons
14m	parks in system
15m	4th of July in Douglass
20m	other activities in parks
21m	games for adults
22m	boundball
23m	differences between recreation for girls and boys
25m	Douglass High School, county high school
26m	beginning in county park system and segregation
27m	county park locations
29m	differences between Douglass Park and Douglass High School Playground
31m	carnivals
35m	dances at Douglass High
40m	Dunbar High School compared to Douglass High
41m	Lucy Estill
43m	recreation certificates
49m	important people in county park system
51m	John Will Brown at Spiegel Heights
54m	Smoke Richardson and Charles Young Community Center
57m	Apex Club
57m	women clubs, i.e., Copper Dime
61m	parks across city and surrounding neighborhoods
66m	golf at Douglass Park
71m	dog shows and doll shows
72m	Douglass Park swimming pool
73m	Taylor Seals
75m	bands in Douglass Park
76m	County Recreation Scrapbook, 1954
79m	staff of county parks
82m	William Goodwin

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Gentry-060397

interviewee: **George Gentry**  
Lexington Jazz Musician and played at Douglass Park  
date: **June 3, 1997**  
length: 90m  
location: Mr. Gentry's residence  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

*contents (times approximate)*

0m	family history
5m	first job because not liking school
7m	first involvement in music
11m	Stormy Weather, the movie
12m	Gentry plays Stormy Weather on trumpet
16m	playing music at Douglass High School
18m	opportunity to play in parks
20m	talent shows at Douglass Park
25m	neighborhood around Douglass Park
29m	4th of July at Douglass Park
32m	Mammoth Life Insurance Company sponsored events at parks
33m	first DJ in Lexington, Lawrence Webb
36m	formal dances for teenagers
39m	Duke Madison, local jazz musician
40m	Omicron dances
44m	Bands playing at Charles Young Community Center
50m	Smoke Richardson Orchestra and Circle H Club
54m	Gentry plays Smoke's signature piece, Trees, on saxophone
62m	music and segregation in Lexington
68m	American Federation of Musicians
71m	black bands playing in Lexington
73m	sports vs. music
75m	personal philosophy on music
79m	Lyric Theater
82m	who played at Lyric
86m	Lyric closes
90m	personal recommendations for music in parks

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Grevious-042397

interviewee: **Mrs. Audrey Grevious**  
former Charles Young Playground Director and school teacher

date: **April 23, 1997**

length: 80m

location: Mrs. Grevious's residence

interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents (times approximate)*

0minutes	Name and brief description of family
3m	Charles Young Community Center (CYCC) women in parks; Smoke Richardson; Socialization of children
6m	Ball room dances and other dances
8m	plays on CYCC's
9m	library in CYCC
11m	women leaders and programs for girls
12m	women role models
13m	always something going on in CYCC
14m	Douglass Park
17m	Difference between then and now
18m	couldn't wait to get to CYCC after school
20m	a true community center
21m	extended family through CYCC
23m	neighborhood closeness promotes stability
26m	people crossing town to get to CYCC
28m	Douglass Park vs. CYCC
30m	boy-watching in the park
33m	4th of July
36m	individual benefits of recreation
39m	...community benefits
40m	Colored Fair
42m	personal history of working park
45m	sports not everything in a park
46m	expressing yourself through parks and plays
51m	women in parks
53m	other playgrounds across city
54m	changes in Douglass Park
57m	Aspendale park and history
60m	the Spider Web restaurant
1:05h	coda: Personal history
1:08	Dog Show in parks
1:12	what is needed in recreation and benefits from arts and crafts
1:15	building character through parks
1:16	lack of pictures of parks, why?
1:19	East end neighborhood around CYCC



*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Jones-121996

interviewee: **Mr. James O. Jones**  
former member of Board of Park Commissioners (Colored)  
date: **December 19, 1996**  
length: 90 minutes  
location: Resident of Mr. Jones  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents*

side one:

- i. Personal history of Mr. Jones
- ii. Park Board of black park system in 1940's when Mr. Jones was member of Board
  - a. personal experience in becoming involved in Park Board
  - b. money issues of the Board; money was better handled in black community for black community
  - c. common activities of Park Board
  - d. connection of local black schools with Park Board
  - e. employees of Board

side two:

- iii. Park system
  - a. Douglass Park
  - b. business and activities associated with parks
  - c. festivals and parades in park
  - d. other parks across town
- iv. Colored Fair
  - a. dance halls during Colored Fair
- v. Personal notes and summary
  - a. names of individuals associated with park

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Jones-052797

interviewee: **Mr. James O. Jones**  
former Board of Park Commissioner (Colored)  
date: **May 27, 1997**  
length: 65m  
location: Mr. Jones' residence  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

*contents* (times approximate)

0m	family history
4m	childhood home and neighborhood
6m	play activities as child
8m	Douglass Park dog show
9m	importance of Douglass Park
13m	trolley stop in front of park
15m	looking through Douglass Park's front gates
21m	street showers before pools
26m	Dunbar High School Band
29m	Smoke Richardson's Orchestra
34m	Charles Young Community Center opening
35m	Mrs. Audrey Grevious
39m	differences between parks in system
40m	Apex Club and Parks
45m	Lucy Estill
49m	her community recreation certificate
51m	Lucy Estill and women recreation directors
53m	Hattie Rowe, former recreation director
61m	Charles Young Community Center

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Passmore-051697

interviewee: **Mr. Norman L. Passmore**  
former Dunbar High School teacher and basketball coach

date: **May 16, 1997**

length: 81m

location: Mr. Passmore's residence

interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents (times approximate)*

0:30mm:ss	personal history / academic history: born, April 1, 1915 Columbia, Georgia
2:00	academic Achievements
2:30	athletic achievements
3:00	Frankfort flood, 1937
4:25	graduation from KSU, 1928
5:50	Dunbar High School
6:55	head football coach, 1950-1960
9:28	assistant principal at Dunbar, 1964
11:20	assistant principal of Henry Clay High School, 1967-1984
12:30	elected to board of Kentucky Athletic Association, 1974
13:45	teaching at Dunbar
14:50	vice-president of KAA
15:18	Religious experience
16:10	1942 experience at St. Paul
12:28	1950-1976 pastor in Midway
17:00	1976 to present pastor in Wilmore
17:30	Awards received
19:20	own children
22:00	connection between Dunbar High School and Douglass Park
23:00	old Heber Field off Rose and Limestone
24:00	trade school beside Dunbar
26:00	Dunbar High School Band
30:00	playing Kentucky Appalachia teams after integration
35:45	John Will Brown
39:20	Mr. Brown as referee
44:22	Dunbar recreation
52:30	Douglass Park
55:50	integration and competition
58:30	parks help children
1:00:00	segregated parks in Lexington
1:05:00	segregation in school and parks
1:08:00	decline of park
1:10:30	neighborhood around Douglass Park in the 1990's
1:15:25	Churches were "brighter" in the 1930's and 1940's
1:17:00	Mr. Taylor Seals
1:20:00	Other individuals related to Dunbar history

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Quillings-072197

interviewee: **Charles Quillings**  
former Dunbar High School Band Instructor and Douglass Park  
Musician  
date: **July 21, 1997**  
length: 65m  
location: Lexington City Archives  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

*contents* (times approximate)

0m	family history
5m	first job because not liking school
7m	first involvement in music
11m	Stormy Weather, the movie
12m	Gentry plays Stormy Weather on trumpet
16m	playing music at Douglass High School
18m	opportunity to play in parks
20m	talent shows at Douglass Park
25m	neighborhood around Douglass Park
29m	4th of July at Douglass Park
32m	Mammoth Life Insurance Company sponsored events at parks
33m	first DJ in Lexington, Lawrence Webb
36m	formal dances for teenagers
39m	Duke Madison, local jazz musician
40m	Omicron dances
44m	Bands playing at Charles Young Community Center
50m	Smoke Richardson Orchestra and Circle H Club
54m	Gentry plays Smoke's signature piece, Trees, on saxophone
62m	music and segregation in Lexington
68m	American Federation of Musicians
71m	black bands playing in Lexington
73m	sports vs. music
75m	personal philosophy on music
79m	Lyric Theater
82m	who played at Lyric
86m	Lyric closes
90m	personal recommendations for music in parks

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Richardson-030597

interviewee: **Ms. Sandra Richardson**  
great-niece of Lucy Estill (deceased) who was member of  
Board of Park Commissioners (Colored)

date: **March 5, 1997**

length: 30 minutes

location: Resident of Ms. Richardson

interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents*

side one:

i. Introduction

ii. Description of Ms. Richardson's great aunt, Lucy Estill, who was Colored Park Board member in 1940's

iii. Description of family while looking at photographs

iv. Mrs. Richardson reads Lucy Estill's awards and recreation notes

a. reading of play script written by Lucy Estill similar to 1920's play, "Milestones of Our Race."

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Richardson-052897

interviewee:           **Ms. Saunda Richardson**  
                              daughter of Saunders "Smoke" Richardson, Charles Young  
                              Community Center Musician  
date:                    **May 28, 1997**  
length:                 30m  
location:               Ms. Richardson's residence  
interviewers:          Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

*contents (times approximate)*

0m	introduction of Father, Smoke Richardson
4m	nickname of "Smoke"
7m	Smoke Richardson's Orchestra
10m	places Smoke played (from picture)
11m	Smoke Richardson's Orchestra
13m	Duke Madison
14m	Smoke meeting Saunda's mother
15m	Lucy Estill and Smoke
22m	courtship of Smoke and wife
23m	John Estill's playing experience

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Seals-032597

interviewee: **Mr. Wilfred Tay Seals**  
1950's employee of the county park, Douglass Playground  
date: **March 25, 1997**  
length: 65 minutes  
location: Lexington City Archives  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents* (times approximate)

0minutes	general personal history
2m	first experience working in county park system, 1953; activities in and between parks
9m	context of working in park system
11m	playground carnivals in Spiegel Heights
17m	segregated communities using public facilities
21m	neighborhood pride as seen in Prall Town and traditional black neighborhoods
25m	Douglass Park as meeting place for the community
38m	differences between county and city park system
43m	Douglass High School, county black high school
45m	personal reflections and contributions to park programs
52m	Douglass Park and Charles Young Community Center
55m	John Will "Scoop" Brown, former Director of Recreation
57m	pre-Dirt Bowl Basketball; the now-famous annual basketball tournament
1:00h	Mr. Brown

*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Sykes-040997

interviewee: **Mr. Harry Sykes**  
former City Commissioner and Dunbar Teacher  
date: **April 9, 1997**  
length: 90m  
location: Lexington City Archives  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.  
Harold Barker, Director of Lexington City Archives

*contents* (times approximate)

0minutes	Name and brief description of family
2m	mathematics teacher at Dunbar
3m	Starting at Douglass Park
4m	Prall Town Park
5m	Lou Johnson in Brooklyn Dodgers
7m	Year stating in Douglass Park
8m	activities in park
11m	segregation philosophy
13m	organizing Dunbar junior high basketball league and integration
19m	games in parks and state tournaments
23m	integration vs. segregation in sports
25m	...in parks
27m	Working with John Will Brown
29m	merger of city and county governments
30m	experience as first black commissioner
36m	Open-housing law contribution to segregated housing
44m	advancement of parks while on boards
46m	Green Acres Subdivision park
47m	Oakwood Development as housing for black middle-class
51m	black access to recreation
53m	discussion of photographs of parks
60m	problem with of UK and Adolph Rupp
65m	Charles Young Community Center and Basketball
70m-90m	excursion into Mr. Sykes' history of playing with the Globetrotters in 1950's



*The Daily Aesthetic: an oral history of a southern city's black park system, 1916-1956*

Record ID: Webb-061897

interviewee: **Mr. Lawrence Webb**  
former DJ at Charles Young Community Center  
date: **June 18, 1997**  
length: 60m  
location: Lexington City Archives  
interviewers: Boyd Landerson Shearer Jr.

*contents* (times approximate)

0m	family history
3m	mother's radio experience
7m	early family memories
10m	mother's fan club
13m	first memory of Charles Young Community Center
14m	dances at Center that he Djed
27m	Douglass Park and the Lyric Theater
29m	Lyric activities
32m	what did dances at Center mean to black communities
34m	the importance of Douglass Park
37m	type of music played at Center and stereotypes
41m	equipment used at Center
44m	requested songs at Center dances
46m	local entertainment personalities
48m	Webb's grandfather and broommaking
50m	James O. Jones
51m	Taylor Seals

