2021

"To Claim That Greatness for Themselves": A History of the Kentucky Horse Park

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Digital Object Identifier: https://doi.org/10.13023/etd.2021.176

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“To Claim That Greatness for Themselves”: A History of the Kentucky Horse Park

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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2021

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

"To Claim That Greatness for Themselves": A History of the Kentucky Horse Park

The Kentucky Horse Park describes itself as the world's only equine theme park. However, the park is not entirely without historical precedent; instead, world's fairs, amusement parks, and theme parks all form a century-long pedigree chart through which the park can trace its ancestors. The Kentucky Horse Park's links to these predecessors deepen our understanding of how the park is a reflection of the world around it and the motivations for how and why it was built. From its inception in the late 1960s, to when it opened in 1978, through the present day, the Kentucky Horse Park was and still is an embodiment of white racialized ideals about the history of Kentucky and how its horse tourism industry communicates and reinforces those nostalgic fantasies. The joint monument to the Black jockey Isaac Murphy and champion racehorse Man o' War, and the multiple disinterments and reburials Murphy underwent in the process, epitomizes the way in which race is at the center of the history of the park itself. While the park was certainly created with some genuine intentions of making horse tourism accessible to the masses of locals and tourists who desired it, the story of this theme park's emergence cannot be disentangled from the history of race in twentieth-century Kentucky.

KEYWORDS: Kentucky Horse Park, race, civil rights, African American history, horse racing, amusement parks

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05/15/2021

Date

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DEDICATION

To the memory and legacy of Isaac Burns Murphy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When I reflect on not only this thesis, but also the past three years of my degree programs, I realize there are so many people who have had a hand in my success. To my undergraduate advisor, Dr. Leslie Harris, and my other professors at Emory including Dr. Joseph Crespino, Dr. Michele Schreiber, and Dr. James Roark: thank you for providing me with a solid foundation for my later academic growth. To the professors in the University of Kentucky history department, including Dr. Anastasia Curwood, Dr. Mark Summers, Dr. Vanessa Holden, and Dr. Daniel Vivian: thank you for teaching me not only with formal coursework, but also by example, what it means to be a historian. To the staff of the Pixar Animation Studios Archives, the staff of the Margaret Herrick Library, and the staff of the UK Medical Center Library: thank you for taking a chance on me and for giving me the chance to try out libraries and archives as a career. To the librarians who have helped me so much, including Jennifer Hootman at the University of Kentucky, Sarah Hubbard at the Lexington Public Library, and Roda Ferrero at the Keeneland Library: thank you for your creativity and your dedication to finding just the right sources I needed. You inspire me in my own approach to my research and facilitating that of others. To the staff of the International Museum of the Horse: thank you for teaching me about the museum world and digital history throughout my internship. I especially appreciate my supervisor, Karen Lanier, whose thoughtful approach to her work I try to emulate. To Dr. Katherine Mooney: thank you for not only your brilliant scholarship but also for your willingness to share ideas with me. To my advisor, Dr. Amy Taylor: thank you for everything over the past three years. Your

encouragement, advice, understanding, and insight have kept me going, and I am so grateful to you for your constant presence throughout my studies.

To my friends Abi Stephens, Amy Malventano, and Chris Leadingham: thank you for all the good times on the 17th floor, the commiserating, and the solidarity. To my friend Stuart Simms: I don't know what I would have done without our TV watching, meme sharing, Starbucks hanging out, and being there for each other. To my mom and dad, Lisa Ortler and Ron Moore: thank you for providing me with a lifelong education. To my sister, Sarah Moore: no one understands me like you do. Thank you for always being there for me, even when you had your own master's keeping you busy. To Eddie, my little black pug: thank you for keeping my lap warm and bringing joy to my life. And finally, to my husband, T.J. Libecap: thank you for always believing in me, even when I didn't believe in myself. Your constant love and support means the world to me. I love you more than words can say.

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Here Lies…

by Frank X Walker

When the pneumonia rode me from this place
they stabled me in a stall at the African Cemetery.

Years later, my bones almost dust, they dug up
what was left then placed me in the ground
beneath a big monument next to Man o' War.

And if that wasn't respect enough they dug us both up
and buried us again at the Kentucky Horse Park.

I know I'm the only black jockey buried here.
and I know I finally got my name and face in stone.

But they left my Lucy back in the cold hard ground
next to an empty hole without me to share forever with.

Even in death I feel the sting of race and sport,
while I hover at the front doors of the Park –
like a ghost lawn jockey.[1]

[1] Reproduced with permission from the author.

INTRODUCTION

At the northwest edge of Lexington, Kentucky, nestled among the rolling green pastures of some of the world's most prominent horse farms, lies the Kentucky Horse Park. Ever since it opened in 1978, the Kentucky Horse Park, which is owned and operated by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, has occupied a unique and prominent position in Central Kentucky's tourism landscape. As a self-described "equine theme park," the park's mission is to "celebrate [humankind's] relationship with the horse through education, exhibition, engagement and competition."[2] The park's 1,229 acres are visited by over 500,000 visitors annually from Kentucky and around the world.

Visitors to the park are presented with a variety of attractions and amenities. The most prominently featured of these are the International Horse Museum, a Smithsonian affiliate dedicated to the history of horses and humans, and the Hall of Champions, where retired winning racehorses live out the rest of their days. While Thoroughbred horses are what immediately come to mind when most think of Kentucky and horses, the park includes many other breeds. These horses are showcased at the American Saddlebred Museum; the Breeds Barn, where rare breeds of horses from around the world live and are demonstrated such as the Akhal-Teke from Turkmenistan; and the Big Barn, where big draft horses such as Clydesdales live.

Visitors can also directly participate in equine activities by going on trail rides, riding on the horse-drawn trolley, petting and feeding horses in their stalls, and participating in interactive demonstrations. Other features of the park include the Mounted Police Barn, which is home to the park's police unit (one of only three of its kind in the

[2] "Park Info & Resources: Visit KHP," Kentucky Horse Park, accessed March 28, 2021, https://kyhorsepark.com/visit/park-info-resources/visit-khp/.

state) and the offices of over 30 national and regional equine organizations, such as the United States Hunter/Jumper Association (USHJA) and the American Farriers Association. Finally, the Covered Arena, Alltech Arena and the Rolex Stadium, the park's covered and open air arenas, can seat over 3,000, 5,000 and 30,000, respectively. The three facilities host not only international equine events and competitions, but also non-equine sporting events, competitions, and concerts. The landscaped grounds, elegant brick buildings, and stately barns convey a sense of pride and legacy.

The park describes itself as the world's only theme park dedicated to the relationship between humans and horses. This much is true; there are currently no other parks in the world that focus on horses or combine event space, elements of a working horse farm, monuments and memorials, and a museum the way that the Horse Park does. The park is in this way a very unusual place. However, the park did not simply bubble up from the ground fully formed, seeded by the horses that have continuously lived on the property for over 200 years. Instead, the park is better understood as the product of a number of historical and cultural trends related to leisure and entertainment. World's fairs, amusement parks, and theme parks all form a century-long pedigree chart through which the park can trace its ancestors. Given this, the site should be interpreted as the youngest generation of a long lineage of recreational spaces.[3] Many of the Horse Park's defining characteristics are directly traceable to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, the 1895 Atlanta Exposition, Luna Park in Coney Island, New York, and Disneyland and Walt Disney

[3] The nuanced differences in purpose, chronology, and locality between amusement parks and theme parks will be elaborated upon in part one of this thesis. For now, 'amusement parks' refers to the places geared towards pleasure and recreation outside of urban centers in the early twentieth century which subverted Victorian social norms. An example is Coney Island. 'Theme parks' come about later, in the mid twentieth century, and are characterized by a conscious effort to adhere to one thematic universe and create a wholesome, family-friendly atmosphere.

World. The Kentucky Horse Park's links to these predecessors deepen our understanding of how the park is a reflection of the world around it and the motivations for how and why it was built.

The road to the Kentucky Horse Park is paved with the ghostly hoofbeats of champion racehorses past. The streets leading to its grand entrance bear the names of greats such as Citation, Aristides, Nandino, and of course, Man o' War, popularly remembered as the "mostest horse that ever was" and namesake of the arterial road which encircles Lexington. Buried within the park itself are over thirty famous or simply beloved horses. These graves and memorials are a major draw for visitors who come to pay their respects or simply feel the presence of a great horse, and these horses' spirits imbue the park with a quite literal sense of sacred ground. Among these is Man o' War, whose grave is marked by a larger-than-life statue of him and a surrounding fountain.

Peculiarly, there is one human buried at the Kentucky Horse Park, too.[4] His name is Isaac Murphy, and he was a successful Black jockey who won the Kentucky Derby in 1885, 1890, and 1891. His grave, situated next to Man o' War's, is marked by a comparatively modest headstone. Though the two have no relationship to each other and were not even alive at the same time, they lie together in eternal rest near the entrance of the park.

The physical prominence of the joint Murphy and Man o' War monument in the landscape of the Kentucky Horse Park invokes the many ways in which race and nostalgia are at the center of the history of the park itself. From its inception, the Kentucky Horse Park was an embodiment of white racialized ideals about the history of Kentucky and how

[4] There are other humans buried on the periphery of the park's grounds, but they are from when the land belonged to individual families and thus predate the Kentucky Horse Park.

its horse tourism industry could communicate and reinforce those nostalgic fantasies. While the park was certainly created with some genuine intentions of making horse tourism accessible to the masses of locals and tourists who desired it, the story of this theme park's emergence cannot be disentangled from the history of race in twentieth-century Kentucky.

When the original vision of the Horse Park was born in 1968 and approved by then-Governor Louie B. Nunn, it was steeped in the racially charged, chaotic tension of the times. Throughout his term as governor from 1967-1973, Nunn, who was an unabashed segregationist, was swamped with race riots in Louisville, violent anti-Vietnam protests at the University of Kentucky, and housing rights protests which disrupted the Kentucky Derby. He, and the ring of influential white horsemen who promoted the idea, envisioned the Kentucky Horse Park as a stabilizing influence to counter the ways in which the horse industry – and therefore, the core of what he imagined as Kentucky's identity and state pride – was being eroded by what he saw as unnecessarily disruptive racial conflict. Insulated from the outside world, the park could serve as a refuge for nostalgic white Kentuckians who clung to white supremacy cloaked in past visions of grandeur in a rapidly changing present. Those ideas filtered down and influenced the features of the park itself, from Murphy's reburials, to the international status claimed by the park when it hosted the 1978 World Three Day Event Championships and the 2010 World Equestrian Games, to the well-timed resurgence of interest in Black horsemen in the 2010s. The Horse Park re-centered this version of Kentucky's local pride and external image around a thriving horse world built on a foundation of whiteness – one bronze statue, retired Derby winner, or world championship event at a time.

The story of the Kentucky Horse Park, then, is not just about horses, or theme parks, or the combination of the two. Instead, the story of the Kentucky Horse Park is about race. To tell this story, this thesis focuses on the years 1967 to 2010, but extends backwards to 1893 and forward to 2015. The fragments of this story have been traced through contemporary Lexington and Louisville area newspapers, personal accounts found in memoirs and oral histories, and scholarship on Thoroughbred racing, race in twentieth century Kentucky, the history of Lexington and the larger Bluegrass region, the history of world's fairs and amusement parks, and the study of cultural history, monuments, and public memory.[5] This thesis traces the development of the Kentucky Horse Park as an idea, to the Kentucky Horse Park as a reality, with particular emphasis on Isaac Murphy and Man o' War and how the two epitomize the combination of race, nostalgia, and collective memory at the very heart of the park.

[5] As of this writing, I am unaware of other scholarly works that focus on a single theme park and its intersection with the history of race. I am also unaware of works dedicated to the intersection of Isaac Murphy and Man o' War, aside from the epilogue of Katherine Mooney's Race Horse Men.

CHAPTER 1: HOW THE KENTUCKY HORSE PARK CAME TO BE

On October 4, 1974, Governor Wendell Ford broke ground at the new Kentucky Horse Park to kick off a day of merriment and celebration. The two-hundred person crowd present was in a "carnival-mood" throughout the day of festivities, which included a parade of all breeds of Kentucky horses, including the 1974 centennial Kentucky Derby winner Cannonade. Local politicians, including the mayor of Lexington and the Fayette County judge executive, gave speeches and praised Representative William Kenton for introducing the legislation which made the park possible. At the end of the ceremonies, the crowd broke out in singing "My Old Kentucky Home" to conclude what state parks commissioner Ewart W. Johnson referred to as "this magnificent day."[6] The park opened four years later, in November of 1978, after the World Three-Day Event Championships had served as a soft opening two months prior.

However, the history of the Kentucky Horse Park does not begin when it opened officially in 1978, nor does it begin in 1974 when ground was broken at the site. The history of the park does not begin in 1970 when House Bill 92 was passed in the state legislature, nor does it begin in 1968 when a group of Lexington horsemen and tourism promoters dreamt up the idea and convinced Governor Louie B. Nunn to fund it. Instead, its history begins in 1893, in Chicago, at the World's Columbian Exposition. By reflecting on the Kentucky Horse Park's progenitors, including the Atlanta and St. Louis world's fairs, one can better understand how race and nostalgia have been central to amusement and leisure spaces since they were created. These early ancestors of the Kentucky Horse Park laid important groundwork for the issues of national and state pride, the social and racial

[6] W.B. Ardery, "New Horse Park On With A Flair," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, October 5, 1974, Lexington Public Library.

dynamics of leisure spaces, and the negotiation of the status quo while promoting the consuming march of progress.

The Chicago World's Fair was unlike anything that had come before it in the United States. Held as a celebration of the 400 year anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World, it was "a commemoration, in other words, of one of the first major imperial acts by European powers."[7] The Chicago World's Fair was intended to demonstrate America's arrival on the world stage, and the nation's industrial and commercial strength relative to European competitors. It also served to enhance Chicago's reputation and show the world that the city had recovered from the Great Fire in 1871. The Chicago World's Fair, along with expositions in Atlanta in 1895 and St. Louis in 1904, laid important groundwork for amusement parks and theme parks, the next generation of American leisure and entertainment spaces of which the Kentucky Horse Park is a direct descendant.

World's fairs in Chicago and other major cities had powerful repercussions beyond simple entertainment for the masses. Between 1876 and 1916 almost one hundred million people attended these fairs – 27 million of whom attended the Chicago World's Fair.[8] These expositions "showed off the nation's economic strength and artistic resources" to their attendees, and "presented new mediums of entertainment and opportunities for vicarious travel in other lands."[9] For all social classes of Americans, world's fairs gave them a chance to experience novelty and learn about the world in which they lived. For fair organizers, this was an opportunity to not only "boost the economic development of the

[7] Mona Domosh, "A 'Civilized' Commerce: Gender, 'Race', and Empire at the 1893 Chicago Exposition," *Cultural Geographies* 9, no. 2 (April 2002): 181.
[8] Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (University of Chicago Press, 2013), 8.
[9] Rydell, 8.

cities and regions in which they were held," but also promote whatever ideas they had about the world, from a local scale with state-sponsored exhibits, to a global scale with imported people and goods from far-flung locales.[10] Even long after the deliberately temporary structures were destroyed and the specimens (human, animal, or inanimate) displayed in them were shipped home or distributed throughout the country, the influences of a world's fair could be seen on a host city for generations.[11]

Though separated by time and space, the Kentucky Horse Park and the 1893 Chicago World's Fair share many important similarities. The intentions of the World's Fair organizers are similar to that of the Horse Park's. The World's Fair organizers created exhibits and promoted them "knowing that the eyes of the world would be upon them" and thus sought "to demonstrate the progress of American civilization and the special role Chicago had played therein."[12] Similarly, the Horse Park's creators knew the eyes of not only the Bluegrass, but also the world, would be upon it, particularly in 1978 during the Three-Day Event Championships. This prestigious international competition served as a soft opening for the park, and was held two months before its official grand opening to the public. Described in the press as "one of the most exciting things *ever* to happen in Kentucky," the competition not only stoked public interest in the soon to be opened Horse

[10] Rydell, 8.
[11] Many other cities bear the visual legacies of world's fairs past. San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts is leftover from the Panama–Pacific International Exposition held in 1915. Seattle's most iconic landmark, the Seattle Space Needle, was built for the 1962 World's Fair. Lesser known, but still impactful on the city, was the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, whose grounds later became the campus of the University of Washington. Animatronics and rides developed by Disney's WED Enterprises (the precursors to Imagineers) for the 1964/1965 New York World's Fair were later moved to Disneyland. These included the "It's a Small World" ride, the "Carousel of Progress," and the "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" Animatronic. Still more cities besides those listed here display the lasting influence of world's fairs and expositions.
[12] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, Kindle version (W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), chap. 8.

Park, but also brought the world to Lexington. The fifteen countries represented meant the Kentucky Horse Park gained "world attention" as the international equine community eagerly awaited the results of the championships.[13] After "tooting its horn as the horse capital of the world" for nearly two hundred years, the Kentucky Horse Park's hosting of the Three-Day Event Championships was its chance to prove the Bluegrass's superiority and dominance in the horse world and the park's worthiness of hosting such an honor.[14] Observers of both also noted the themes of predestination for both Chicago and the Horse Park. The organizers of Chicago suggested "that their own city was itself the fulfillment of a destiny that Columbus had long ago set in motion."[15] Meanwhile, the *Herald Leader* explained that it is "most fitting and proper that the Kentucky Horse Park should be located here," as "horses and Lexington have almost become synonymous."[16] Just as the World's Fair portrayed Chicago as "a much praised version of urban life at its noblest and most civilized," so too did the Horse Park and Three-Day Event Championships for Kentucky.[17]

While the Kentucky Horse Park was from its inception a global stage, it also is a world unto itself. The sociologists Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann have developed the concept of a "symbolic universe," which "integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality."[18] A symbolic universe is created as a kind of subset of reality, and is conceived of as "the matrix of *all* socially objectivated

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[13] "Opening September 1978: Kentucky Horse Park (Advertisement)," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, January 29, 1978, Newspapers.com.
[14] Associated Press, "Woodstock, Bluegrass Style," *Journal News*, October 29, 1978, Newspapers.com, newspapers.com/image/163019691.
[15] Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, chap. 8.
[16] Jackie Nelsor, "Big State Horse Park Scheduled to Open in July," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, January 28, 1978, Lexington Public Library.
[17] Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, chap. 8.
[18] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Open Road Media, 2011), 95.

and subjectively real meanings."[19] In other words, a symbolic universe is a way of understanding the world by picking and choosing what influences from society, culture, and history are meaningful and interrelated. Symbolic universes are mutually agreed-upon products of human consciousness, and are therefore social products with a history which legitimate both individual biography and the institutional order.[20] The idea of the symbolic universe is related to collective memory, as the symbolic universe "locates all collective events in a cohesive unity that includes past, present, and future." Those who partake in this shared memory "can now conceive of themselves as *belonging to* a meaningful universe."[21]

Both the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the Horse Park are examples of symbolic universes, as they are subjectively constructed worlds which legitimize the "particular institutions and roles" they are showcasing. The World's Fair is a symbolic universe which legitimizes concepts of scientific progress, democracy, racial order by placing them in this "comprehensively meaningful world" of pavilions, exhibit halls, lecture stages, and the thronging huddled masses that are delighted by, and internalize and perpetuate what they observe.[22] On a much smaller scale, the Horse Park engages in the same work on behalf of the Commonwealth and its identity as the ruler of the horse world. The Horse Park, through museum exhibits, demonstrations, monuments, and memorials, has made itself into its own symbolic universe. While these media may not contain messages as overt as the World's Fair messages of race and empire are to us now, they still communicate these ideas in their own way. At the World's Fair, with its "electric vehicles and lack of horse manure, its

[19] Berger and Luckmann, 95.
[20] Berger and Luckmann, 96.
[21] Berger and Luckmann, 101.
[22] Berger and Luckmann, 101.

carefully cleaned streets and landscaped grounds" visitors saw an idealized version of the world.[23] Though the Horse Park has plenty of horse manure to go around, its stately barns, heroic bronze statues, and expansive pastures create an idealized version of a horse farm for visitors to experience.

One key aspect of the Chicago World's Fair and other expositions was race. As Rydell writes, "World's fairs existed as part of a broader universe of white supremacist entertainments." While these messages of white supremacy were often cloaked by the fair's "scientific, artistic, and political underpinnings," they were also overtly communicated in other ways.[24] None was more obvious than the anthropological exhibits that essentially functioned as human zoos. Modeled after colonial villages present at the 1889 Paris Exhibition, "living ethnological displays" of non-white people were introduced "en masse" at Chicago and then later expositions.[25] In these themed exhibit spaces Native American tribes, African nations, and other colonized nations were represented by people who had been brought there, often forcibly, to pantomime their cultures for amusement. Delighted crowds watched as the humans on display made crafts, sang, or otherwise demonstrated activities that were marketed as daily living. The human displays were designed and interpreted as proof of the superiority of imperialism, colonialism, and Western civilization. Exhibiting nonwhites as the other, and fetishizing their supposed primitive savagery, convinced visitors of their rightful place in the world. A delegation of Bedouins were located among the anthropological exhibits at the Midway esplanade at Chicago. The Bedouin people put on a "Wild East" show which showcased their Arabian horses. Visitors

[23] Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, chap. 8.
[24] Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*, 13.
[25] Rydell, 16.

were enchanted by the magnificent creatures and the close relationship between the Bedouins and their horses. The International Museum of the Horse has devoted exhibit space to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and includes pictures and ephemera from the Bedouin exhibit. Located in the Arabian gallery, which is dedicated to portraying all aspects of the Arabian breed of horse, a corner of the exhibit discusses their presence at the fair, unintentionally highlighting the connection between the Kentucky Horse Park and its predecessor. Where the themes of racial hierarchy were implied in the anthropological exhibits, in others, it was much more overt. The clearest example of the cruelty of these human exhibits is a man named Ota Benga, who was a Mbuti pygmy man from what is today Congo. He was put on display in what was essentially a human zoo at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, and visitors marveled at his sharpened teeth, exotic appearance, and palpable anger at being imprisoned for viewing pleasure. After the fair was over, he was exhibited in the primate cage at the Bronx Zoo, and later died from suicide in 1916.[26]

Human zoos aside, issues of race played out in more complex ways among Americans around these world's fairs. This was particularly true for Black Americans, whose "participation in southern expositions demonstrates the dialogic nature of black identity" at the turn of the century. Instead of rejecting these theories, many Black middle class activists espoused Social Darwinism and racial progress as a way to access modernity and white acceptance. "Instead of challenging the methods of racial science," which was often used against them in an increasingly Jim Crow America, "they challenged its

[26] Phillips Verner Bradford and Harvey Blume, *Ota Benga: The Pygmy in the Zoo*, 1st edition (New York: St Martins Pr, 1992).

conclusions."[27] This cognitive dissonance came about by distancing themselves as "culturally and perhaps biologically, different from Africans and lower-class blacks."[28] This resulted in Ida B. Wells and other activists' protesting the Chicago World's Fair, not because of the way African people were portrayed, but because Black Americans had been completely left out. In the pamphlet "The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition," Ida B. Wells, Frederick Douglass, and other authors lament the exclusion of Black Americans from the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. To Wells and Douglass, Chicago was a missed opportunity for Black Americans to demonstrate their progress post Emancipation. "Colored people…saw in this great event their first opportunity to show what freedom and citizenship can do for a slave," writes Wells. "The colored man," she continues, "hoped that the American people with their never failing protestation of justice and fair play, would gladly respond to this call," so that he may show to the world "not only what America has done for the Negro, but what the Negro has done for himself."[29]

Their calls were answered at the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition, which was held in Atlanta. By 1895, post-Reconstruction Atlanta aspired to be a successful example of the industrious, thriving New South. Southern white boosters realized an event modeled on Chicago's could promote this version of Atlanta to the wider world, and thus, the idea for the Exposition was born. The Exposition "linked economic progress with sectional reconciliation" and sought to show the world that to Atlanta, and the rest of the

[27] Nathan Cardon, "The South's 'New Negroes' and African American Visions of Progress at the Atlanta and Nashville International Expositions, 1895–1897," *The Journal of Southern History* 80, no. 2 (May 2014): 288.
[28] Cardon, 293.
[29] Ida B. Wells, "The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World's Columbian Exposition," 1893, chap. 4, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/wells/exposition/exposition.html.

New South, "sectional animosity was a thing of the past."[30] This "extravagant and ambitious display of New South evangelism" depicted a South that embodied progress and industry – one that belonged to the future.[31] The organizers of the Exposition took inspiration from the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and expressed these desires through architecture. A regional aesthetic style was rejected in favor of a Romanesque style that was popular in Northern cities and would therefore have mass appeal.[32]

The symbolism of the Exposition's structures extended deeper than their beautiful, stately exteriors. Black leaders, including Wells and Douglass as well as AME bishops Wesley Gaines and Henry McNeal Turner, pressured the Exposition's organizers and Congress to meaningfully include and represent blacks in the event. Congress did agree to provide funding, but only under the condition that a separate "Negro Building" be built to appease them yet still avoid fully integrating them into the Exposition.[33] Foreshadowing later events, Booker T. Washington quieted Black leadership who criticized this decision. The Negro Building's exhibits were nothing provocative and featured agriculture, schools, and churches as well as artwork, quilts, and furniture. White visitors to the Negro Building expressed their approval, remarking how useful and advanced the Black authors of the exhibits were.[34] White visitors to the Midway found an Old Plantation exhibit there, complete with black people who played fiddle and banjo and demonstrated cotton ginning. To white visitors and organizers of the Exhibition, "the presence of the Negro Buildings testified to their paternalistic goodwill…the fair's organizers viewed the buildings as a way

[30] Reiko Hillyer, *Designing Dixie: Tourism, Memory, and Urban Space in the New South* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 164, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kentucky-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3444186.
[31] Hillyer, 164.
[32] Hillyer, 166.
[33] Hillyer, 166.
[34] Hillyer, 167.

to demonstrate white's guidance of a supposedly childlike race."[35] The existence of the Negro Building, and the exhibits in it, had the paradoxical effect of highlighting African American performance of bourgeois sensibilities while "confirming a southern racial order that separated black from white."[36]

The best way to understand how the Exposition reinforced a segregated racial order is the most well-known event it is remembered for: Booker T. Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" speech. Famously, Washington argued that blacks should focus on economic liberation and be content to exist separately from whites. To him, "the agitation of the questions of social equality is the extremest folly."[37] The white audience greatly approved of him, and his speech garnered "excited applause from thousands…waving handkerchiefs…[and] flowers pulled from white women's bosoms that showered Washington when he finished."[38] Whites approved of Washington's modest aims, as they reinforced their own ideas about imagined Black subservience, disenfranchisement, and willing inferiority. Just one year later, the Supreme Court would hand down the Plessy v. Ferguson decision, entrenching segregation and spurring the adoption of Jim Crow laws across the South.

The 1895 Exposition connects to the history of the Kentucky Horse Park in many ways. The fact that African Americans "pursued a variety of corresponding and contradictory goals" at the Exposition shows that even when Black people are included in

[35] Cardon, "The South's 'New Negroes' and African American Visions of Progress at the Atlanta and Nashville International Expositions, 1895–1897," 290.
[36] Cardon, 292.
[37] Booker T. Washington, "[Atlanta Compromise]" (Speech, Atlanta, Georgia, September 18, 1895), https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/civil-rights-act/multimedia/booker-t-washington.html.
[38] Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (Bold Type Books, 2016), 277.

predominantly white recreational spaces, it often occurs in tokenizing, patronizing ways.[39] In 1976, when Isaac Murphy was disinterred and moved to the Horse Park, white Lexingtonians felt they were doing him an honor by placing him with other racing greats, ignoring that he had been buried with his family and community in his original resting place. The 1895 Atlanta Exposition, specifically Washington's "Atlanta Compromise," shows that there is a precedent of whites turning to spaces of leisure and amusement to have their vision of the world be upheld and confirmed. Similarly, though Isaac Murphy or other Black horsemen were never displayed in a human zoo as Ota Benga was in 1904 at the St. Louis World's Fair, their bodies' value as spectacles of entertainment for whites overlap significantly.

The connections between the World's Fairs and the Kentucky Horse Park are not limited to themes of race and hegemony. Horses, and more generally, other livestock and agriculture, were a central part of world's fairs, not only in Chicago in 1893, but also in St. Louis in 1904. As with Chicago and Atlanta, the St. Louis World's Fair celebrated "America's colonial state building" and one of the ways it did so was through its celebration of man's dominion over nature.[40] As the Exposition's official promotional brochure described: "The heroes of Homer's Iliad were engaged in petty achievements when compared with the work of the men who wrestled a vast wilderness from savages and wild beasts and made it the seat of twenty great commonwealths in a single century."[41]

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[39] Cardon, "The South's 'New Negroes' and African American Visions of Progress at the Atlanta and Nashville International Expositions, 1895–1897," 295.
[40] Cynthia Marasigan, "Race, Performance, and Colonial Governance: The Philippine Constabulary Band Plays the St. Louis World's Fair," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 22, no. 3 (2019): 350, https://doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2019.0040.
[41] Kentucky Commission, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, "Kentucky at the World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904" (Frankfort, Kentucky, 1904), ExploreUK, https://exploreuk.uky.edu/catalog/xt7jh98z9d6b#page/4/mode/2up.

Kentucky's horse and livestock exhibits at the St. Louis World's Fair contributed to that narrative.

As a state, Kentucky made a strong showing with its entries into horse competitions as well as its Kentucky Exhibit. According to the official report published after the conclusion of the Exposition, the Kentucky Exhibit was organized and partially funded by the Commonwealth and was created in order "to give Kentucky credible representation at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition."[42] The exhibit displayed Kentucky products like tobacco, art, and music, and in doing so, served as "an advertisement of the progress and the resources of the State."[43] Kentucky was most proudly represented at the Exposition by its horses and other livestock. A long list of awards won "tells the story of the triumphs of Kentucky's livestock at the World's Fair."[44] Kentucky received more awards for exhibiting horses than any other state or country, and one well to do white man in particular was especially decorated.[45] Later in his life, Hal "HP" Headley would be honored as a "Pillar of the Turf" for his "vision and acumen" as a horseman. Back in 1904, at just fourteen years old, Headley traveled to St. Louis on behalf of his father and entered a draft of his horses into the competitions.[46] One of these horses, Ornament, was known as "one of the best horses of his day."[47] The "$50,000 Thoroughbred stallion" had narrowly lost the 1897 Kentucky Derby to Typhoon II and had won many other Derbys.[48] As he possessed "all the qualities which [made] a Thoroughbred great, including beauty," Ornament was chosen

[42] Kentucky Commission, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 4.
[43] Kentucky Commission, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 5.
[44] Kentucky Commission, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 115.
[45] Kentucky Commission, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 115.
[46] "Pillars of the Turf: Hal Price Headley," National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame, c 2018, https://www.racingmuseum.org/hall-of-fame/pillar/hal-price-headley.
[47] Lucy Zeh, *Etched in Stone: Thoroughbred Memorials*, 1 edition (Lexington, Ky: Eclipse Press, 2000), 17–18.
[48] Zeh, 17.

by Kentucky horse breeders to go with Headley to St. Louis in order to "represent the interests of the Blue Grass region."[49] It seems Ornament fulfilled that expectation. Headley returned home to Lexington with a box full of prize ribbons and $4,600 of prize money, and soon after took over his late father's farm. In the 1930s, Headley was closely involved in founding Keeneland Racecourse, which is today still a world renowned "bastion of solidity and elegance."[50] Ornament, the horse so central to Headley's early successes, is buried in what is now a parking lot in the Southcreek Office Park, on Harrodsburg Road. His headstone stands on a small patch of grass, surrounded by asphalt.[51]

The Kentucky horses at the 1904 Exposition were apparently such excellent representations of their breed that it is "doubtful if there has ever been a more valuable lot of show animals gotten together."[52] This convergence of horses and world's fairs shows that there are nearly 100 years of history of using horses to promote and maintain its state pride on a national and even world stage. Visitors to St. Louis certainly experienced the Exposition as pure amusement – enjoying the first ice cream cones, X-rays, or premature infant incubators. Yet, the St. Louis Exposition, along with the 1893 Chicago World's Fair and the 1895 Exposition in Atlanta, were anything but superficial pleasures. The perspective granted by the passage of time shows that these fairs were instead active forces on the world that passed through their splendid pavilions.

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[49] Philip Henry Hale, *The Book of Live Stock Champions: Being an Artistic Souvenir Supplement of the Monthly National Farmer and Stock Grower* (St. Louis, Missouri, 1912), 225, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/pst.000057749105.
[50] Edward L. Bowen, *Legacies of the Turf: A Century of Great Thoroughbred Breeders*, Kindle (Lexington, Kentucky: Eclipse Press, 2003), chap. 10.
[51] Anne Peters, interview by Kim Lady Smith, Digital Recording, August 11, 2008, sec. 01:14:00, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt78930nsh4m.
[52] Kentucky Commission, Louisiana Purchase Exposition, "Kentucky at the World's Fair, St. Louis, 1904," 116.

Though world's fairs and expositions remained popular throughout the first half of the twentieth century, at the turn of the century, they spawned the development of something entirely different: amusement parks. While they retained the midway entertainment attractions offered at world's fairs, amusement parks de-emphasized the intellectual exhibits at world's fairs and centered pure pleasure.[53] Amusement parks offered dance halls, beer gardens, thrill rides, sideshows, cheap theatres, dime museums, and the anthropological exhibits or academic lectures of the world's fairs were conspicuously absent. Instead, amusement parks were destinations for the "masses of pleasure-seeking humanity" who gathered to enjoy the thrill of interacting with each other and the rush of taking in tawdry, indulgent, or otherwise exciting spectacles.[54] As the historian Gary Cross explains in his study of Coney Island, Blackpool, Disneyland, and Beamish, amusement parks in the first decades of the twentieth century were places where the "playful crowds" who visited them could set aside their inhibitions and embrace "both the gaudy and the sublime."[55] In particular, the individual parks which comprised Coney Island "combined popular modernity, mass consumption, and a new collective experience."[56]

In her exploration of the link between amusement parks, movies, and American modernity, historian Lauren Rabinovitz explains how amusement parks invited visitors to engage in fantasy by experiencing new and exciting sensations unavailable to them in their daily lives. Amusement park goers had new physical experiences with slides, funhouses, wooden roller coasters, and motion simulator rides, and were transported to other realms

[53] Carroll Pursell, "Fun Factories: Inventing American Amusement Parks," *Icon* 19 (2013): 88.
[54] Gary S. Cross, *The Playful Crowd: Pleasure Places in the Twentieth Century* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 4.
[55] Cross, 5. Beamish and Blackpool were amusement parks located in northern England.
[56] Cross, 6.

in Nickelodeons and movie theaters. While there are no dance halls, arcades, or roller coasters at the Kentucky Horse Park, visitors still interact with the space in ways reminiscent of those at amusement parks. As Rabinovitz notes, early twentieth-century amusement parks gave people the chance to break free from the social and experiential constraints of everyday life. At Coney Island, this meant the erosion of Victorian social mores. At the Kentucky Horse Park, this means visitors, most of whom are from outside of Kentucky and are not equestrians, are transported to a new and unfamiliar world. The excitement and spectacle of horse riding demonstrations, the adoption of a novel vocabulary, the associations with wealth and prestige, and the beauty and grandeur of the Horse Park's grounds immerse the visitor in fantasy just as amusement parks did at the turn of the century.

As the twentieth century progressed, the charm of chaotic, transgressive, thrilling amusement parks faded, and a new style of clean, innocent, and orderly parks took their place. When Walt Disney had his idea for what would become Disneyland, he created it as a direct response to the prior generation of amusement parks. He created "a new kind of pleasure park…designed for baby boomers and their parents from middle America, offering entirely new forms of entertainment."[57] Disneyland, which opened on July 17, 1955, became a "powerful, even emblematic example of commercialized tourism in the twentieth century" and many sociologists have applied different frameworks to describe its unique space between the real and imagined.[58] Postmodernism, Umberto Eco's concept of "hyperreality" and Jean Baudrillard's idea of a "simulacrum" are key in understanding the Horse Park as a space. As with many postmodern spaces, the Horse Park employs a series

[57] Cross, 167.
[58] Cross, 181.

of "immersive simulations to transform and enhance daily existence."[59] While the park bills itself as a "working horse farm," visitors only see the aspects of a horse farm deemed permissible for their consumption – a simulacrum of a working horse farm. Visitors marvel at the riding demonstrations, go on trail rides, and visit the display barns, which all purportedly give them experience of really being on a horse farm. Yet, the hard labor of feeding, grooming, exercising, healing, breeding, and cleaning up after horses is kept backstage. The perceived Horse Park – the simulacrum – is therefore "an identical copy for which no original ever existed," and permits the visitor to "'be there' without 'being there' at all."[60]

According to audio engineering professor and theme park historian Barry Hill, post-Disneyland, the 1960s and 1970s were "the golden age of the regional theme park."[61] While Disneyland, Walt Disney World, and other major theme parks attracted guests on a national scale, regional theme parks were "steeped in local culture, creating a unique bond and identity with guests who grew up with each particular park – *their* park."[62] Regional theme parks almost always employ imagery and theming to tie the park to the surrounding area. Most of the time, these "creative design touches [that bring] a sense of regional identity to the park" are harmlessly kitschy. For example, Astroworld, which opened in Houston in 1968, incorporated Space Age aesthetics in order to capitalize upon NASA's presence there.[63] Often, however, this crossed into problematic territory, as can be seen in the

[59] Cher Krause Knight, *Power and Paradise in Walt Disney's World*, 1st edition (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 21.
[60] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York, New York: Semiotext(e), Inc., 1983), http://archive.org/details/simulations0000baud; quoted in Knight, *Power and Paradise in Walt Disney's World*, 21.
[61] Barry R. Hill, *Imagineering an American Dreamscape: Genesis, Evolution, and Redemption of the Regional Theme Park* (Rivershore Creative, n.d.), 9.
[62] Hill, 9.
[63] "Hofheinz Unveils Astroworld Plans," *Kilgore News Herald*, September 17, 1967.

uncritical mimicry of the antebellum South at Six Flags Over Georgia, or the Confederate reenactors who once performed at Six Flags Over Texas.[64] In some cases, though, this impetus to cater to local visitors resulted in outright discrimination. Coney Island Amusement Park in Cincinnati, which later became the enormously popular Kings Island, demonstrated this in 1955. The park refused to integrate, invoking the language and logic of regionalism to defend itself against calls to do so. The owners claimed the park had to remain segregated because white visitors from Kentucky, who made up a large portion of their annual visitation, expected it.[65] Much like their amusement park ancestors, regional theme parks are places influenced by local racism and white supremacy.

The Kentucky Horse Park occupies space on the continuum between the regional theme park and major theme park. It incorporates the "creative design touches [that bring] a sense of regional identity to the park," such as black four-board fencing, which is unique to the Bluegrass, and caters to visitors' expectations of what Kentucky should be. In this way, the Kentucky Horse Park provided, and still provides, accessible horse tourism to those who visit.

Horse tourism in Kentucky dates back to at least January 1921, when the enormously successful Thoroughbred Man o' War was retired to stud at Faraway Farm, outside of Lexington. The horse "quickly became a living monument in Kentucky's Bluegrass region."[66] Elizabeth Daingerfield, manager of Faraway Farm, noted, "his name

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[64] Hill, *Imagineering an American Dreamscape*, 55–64.
There are no more Confederate reenactors at Six Flags over Texas, and no more Confederate flags. In 2017, the flags were removed as part of that year's larger reckoning with the flag's symbolism and the appropriateness of displaying it. The Old South pavilion at the park, however, remains.
[65] Victoria W. Wolcott, *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), chap. 3, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fhgtz.
[66] Dorothy Ours, *Man o' War: A Legend Like Lightning*, 1st ed. (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 268.

is on all the road directions in this part of the country…tourists ask first where they can find him and then where they can find the Mammoth Cave."[67] Man o' War topped the list of reasons for tourists to travel to the state, and visits to Faraway Farm to see him were quite informal then. Guests could simply drive over to the farm, walk up to the paddock, and ask. Man o' War was not the only attraction guests came to see, however. Will Harbut, a Black man who had been Man o' War's groom for the latter's whole life, soon found himself with duties beyond keeping the horse "clean, fed, and cooperative in the breeding shed." Harbut became Man o' War's unofficial spokesman, telling the horse's story to whomever wandered up to the farm that day with "the suspenseful rhythm of a theatrical event."[68] Many accounts of interactions with Harbut employ offensive dialect to record his words, which quietly bothered him at the time. Yet, Harbut's Homerian epithet for Man o' War, "the mostes' horse who ever lived," became cemented in popular memory. People who came to visit Man o' War felt very close to the horse, likely because they physically could. All visitors had to do was walk right up to the paddock fence or poke their heads into his stall and peer through the door.[69]

Today, in the times of quarter-million-dollar stud fees and multi-million dollar accident insurance, this setup sounds impossible. Currently, luxury tour companies partner with Lexington-area horse farms to offer tours at hundreds of dollars per person. For example, Claiborne Farm tours start at 20 dollars per person for a basic tour, but can reach 600 dollars per person for the privilege to "meet the stallions at this historic farm and pay

[67] Elizabeth Bent, "She Breeds Great Horses," *New York Times*, December 30, 1923.
[68] Ours, *Man o' War*, 270.
[69] Ours, 271.

respects to Secretariat at his gravesite."[70] The casual interactions of the past between fans and horses at major farms were the norm until the 1960s. In the late 1960s, farms in the area that had once been freely open began shutting their doors to tighten security. The reason most commonly given is the rash of devastating barn fires that occurred across the Bluegrass and were presumed to be set intentionally. A seasoned volunteer at the park who has been there since the first year it opened confirmed that this is what she was officially told when she began working.[71] One of the worst occurred at the prominent Manchester Farm in 1965 and killed 22 Thoroughbreds worth a total of $800,000. Gruesomely, thousands of fans at Keeneland, located just half a mile away, watched the blaze from the grandstands.[72] Smaller farms, such as the Gibson White Stable and the Darby Dan Farm, also suffered losses of both horses and property that same year.[73] In 1968, three fires that occurred at different farms in the span of less than 24 hours prompted authorities to search for a suspect who was spotted by a witness but ultimately never apprehended.[74] "The barn is accessible to the public," noted the article in the Lexington Herald, as it described the many other possibilities, such as electrical fires or gas leaks, that were ruled out as causes of the fire at one of the farms.[75] Finally, in March 1969, the fifth barn fire in six months at the prestigious Spendthrift Farm prompted authorities to take seriously the possibility of arson. Fayette County law enforcement officials administered lie detector tests to night

[70] "About Us," *Visit Horse Country* (blog), accessed March 28, 2021, https://visithorsecountry.com/about-us/.
[71] Rachel Berry, interview by Emily Libecap, Telephone call, February 4, 2021.
[72] Lenn Cobb, "DUPE 22 Thoroughbreds Perish in Headley Farm Fire," *Lexington Herald*, April 22, 1965, Lexington Public Library.
[73] Lenn Cobb, "Foaling Barn Loss Is Set At $50,000," *Lexington Herald*, August 3, 1965, Lexington Public Library; "Two Horses Die in Barn Blaze," *Lexington Herald*, November 4, 1965, Lexington Public Library.
[74] Jim Ennis, "Fire Hits 3 Horse Barns; Cause Still Undetermined," *Lexington Herald*, September 11, 1968, 3, Lexington Public Library.
[75] Ennis, "Fire Hits 3 Horse Barns; Cause Still Undetermined."

watchmen at the farm, as the fire broke out in a barn only 15 minutes after it had been patrolled by farm security.[76] The farm's owner, Leslie Combs II, noted that while 150,000 people visit the farm annually, he would "abide by any decision [law enforcement] made concerning the possibility of closing the barn to visitors."[77]

It appears from the existing historical record that no suspects were ever identified or charged in these costly, traumatic fires. The looming threat of an arsonist, or multiple arsonists, prompted farm owners to heighten security and close their stable doors to the public. It seemed that the days of accessible horse tourism in central Kentucky, and the revenue and cultural cachet the industry brought to the state, were over – that is, until a few dedicated horsemen, a local booster, and the governor of Kentucky himself got involved. The political allegiances, the business acumen, and the ease with which they were able to create the Kentucky Horse Park reveals much about the park itself as they do about the process of building it.

There were many influential, well-connected men who deservedly claim credit for bringing the Kentucky Horse Park into being. However, one man in particular was at the center of the many forces at work that built the Kentucky Horse Park: Jim Host. Throughout his career, Host pursued and succeeded in a wide variety of ventures in business, sports, and politics in Kentucky. Host pioneered many aspects of collegiate sports marketing and broadcasting which made him a multi-millionaire through his eponymous company, Host Communications. Host was also involved in the development of places crucial to Kentucky's tourism industry such as Rupp Arena, the Lexington Civic Center, and the KFC Yum! Center in Louisville.

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[76] "Spendthrift Fires Bring Lie Tests," *Lexington Herald*, March 11, 1969, Lexington Public Library.
[77] "Barn at Spendthrift Burns; Authorities Suspect Arson," March 17, 1969, Lexington Public Library.

After graduating from the University of Kentucky in 1961 with a degree in radio broadcasting, Host dabbled in real estate, selling insurance, and miscellaneous business ventures before becoming interested in state politics. In 1967, Republican Louie B. Nunn was elected Governor of Kentucky, and at age 29, Host became the youngest member his cabinet, having assisted with Nunn's campaign. Under Nunn, Host first served as the Commissioner of Department of Public Information, and later, the Commissioner of the Department of Parks. Nunn selected Host as Commissioner of Public Information because he "wanted someone to dramatically improve communication."[78] Nunn granted Host "total authority on his behalf to…communicate his goals to the public" and later instructed him "your job is to promote the governor."[79]

Just who was this governor Host was required to promote?[80] Louie B. Nunn had built a reputation as a staunchly conservative Republican when he served as state chairman of Richard Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign.[81] Though Nixon lost the race, he won Kentucky by a seven point margin. When Nunn himself ran for governor of Kentucky in 1963 against the Democratic candidate, Ned Breathitt, he established himself as a calculated and persistent candidate. Notoriously, Nunn leveraged racial discord in a campaign stunt in which he appeared on television surrounded by the American flag and statues of notable Kentuckians, and holding a Bible. Brandishing a printed copy of sitting

[78] Jim Host and Eric A. Moyen, *Changing the Game: My Career in Collegiate Sports Marketing* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2020), 46.
[79] Host and Moyen, 54.
[80] Answering this question proved difficult given the lack of scholarly sources dedicated solely to Nunn and his career. Professor Tracy Campbell speculates this could be due to the tragic story of Nunn's son Steve, who was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison in 2011. I found what I could in contemporary newspapers and compiled works (see the following footnotes).
[81] Robert F. Sexton and Al Cross, "Louie B. Nunn," in *Kentucky's Governors*, ed. Lowell Harrison, Updated (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 206.

Democratic governor Bert Combs' executive order prohibiting racial discrimination issued on June 26, Nunn enthusiastically exclaimed, "My first act will be to abolish *this!*"[82]

Nunn traversed murky territory when it came to race and his public image. On the one hand, he was unabashed in his disdain for integration. On the other, he fought back against any accusations, implied or outright, that he was prejudiced. The most dramatic example of this came in October of 1963, when Nunn announced he was filing a one-million-dollar libel suit against the *Glasgow Daily Times* for publishing a lengthy editorial criticizing Nunn and endorsing his opponent, Breathitt. Nunn's suit cited two problems with the editorial: its discussion of the circulation of unflattering leaflets in the community, and its reprinting of racist remarks Nunn had supposedly made in a speech at the Glasgow Lions Club.[83] The speech and its apparently racist content is fairly straightforward. The *Glasgow Daily Times*' editorial stated that Nunn, in his speech, had told a story from his role a year earlier as campaign manager for Thruston Morton, who was running for senator and won. Nunn, in a "bragging admission," said part of the campaign's success came from a tactic in which Republicans would send a "Negro" into Western Kentucky and ask to be served in a restaurant. When the restaurant staff refused, the man was instructed to make a point of saying that if Morton's opponent became senator, he and other "Negroes" would be able to eat in restaurants however and whenever they pleased.[84] Essentially, Nunn had successfully harnessed racial antagonism to win the election for his candidate.

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[82] Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 411, http://ezproxy.uky.edu/login?url=http://uknowledge.uky.edu/upk_united_states_history/154/; John Ed Pearce, *Divide and Dissent: Kentucky Politics, 1930-1963*, Paperback edition. (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 221.
[83] Bob Cooper, "Nunn Threatens Libel Suit Against Glasgow Newspaper," *Lexington Herald*, October 22, 1963, Newspapers.com.
[84] Cooper.

The handbill issue is slightly more convoluted. Apparently, in the fall of 1963, during the Nunn-Breathitt governor's race, handbills mysteriously popped up in and around Glasgow, which was Nunn's home district both personally and earlier in his political career. The handbills portrayed drawings of a white girl and Black boy holding hands, listed two "leading Negro integration organizations" and showed three pictures of Nunn's opponent, Breathitt. Both Nunn's team and Breathitt's team pointed their finger at the other. Breathitt accused Nunn of planting the leaflets to convince voters that Breathitt was an extreme integrationist who openly approved of miscegenation. Nunn accused Breathitt of planting the leaflets himself, in order to portray Nunn as a politically clumsy racist. Apparently, the mystery was never solved, and I did not find a definitive answer in the existing record whether or not Nunn was awarded the one million dollars in damages. An editorial retrospective on his term published in 1971 hints that the newspaper was either successful in defending itself or quietly settled out of court.[85]

Although Nunn lost the 1963 race for governor, he reused these same tactics when he ran again and competed in the Republican gubernatorial primary in 1967. Nunn zeroed in on his opponent Marlow W. Cook's Catholic faith and derided him as a threatening "liberal, former New Yorker."[86] Nunn claimed in an oral history interview thirty years later that it was not his idea to bring up Cook's Catholicism and that it was instead Cook's campaign who "accused" him of being prejudiced. "*They* were the ones who brought it in," insisted Nunn, and he repeatedly referenced it during every single campaign event simply

[85] Editorial Board, "Most Kentuckians Say Nunn Has Been a Good Governor," *News-Democrat and Leader*, October 18, 1971, Newspapers.com.
[86] Pearce, *Divide and Dissent*, 413.

to refute those allegations against him.[87] Yet, Nunn was surely aware of the impact of fanning the flames of voters' anti-Catholicism with sly mentions of it. In the very same interview, Nunn recounts how many rural counties in Kentucky supported Nixon in the 1960 presidential election, despite their strong Democratic leanings. "This *is* the Bible Belt," explained Nunn, and therefore, Protestant Kentucky voters abandoned their strong political affiliations to avoid voting for Kennedy, a Catholic.[88] When the oral history interviewer asks about similar allegations of Nunn's supposed anti-Semitism, he feigns complete ignorance. "I was totally innocent, and didn't even know it was being said," he sniffs.[89] What a difference three decades makes in remembering these moments in his career.

Whether he remembers them or not, Nunn's strategy of centering race, culture and religion worked. He won the 1967 Republican primary and advanced as the Republican candidate for governor of Kentucky. In his campaign against Democratic candidate Henry Ward, he once again "capitalized on the race issue and the uneasy mood of the nation" to his advantage, as "riots, demonstrations, and general unrest appeared in the news seemingly daily."[90] This time, Nunn narrowly won with 51.20 percent of the vote and was inaugurated on December 12, 1967 as the first Republican governor of Kentucky in 21 years. Nunn's election, and his embodiment of the backlash and power struggle between civil rights and the existing racist system, was a precursor to Nixon's in 1968. Nunn admired him and faithfully supported his run for the Republican nomination and

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[87] Louie B. Nunn, interview by Harry Merritt, March 31, 1994, pt. 01:53:07, John Sherman Cooper Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, https://kentuhttps://kentuckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt7zw37ksw21ckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt731z41v918.
[88] Nunn, pt. 01:55:00.
[89] Nunn, pt. 01:58:00.
[90] Pearce, *Divide and Dissent*, 413.

eventual presidential race just as he had previously in 1960. Nunn even invited Nixon to the 1968 and 1969 Kentucky Derbys, and Nixon became the only president to attend the Derby while in office.[91] Nixon, like Nunn, positioned himself as a response to a growing silent majority angry and outraged by the social changes of the 1960s. If "under Nixon, everything was going to be all right…under Nixon, America would be *quiet* again," under Nunn, Kentucky would be *quiet* again.[92] Or, so Nunn hoped.

All of these negotiations between Nunn, race, and public perception served as background to his actual four year term as governor. Right away, Nunn was faced with a significant political challenge, with which Jim Host assisted him in spinning to the public. This was Nunn's endeavor to raise the state sales tax from three cents per dollar to five cents. Host was tasked with not only selling the public on this sudden reversal of Nunn's fiscally conservative campaign promises, but also convincing the state legislature to pass the proposed legislation. Host, either on his own or joined by Nunn himself, rounded up stakeholders whose budgets were most impacted by taxes and gave them the hard sell. For example, Host identified the presidents of state colleges and universities as a group of stakeholders who were prime for convincing. Host first showed them their estimated budgets with the new tax increase and then "promised to cut their budgets if the proposed tax failed."[93] The outcome? They all immediately vowed their support. Though Host recounts many similar meetings in a light tone, some encounters and tactics seem downright threatening. He recalls: "We…determined who needed to be pressured and what they could be given in return for a 'yes' vote on the tax."[94] Host alleges elsewhere in his

[91] Associated Press, "Nixon Accepts Nunn's Derby Bid," *Lexington Herald*, April 23, 1969.
[92] Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (Scribner, 2008), 526.
[93] Host and Moyen, *Changing the Game*, 51.
[94] Host and Moyen, 51.

memoir that Nunn would stop at nothing to get what he wanted, at one point explaining to Host, "I never did anything in politics that hadn't been done to me."[95]

Host soon was tasked with "many other duties beyond selling the sales tax" when Nunn fired his press secretary. Host stepped in and achieved "some of the most important public relations reforms [which] transformed the relationship between the press and the state government".[96] Because he was "called on to promote tourism and industry in Kentucky" as part of his "many other" job duties, he was interested in anything affecting large-scale trends in the tourism trade in Kentucky.[97] So, when horse farm managers began closing their gates to visitors due to arson, Host realized this was a problem he needed to fix.[98] He met with some of the farms' managers and pitched an alternative: "a model horse farm and track where visitors could learn about the horse industry. It would also be a gathering place…and hopefully it would attract various entities in the horse industry to move their national or international headquarters to the Bluegrass."[99]

Host's idea of a model horse farm was apparently immediately well received, because as he claims, "the newspapers ran articles about my proposals."[100] His phone began ringing off the hook. One caller was Fayette County judge Joe Johnson, who tipped Host off to the fact that the owner of the Walnut Hall Stud farm, "Harky" Edwards was in financial trouble. Sure enough, after one call from Host, "Harky" supposedly eagerly agreed to sell for the state's appraised price.[101]

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[95] Host and Moyen, 45.
[96] Host and Moyen, 52.
[97] Host and Moyen, 53.
[98] Host and Moyen, 55.
[99] Host and Moyen, 56.
[100] Sadly, I could find no such articles in the Lexington Public Library's archive.
[101] Host and Moyen, *Changing the Game*, 55.

Another caller was John Gaines, who suggested to Host the concept of the Kentucky Horse Park, building from Host's idea of simply a model farm. The two met for dinner and brainstormed at the restaurant for three hours. In the few existing accounts of the Kentucky Horse Park's history, Gaines is often described as a "horseman" which belies the true scope of his influence on Lexington throughout his lifetime. Gaines was the owner of Gainesway farm, a Thoroughbred breeding "colossus" that he had built from his father's standardbred breeding farm.[102] He also developed the Maxwell H. Gluck Equine Research Center at the University of Kentucky, and founded the National Thoroughbred Racing Association and the Kentucky Equine Education Project. Outside the horse world, Gaines led fundraising efforts for the William T. Young library, the flagship library on University of Kentucky's campus, and created the Gaines Center for the Humanities at the University of Kentucky.[103] Gaines was passionate about education, and wanted to carry on "our justly renowned tradition of Kentucky hospitality and generosity" by building "a home to help people reach their full human potential."[104] With all of these endeavors, Gaines was constantly searching for ways to promote racing, build the future of the sport, and grow the tourism industry in the Lexington area.

One of the most impactful of Gaines' ideas was the Breeders' Cup. The Breeders' Cup is an annual international series of G1 Thoroughbred races held over two days each fall since 1984. Rotating through different host sites in North America, the Breeders' Cup represents a new level of cooperation in the racing world, and a unique variety of

[102] John Eisenberg, "Father of the Cup," *Keeneland Magazine*, Summer 2015, 45.
[103] "Horseman Gaines to Help UK Raise $40 Million for Library," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, October 19, 1990, Lexington Public Library; Ray Paulick, "Remembering John Gaines and His Powerful Dream," Paulick Report, October 27, 2015, https://www.paulickreport.com/news/ray-s-paddock/remembering-john-gaines-and-his-powerful-dream/.
[104] Paulick, "Remembering John Gaines and His Powerful Dream."

Thoroughbreds of all different ages and sexes. Described as a racing's version of soccer's World Cup, the Breeders' Cup is where "the best of the best from every division are on hand in one place to show their stuff."[105] In recent years, the purse has topped 30 million dollars.[106] The event has garnered its own cultural aura, with official celebrity ambassadors attending, particularly when the Cup is held at Santa Anita Downs, outside of Los Angeles. The event has even spawned its own official cocktails: the "Torrie Cup" and "The Garland" which contain "subtle nods to iconic elements of the Breeders' Cup races," and of course, corporate sponsors' brands of alcohol.[107]

Gaines conceived of the idea out of a desire to improve the sport's reputation and profile and bring a new level of international attention and prestige to racing. He presented his idea at a pre-Derby luncheon in 1982 and though the need for cooperation among many different organizations and stakeholders was contentious and challenging, "with the founding of the Breeders' Cup, Gaines, quite simply, changed racing forever."[108] His ideas for both the Kentucky Horse Park, and the Breeders' Cup, cemented his reputation as a "bold, outside-the-box visionary with a mind that worked on the grandest of scales."[109] Though many of Gaines' achievements may seem focused directly on the sport of racing itself, it is important to note that racing and tourism are inextricably linked. Horse racing, more than any other sport, is reliant on spectators and the cultural rituals of attending the

[105] Amanda Duckworth, "Oh, Breeders' Cup," ESPN.com, October 30, 2013, https://www.espn.com/horse-racing/story/_/id/9902828/oh-breeders-cup-world-championships.
[106] "No Fans At This Year's Breeders' Cup; Purse Increases Postponed Until 2021; Keeneland To Host Again In 2022," Paulick Report, September 12, 2020, https://www.paulickreport.com/news/breeders-cup/no-fans-at-this-years-breeders-cup-purse-increases-postponed-until-2021-keeneland-to-host-again-in-2022/.
[107] "Official Cocktails of the Breeders' Cup," Breeders' Cup, accessed February 21, 2021, https://www.breederscup.com/cocktails.
[108] Eisenberg, "Father of the Cup," 45.
[109] Eisenberg, 45.

race to give the sport meaning. Therefore, any boosting of horse racing as a sport is done so with spectators and the tourism they bring to the area in mind. Gaines' founding of the Breeders' Cup, then, is not only about horse racing as a sport, but also about horse racing as an attraction.

Returning to 1968, when Gaines called up Host and proposed this idea for the Kentucky Horse Park, it is unlikely either of them knew the heights to which their literal back of the envelope sketches would grow. In fact, the two originally disagreed – Gaines wanted it to be a *Thoroughbred* horse park, initially threatening to pull his involvement if Host broadened the scope to include all horse breeds.[110] Host eventually convinced Gaines to go along with his version of the park, and the two "divided responsibilities to get the political backing [they] would need to fund the project." Host knew he had to talk to Nunn and get his approval "or else the project would die."[111]

Host chose his moment carefully. One day, he and Nunn flew to Michigan, where Nunn gave a speech on behalf of Gerald Ford, then the Representative for Michigan's 5th district. Afterwards, on their flight back to Kentucky, after Nunn "had consumed a couple bourbons," Host pitched him the idea of the Kentucky Horse Park and a rough outline of the steps needed to accomplish it. Nunn had only one question: how much it would cost. When Host replied with an estimate of $30-40 million, "without any hesitation [Nunn] said, 'Go for it.'"[112] What happened next was a coordinated whirlwind. Gaines called the Kentucky House Speaker (and future governor) Julian Carroll and got his approval, and then Gaines and Host convinced State Representative William "Boom Boom" Kenton.

[110] Host and Moyen, *Changing the Game*, 55.
[111] Host and Moyen, 55.
[112] Host and Moyen, 57.

Gaines and Host "had no problem winning [Kenton] over," since the park would be in Fayette County, where his district was.[113] In March 1970, Kenton took House Bill 92 to the legislative session, and it passed, which appropriated funds, established a planning committee, and authorized the purchase of the land. The text of the bill reads, in part:

> There may be a state park at a site to be selected by the Commissioner of Parks in Fayette County, Kentucky, which shall be known as Thoroughbred State park. It shall be developed for recreational and educational purposes, in commemoration of the influence of the thoroughbred horse industry on the history and traditions of the Commonwealth. It shall include restaurant facilities for visitors and a museum of the thoroughbred industry.[114]

"The stars were aligning," recalls Host.[115] It certainly seems that this two-year-long process, from Host and Gaines' idea, to the passing of HB 92, was extraordinarily smooth, particularly compared to other moments in Nunn's career that Host describes as becoming contentious or even outright hostile between the parties involved. For example, when Nunn realized it was a financial necessity to raise the state sales tax from $0.03 to $0.05 per dollar, he agonized over the decision. Nunn was right to hesitate, as he correctly predicted that it would be a dent in his legacy and cost him a second term. A staunch fiscal conservative and Republican, Nunn hated the idea of appearing to plump up the state's coffers or subsequently spending it frivolously in the eyes of voters. Once he finally did

[113] Host and Moyen, 58.
[114] "House Bill 92" (1970).
[115] Host and Moyen, *Changing the Game*, 56.

decide to go through with the tax hike, the ensuing struggle for support entailed pressuring and all but threatening stakeholders into agreeing with it.

It is with this context one most consider Nunn's immediate approval of the Kentucky Horse Park, a $30 to $40 million dollar project. Why would he be so eager to greenlight this enormously expensive project without blinking an eye? It is possible that Host is glossing over the reality of the process, and that it was much more arduous than he makes it sound in his simple, plain way of speaking and writing. Perhaps, as he grew older, the petty difficulties of the process faded from his memory and no longer seemed worth repeating in his memoir. Maybe Host is intentionally omitting interpersonal squabbles or government inertia to protect his image and that of the Nunn administration. While these possibilities could all be true, no other oral histories, or contemporary newspapers, or legislative histories, or any other sources about the early days of the Kentucky Horse Park's conception hint at any difficulty or strife. Unless these other sources are also smoothing over the narrative, or deliberately omitting hardship, there seems to be an explanation for Nunn's eagerness and departure from his existing fiscal record.

"Several bourbons" aside, perhaps Nunn instantly approved of the project because it fit well into his agenda as governor and thus, his broader vision for Kentucky. When Host proposed a tourist attraction that would promote a grandiose representation of Kentucky, through exalting the horse industry, Nunn immediately loved it. Nunn had a very specific idea of what Kentucky should be: white, Protestant, conservative, and traditional. To Nunn, the horse park aligned well with this vision, because it modeled a Kentucky that was as it should be – one where great champions roamed, where white visitors from around the country admired Kentucky's achievements and status, and where

rich equestrians came to spend their money. Even after Nunn's term had concluded, his successors enthusiastically continued work on the project they had inherited.[116] The Horse Park upheld a status quo that men like Nunn, Host, Gaines, and others benefited from. In essence, the park perpetuates, upholds, reinforces, and represents the ideas about how the way the world should be that these men believed in.

To more fully understand the motivations behind what Gaines, Host, and Nunn, were doing, one must look back on a time in Kentucky's history when its status as the center of the horse universe was not a given. According to Maryjean Wall, turf writer and historian, after the Civil War, Kentucky lost its grip on horse racing. Northeastern money shifted the locus of power there and away from Kentucky, and the "new men of the turf" undertook their own breeding programs "far removed from traditional horse country."[117] Horse business aside, at the turn of the century, all Americans, Kentuckian or otherwise, felt "beleaguered" and "longed for a more wholesome and orderly lifestyle that they believed might have existed in the past." The post-bellum Industrial Revolution had wrought unwelcome change as machines replaced craftsmen, corporations subsumed small businesses, and because American wealth was increasingly concentrated in the hands of the few. However, "not even the very rich could escape the rising angst of the times," and the remaining elite horsemen in Kentucky were no different.[118]

"Small wonder, then," continues Wall, "that the upper class as well as the middle class found an escape in…an imagined antebellum Southern lifestyle," one that combined

[116] John Alexander, "World's Best Park Pledged By Carroll," *Lexington Leader*, April 30, 1975, Lexington Public Library.
[117] Maryjean Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern: A Tale of Outlaws, Horse Thieves, Gamblers, and Breeders* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 2.
[118] Wall, 6.

romance with social order, and gentility with racial hierarchy. The popular image of the Bluegrass region of Kentucky became synonymous with this idealized South, thanks to writers and artists whose work promoted Kentucky in this way.[119] The re-imagining of Kentucky worked, and proof of this success can be seen in the renewed interest of wealthy Northeasterners and their rush to return to Kentucky and transfer their nascent empires to horse farms in the Bluegrass. In the 1890s and early 1900s, a number of foundational turfmen came to the Bluegrass, including stockbroker James Keene (the namesake of Keeneland) who owned Castleton Farm, and James Ben Ali Haggin, a mining tycoon, who bought Elmendorf Farm. The Walnut Hall Farm, which later became the land purchased for the Kentucky Horse Park itself, was founded in 1892 by Standard Oil heir Lamon Harkness, after making a visit there. Lured by nostalgia for an imagined past, wealthy horsemen shaped Kentucky in their own image. For these men, the horses were more significant than "one of many means to show off their wealth." To be a turfman, it was not enough to be simply wealthy. Control and influence over horses symbolized one's status as "a gentleman worthy of respect in the most select circles for savvy and judgment, grace and style…It was to be marked with the right to rule."[120] For the owners who, in 1968, saw their barns and investments burn down, the loss was more than the individual horses who perished and the fees and prizes they would have brought in. To these owners, closing their doors to tourists meant the permanent loss of opportunities to communicate their status as men who mattered in the world they had made for themselves.

[119] Wall, 6.
[120] Katherine Mooney, *Race Horse Men: How Slavery and Freedom Were Made at the Racetrack* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 5.

Generations later, in the 1960s, the horse industry in Kentucky was doing well. Tourism was booming, and the owners of major farms in the Bluegrass enjoyed great financial and reputational success. However, the world around them was in turmoil. The impact of youth movements, the Civil Rights struggle, and Vietnam were all felt and observed very clearly in central Kentucky. The struggle for Civil Rights throughout Kentucky was in particular subject to conflicting views among whites. There was an inherent contradiction in whites' seeing the agitation as irritating and threatening while also insisting that great progress had been made with their help. Historian George C. Wright assesses the situation of Black Kentuckians and finds that, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, little changed despite changes to the law and white ideas of perceived progress. In volume two of *A History of Blacks in Kentucky,* Wright notes that white Kentuckians were very eager to point to tiny bits of progress, interpret it as evidence that positive changes were occurring, and then congratulate themselves for finishing the problem of civil rights.[121] As Wright explains, "for many [white] Kentuckians, any change in race relations assured them that conditions had improved dramatically for blacks. Not surprisingly, most whites remained largely unresponsive to black demands for total equality of opportunity in all aspects of society."[122] For example, in the 1950s, whites "cited Louisville as a 'progressive' city where numerous changes in race relations were occurring."[123] Yes, changes were occurring – public libraries, parks, pools, and bus terminals were desegregated. Yet, meaningful, sustainable, transformative change was still a long way away.

[121] George C Wright, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: In Pursuit of Equality, 1890-1980* (Kentucky Historical Society, 2017), chap. 5.
[122] George C Wright, 197.
[123] George C Wright, 195.

The Lexington chapters of the NAACP and CORE are credited with the majority of civil rights work in central Kentucky. Over the course of the 1960s, public elementary and high schools were integrated, with full integration occurring in the 1970s. Governor Combs, whose term lasted from 1959 to 1963, had "consistently expressed sympathy for the goals of the civil rights movement," yet these mere verbal affirmations were not enough.[124] Under pressure from Black Kentuckians to live up to his expressions of support, Combs circumvented the Kentucky general assembly, and issued an executive order ending racial discrimination in all public establishments throughout the Commonwealth – the same order Nunn, during his failed 1963 bid for governor, had promised to overturn.

As mentioned previously, while these changes did represent progress, things did not suddenly change for Black residents of the Bluegrass. During a lunch counter sit-in, activist Audrey Louise Grievous was hit repeatedly with a chain as she remained in her seat.[125] In 1961, activists focused on Lexington movie theatres. The Kentucky, Ben Ali, and Strand Theatres were all segregated, forcing Black movie-goers to use separate entrances and sit in specific balconies. After months of CORE members' stand-ins, arrests, and protesting, the theatres relented and fully integrated their operations. Still, violence continued, and in 1968, the Ku Klux Klan bombed a Black-owned pharmacy in Lexington.[126] The pharmacy's owner, Dr. Zirl A. Palmer, was a prominent community member and was active with the local NAACP, the Chamber of Commerce, and Planned

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[124] George C Wright, 219.

[125] Audrey Louise Grevious, interview by Arthur Graham, February 19, 1985, sec. 00:50:00, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt77h41jkx52; Brandon Render, "The Lexington, Kentucky Civil Rights Movement" (MA Thesis, Richmond, Kentucky, Eastern Kentucky University, 2015), 57, Online Theses and Dissertations, https://encompass.eku.edu/etd/309.

[126] Zirl A. Palmer, interview by Edward Owens, August 17, 1978, Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/ark:/16417/xt7vt43j136n.

Parenthood.[127] This event is symbolic of the very real racism and violence happening in Lexington at the time.

More sustained violence occurred in Louisville. In 1967, Louisville was the site of widespread protests against housing discrimination. The culmination of these protests was an incident at Churchill Downs during one of the races leading up to the Derby where five young Black men ran onto the track amongst the horses and disrupted the race. The presence of, and disruption caused by, Black protestors was particularly impactful given that by 1967, the Kentucky Derby and Churchill Downs had achieved iconic status as a romantic celebration of Old Kentucky and the Old South. The reputation of both event and place had been marketed and exploited for mass appeal, as a "slice of Americana" beginning in the 1950s.[128] The Derby was catapulted to national attention by aggressive marketing via the new medium of television, helmed by "Colonel" Matt Winn, the Derby's most dedicated promoter.[129] Thanks to Winn's efforts, the Derby rose to a symbol of national pride amidst the context of the Cold War.

Now that Churchill Downs and the Derby were established in the collective American psyche as quintessentially American (that is, white) and an example of Old South nostalgia, it was especially fertile ground for making a statement. The status of the Kentucky Derby and Churchill Downs as symbols of white nostalgia is exemplified by the importance of the song "My Old Kentucky Home" to the event. The song was completed by Stephen Foster in 1852 and was originally a minstrel song. As historian Emily Bingham

[127] "Dr. Zirl Palmer and Preserving Palmer Pharmacy," The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation, 2018, https://www.bluegrasstrust.org/dr-zirl-palmer-and-preserving-palmer-place.
[128] James Nicholson, "More than Just a Horse Race: A Cultural History of the Kentucky Derby" (Lexington, Kentucky, University of Kentucky, 2010), 132–41, http://search.proquest.com/docview/862877894/?pq-origsite=primo.
[129] The 1952 Kentucky Derby was the first to be televised and the audience was estimated at between 10 and 15 million viewers. The next year's Derby reached a television audience of 20 million.

notes, its intensifying "sentimental power and political usefulness" from 1900-1920 was intertwined with the nostalgic fantasies identifying Kentucky as part of the Old South.[130] By 1928, the song was adopted as the official state song, and it became an informal tradition at the Derby around the same time and an official one by 1936.[131] The playing of the song before the start of the race, as the horses walk to the starting gate, "reminded spectators that they were witnesses to something special."[132] In the mid 1920s, the Old Kentucky Home site, located in Bardstown, became a tourist destination in its own right, positioned among the constellation of Mammoth Cave, the Abraham Lincoln Birthplace, and the Jefferson Davis monument.[133] With the help of the "My Old Kentucky Home" tradition, the Derby "transcended the realm of horse racing and the world of sport to become a part of the cultural fabric of the United States."[134]

With this history in mind, protestors chose Churchill Downs not in spite of its "celebration of vestiges of the Old South" but *because of it*.[135] Beginning in even the early 1960s, white youth transformed the infield from an unstuffy, yet mostly innocent picnic atmosphere into an environment of "contained debauchery."[136] Young white people saw the Derby as a chance "to participate in unbridled revelry and to thumb their collective nose at…the status quo situated across the racetrack in the grandstand."[137] By 1970, the Derby had become less about horses, and more about the debauchery in which its attendees

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[130] Emily Bingham, "'Let's Buy It!': Tourism and the My Old Kentucky Home Campaign in Jim Crow Kentucky," *Ohio Valley History* 19, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 27.
[131] "History & Tradition: My Old Kentucky Home," accessed April 5, 2021, https://www.kentuckyderby.com/history/traditions/my-old-kentucky-home.
[132] Nicholson, "More than Just a Horse Race," 65.
[133] Bingham, "'Let's Buy It!': Tourism and the My Old Kentucky Home Campaign in Jim Crow Kentucky," 47.
[134] Nicholson, "More than Just a Horse Race," 80.
[135] Nicholson, 145.
[136] Nicholson, 145.
[137] Nicholson, 148.

reveled, as chronicled by Hunter S. Thompson in his infamous article, "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved."

Returning to 1967, the stage was set for something to happen at the Derby. Tensions in Louisville had been brewing leading up to that year's Derby due to the de facto redlining and otherwise discriminatory housing situation in the city. Though the struggle against housing segregation in Louisville, and the rest of Kentucky, began in 1914, residential segregation accelerated, particularly in the West End, due to white flight after Louisville adopted its open accommodations ordinance in May 1963.[138] The legal desegregation of public places stoked white reactionary fears about integration.[139] After the failure to pass any meaningful legislation guaranteeing equal access to housing, the NAACP, Kentucky Christian Leadership Conference (KCLC) and West End Community Coalition (WECC) proposed an ordinance in September 1966.[140] However, by early 1967, it became clear it would meet opposition from municipal leadership.[141] Organizers launched the first major demonstrations, kicking off near-daily marches and rallies beginning in March, which often became violent and dangerous for protestors. In April 1967, the Board of Aldermen rejected the proposed ordinance, sparking even more intense protests and harsher white reaction. According to a woman present at one demonstration, the Ku Klux Klan made its presence known at Iroquois Park, four miles south of Churchill Downs.

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[138] Catherine Fosl et al., *Freedom on the Border: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 126.
[139] Tracy K'Meyer and Valerie Salley, "Opening the Door: 40 Years of Open Housing" (Louisville, Kentucky: Metropolitan Housing Coalition, April 19, 2006), 1.
[140] For more on Louisville and the urban housing struggle, see: Luther Adams, *Way Up North in Louisville: African American Migration in the Urban South, 1930-1970* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
[141] K'Meyer and Salley, 2.

Finally, a few days before the Derby, after the five young Black protestors ran out onto the track, tensions reached a breaking point. Due to the increased National Guard presence and the fact that the Klan publicly suggested to the mayor that they show up fully dressed in their robes and hoods to assist the police, protests that would have occurred on Derby day itself were called off. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had arrived in Louisville to support these efforts, announced on the day of the Derby that there would be no protests as an act of good faith. Activists refocused their attention on their message and aims, and pivoted to registering Black voters. Newly registered voters defeated the incumbent Republican Board of Aldermen members the following November and replaced them with a new Democratic board which favored the housing ordinance and it passed on December 13, 1967. Though the work in Louisville and throughout Kentucky was far from over, this represented a major achievement in the civil rights struggle.

Even after 1967, the specter of Derby unrest loomed large over subsequent years' races. In the aforementioned article "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent and Depraved," Thompson recounts landing in Louisville ahead of the 1970 Derby. He immediately hits the airport bar, where he drinks with a stranger. The man asks Thompson why he came to the Derby, and the two have the following exchange:

> "There's going to be trouble," I said. "My assignment is to take pictures of the riot."
>
> "What riot?"
>
> I hesitated, twirling the ice in my drink. "At the track. On Derby Day. The Black Panthers." I stared at him again. "Don't you read the newspapers?"
>
> The grin on his face had collapsed. "What the hell are you talkin about?"
>
> "Well … maybe I shouldn't be telling you … " I shrugged. "But hell, everybody seems to know. The cops and the National Guard have been

> getting ready for six weeks. They have 20,000 troops on alert at Fort Knox. They warned us — all the press and photographers — to wear helmets and special vests like flak jackets. We were told to expect shooting … "
>
> "No!" he shouted; his hands flew up and hovered momentarily between us, as if to ward off the words he was hearing. Then he hacked his fist on the bar. "Those sons of bitches! God Almighty! The Kentucky Derby!" He kept shaking his head. "No! Jesus! That's almost too bad to believe!" Now he seemed to be jagging on the stool, and when he looked up his eyes were misty. "Why? Why here? Don't they respect anything?"[142]

According to Nunn and other Kentucky Republicans and cultural conservatives, the answer would be no. Young people, Black or white, did not respect these cultural institutions – the Derby, segregation, and the untouchability of both – and instead sought to dismantle them and the racist power structures undergirding them. It was against this backdrop of turmoil that the Kentucky Horse Park was constructed – both literally at the site of the former Walnut Hall Stud Farm and within the minds of the men who imagined it.

As competing visions of the Kentucky Derby played out in dramatic, violent fashion, it seemed that the very soul of Kentucky – and horse racing's centrality to it – was in danger. While it may seem tone deaf for Nunn and his contemporaries to create the Kentucky Horse Park amidst all this, instead, the park can be seen as a direct response. The Kentucky Horse Park should be read as an attempt to resist what was happening at the Derby, throughout the rest of Kentucky, and the United States, and as a defiant reinforcement of white supremacy amid racial upheaval. This can be seen in the park's most prominent attraction: the joint monument and gravesite of Isaac Murphy and Man o' War.

[142] Hunter S. Thompson, "The Kentucky Derby Is Decadent and Depraved," *Scanlan's Monthly*, June 1970, http://grantland.com/features/looking-back-hunter-s-thompson-classic-story-kentucky-derby/.

CHAPTER 2: ISAAC MURPHY, MAN O' WAR, AND THEIR LIFE AFTER DEATH

It was no ordinary funeral at the Kentucky Horse Park on September 21, 1976. There were two caskets, but no mourners, and no ceremony. Workers moved quickly to inter the two caskets – one enormous, and one quite small. They moved so quickly, in fact, that a piece of tailbone was nearly left behind. The two caskets belonged to two prominent figures in the Thoroughbred horse racing world. The bigger casket held Man o' War, the champion chestnut Thoroughbred known as "the mostest horse who ever lived."[143] Isaac Murphy, the famous Black jockey who won three Kentucky Derbys, and became one of the most successful jockeys of all time, occupied the other. No one at the funeral that day questioned why these two bodies were paired together, yet, their pairing was not immediately obvious, either. Murphy never rode Man o' War, nor did he race against him. The two were not even alive at the same time. Murphy died at the age of 36 in 1896; Man o' War was foaled two decades later in 1917. If the two shared no connections in life, then why do they share a final resting place? How did this pairing come about? And, what significance does it hold, both in the context of its time, and today?

Claiming Man o' War and Isaac Murphy as part of the Kentucky Horse Park's attractions did much to boost the Park's profile. But, this was not the first time that Man o' War and Murphy's bodies were made public spectacles. Their funeral was just the most recent example in a century-long saga that turned on issues of race, collective memory, and the role of public monuments in preserving and expressing both.[144] By examining how and

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[143] As explained in the previous chapter, Man o' War's nickname "the mostest horse (sometimes written 'hoss') that ever was" was invented by his lifelong groom, Will Harbut. For more on Harbut and Man o' War's nickname consult Maryjean Wall, "The Mostest Hoss That Ever Was," *Spur*, October 1997, International Museum of the Horse Collections.

[144] The works that have most shaped my thinking on race and memory are: David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past : A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, Mass:

why Murphy and Man o' War came to share a grave, one can better understand the tokenism and racism to which Murphy was subjected. One can see plainly the privileging of horses over the people who rode them and cared for them. And, ultimately, one can see an example of just how Black bodies have been commodified and exploited throughout history. Much ink has been spilled about Man o' War and Isaac Murphy individually, yet, their unlikely convergence in time and space has not yet been the subject of scholarly inquiry.[145] In addition, while Man o' War and Isaac Murphy's lifetimes have been studied in great detail, the significance they have taken on after their deaths – and because of their deaths – has not.[146]

"Isaac Murphy is the prince of jockeys."[147] So proclaimed the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* after his dramatic, yet characteristic win aboard the horse Salvator in the 1890 Champion Stakes in Sheepshead Bay, New York. Born in 1861 to an enslaved mother in Lexington, Kentucky, Isaac Burns Murphy never expected his career as a jockey to attain such unparalleled success. He won the Kentucky Derby three times: in 1884, 1890, and 1891.

Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 1995; Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, First Paperback Edition (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).
The works that have applied these frameworks of race and memory in specific areas of history that have also heavily influenced me are: Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*, 1st edition (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Anne E. Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State*, Illustrated edition (University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Reiko Hillyer, *Designing Dixie: Tourism, Memory, and Urban Space in the New South* (Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2014), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kentucky-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3444186; Winthrop D. Jordan, *Tumult And Silence At Second Creek: An Inquiry into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy*, 2nd edition (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1996).

[145] Mooney, *Race Horse Men*; Pellom McDaniels III, *The Prince of Jockeys: The Life of Isaac Burns Murphy* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2013); Dorothy Ours, *Man o' War: A Legend Like Lightning* (Griffin, 2007); Ann S Reilly, *Man O' War and Will Harbut: The Greatest Story in Thoroughbred Racing History* (United States: Independent Publishers, 2017).

[146] Zeh, *Etched in Stone*.

[147] "Poor Tenny," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, August 13, 1890.

These Derby wins accompanied victories in many other significant races during this golden age of Thoroughbred racing in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[148]

With an unparalleled win percentage of 44 percent, Murphy rightfully deserved his place at the top of all jockeys during his lifetime and through the present day. At the height of his career, he was highly sought after and was compensated accordingly. He was paid more than $20,000 annually, making him the highest paid athlete in the United States.[149] He was simply unmatched in his riding skill and his racing strategy, which granted him status as an icon within the Thoroughbred racing world. Yet, it was not only Murphy's athletic achievements that granted him attention in both the sports world and American culture.

Murphy's identity created a complex position for him in Kentucky's culture and society. First, he was idealized by white horsemen as a token, obedient exception from his race. Later in his career, he would be castigated as proof of Black inferiority. Thoroughbred racing was a sport that belonged to the upper echelon of wealthy whites. As previously discussed, breeders and owners were influential men whose success in racing and breeding reinforced their status, masculinity, and power. As historian Katherine Mooney writes, the racetrack was, in some respects, "a stage on which white men acted out the world they wanted to make."[150] Yet, this stage was reliant on the skill and unique knowledge of specialized workers, most of whom were Black. Reliance on Black talent – jockeys and trainers, specifically – created an uncomfortable reality for

[148] As a comparison, Eddie Arcaro, whose career spanned the 1930s-1960s, won the Kentucky Derby five times and the Triple Crown twice. Arcaro's win percentage is 19.8 percent. For more on Arcaro's life and career, see his entry on the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame site: "G. Edward Arcaro," National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame, 2011.
[149] Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 110.
[150] Mooney, *Race Horse Men*, 6.

wealthy whites. Skilled Black horsemen like Murphy, or the enslaved generation preceding him, navigated precarious territory.[151] Their accomplishments and talent "brought recognition to Kentucky's horse business," which in turn "boosted the fragmented reputation of Kentucky as the cradle of the racehorse," according to Wall.[152]

Murphy's career coincided with formalization and entrenchment of Jim Crow. Black residents of Lexington who were not jockeys and trainers experienced a very different reality than their exceptional counterparts. White Kentuckians were outraged at the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, to a violent degree. At the first post-Amendment election in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, a riot occurred, killing both Black and white Kentuckians.[153] A year later, in 1871, prominent horseman John Harper authorized a mock lynching at his Nantura Stud Farm, demonstrating that these violent racist tendencies filtered into the horse racing world, too.[154] The Jim Crow era assumed particular virulence in Kentucky, and Murphy and other Black horsemen were not immune to its impact.

Murphy in particular was subject to conflicting interpretations of his success, and his prominence meant he was a flashpoint for these racial tensions. On the one hand, he had established himself as a respectable figure that whites could comfortably approve of. Isaac and Lucy Murphy's tenth wedding anniversary in 1893 is an example of how Murphy was praised and viewed through the lens of respectability. The press covered the event approvingly, as evidence of their morality and refinement.[155] Lucy Murphy was and

[151] Mooney, 9.
[152] Wall, 9.
[153] Aaron Astor, "No Gun, No Vote: Violence and the Fifteenth Amendment in Kentucky" (Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting, Louisville, Kentucky, 2009).
[154] Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 118.
[155] "Won Fame as a Jockey: And He Showers Hospitality on His Friends," *Kentucky Leader*, January 31, 1893.

is oft-mentioned in accounts of Isaac's life as both the genuine love of his life but also with an implied approval of Murphy's upstanding character and his supposedly unusual dignity compared to other African Americans. The Murphys were not unique in this way; other successful Black horsemen in Lexington hosted and attended each other's "lavish" weddings which were also extensively covered in both white and Black press outlets.[156] The conspicuous attention paid to weddings is no coincidence. As the historian Kevin Gaines writes, "Under Jim Crow's reign of terror…African Americans struggled in a variety of ways to define themselves, maintain self-respect, and insulate themselves…against this systemic brutality." Gaines explains that, to do so, African Americans reinforced this status in a manner "often articulated in terms of gender conventions."[157] Legal, Christian marriage solidified the masculinity of Black men, whose "preoccupation with manhood" arose out of a response to racism, discrimination, and powerlessness they experienced.[158] Isaac and Lucy Murphy's marriage, in its longevity and social significance, signaled to the world that Murphy was respectable and should therefore be insulated from the worst of the Jim Crow system.

Public approval of Murphy consisted of a paradox. Murphy was praised as being similar to a white man. "He was black of skin, but his heart was white as snow," read one breathless profile.[159] Others took great care to describe his light brown skin, his refined features, and his calm, reserved demeanor, going so far as to call him an "elegant specimen of manhood."[160] More significantly, Murphy's most prized trait was his honesty and

[156] Katherine Mooney, *Race Horse Men: How Slavery and Freedom Were Made at the Racetrack* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 200.
[157] Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 116.
[158] Gaines, 117.
[159] John H. Davis, *The American Turf* (New York, NY: John Polhemus Printing Company, 1907), 102–3.
[160] McDaniels III, *The Prince of Jockeys*, 412.

integrity. While it is certainly true that many jockeys, Black and white, succumbed to the temptation of bribes, Murphy's much-dwelt upon honesty speaks more to expectations and assumptions of Black loyalty and deference to elite turfmen.[161]

Yet, public opinion could turn on a dime. The press leapt at the chance to discredit him at the first opportunity, and Murphy was not alone in experiencing this sudden turn. Many of his contemporaries experienced similarly subtle, yet ruinous attempts to discredit them and ultimately bar them from the profession. In 1890, just days after Murphy won the Champion Stakes aboard Salvator, when he had been described as the "prince of jockeys," he suffered a dramatic last place finish aboard the horse Firenzi. He slumped in the saddle, eased the horse to the finish line, and stumbled off the track. Rumors abounded that he was drunk, or had been poisoned, and Murphy's detractors were quick to decry him as an alcoholic who had always been drunk in the saddle.[162] The most likely explanation for the disastrous showing was a combination of exhaustion, malnutrition, and heart problems due to the unhealthy weight loss regimen Murphy used in order to maintain his low weight.[163] Newspapers did print this alternative explanation, but these articles were outnumbered by outlets eager to report on the star's embarrassment.

The white public relished Murphy's fall from grace as proof of poor individual character and proof that, as a whole, Black jockeys did not deserve to stay in the spotlight. Murphy's acclaim and wealth had threatened the status quo, and this failure brought him back down to earth. By 1893, he was encouraged to retire from his career as a jockey and become a trainer instead. Three years later, in February of 1896, Murphy passed away from

[161] Mooney, *Race Horse Men*, 204.
[162] "Isaac Murphy's Mistake," *Daily Leader*, August 29, 1890.
[163] Mooney, *Race Horse Men*, 209.

pneumonia and heart failure at the young age of 34. He was buried according to the Masonic customs of his fraternal order in African Cemetery No. 2.[164]

In 1902, Jimmy Winkfield would be the very last Black jockey to win the Kentucky Derby. Winkfield's win marks the end of an era in which Black horsemen were central to the sport's success. After Murphy's death, and Winkfield's win, their contributions and that of their fellow Black horsemen evaporated from white public memory.[165] Murphy was forgotten about in many collective memories, and memory of him remained fragmented for over fifty years. Yet, even during Murphy's lifetime, he was the object of projected attitudes about race and power. Though Murphy was not a token in a typical sense – there were plenty of other Black jockeys during his career – he was held up as an unrealistic paragon of perfection and honesty. Therefore, his athletic achievements were ultimately second to how the press, wealthy turfmen, and racing fans wanted to perceive him.

In 1955, Isaac Murphy reentered the national consciousness. Decades after his death, Murphy would now regain his larger-than-life reputation as the greatest jockey of all time – a prince, after all. Conveniently, retrospective memory of him glossed over or permanently omitted the harsh treatment he received in the wake of the Firenzi debacle. In September of that year, the four year old National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame, located in Saratoga Springs, New York, inducted its first class of honorees. Murphy was among the twelve inductees – and the only Black man represented.[166] To date, Murphy is one of only four Black jockeys in the Hall of Fame.[167] An article about the event in the

[164] "Noted Jockeys to Act as Pall Bearers At Isaac Murphy's Funeral," *Lexington Leader*, February 14, 1896.
[165] Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 113.
[166] Associated Press, "Isaac Murphy Enters Racing Hall of Fame," *New York Age*, September 3, 1955, Newspapers.com.
[167] The others are Anthony Hamilton, Shelby Pike Barnes, and Jimmy Winkfield.

New York Age noted that Murphy was a symbol of a better, more "democratic" time, compared to the present day, where "Negroes serve only as grooms and exercise boys."[168] Just as Isaac Murphy had been erased and forgotten from public memory after his death, so too was the ugly reality of Jim Crow. The fact that Black horsemen worked as jockeys and trainers, and not just grooms and exercise boys as in 1955, was not evidence of racial harmony. This willful misconstruction by the *New York Age* demonstrates the degree to which memory of Murphy's career and this period in history was warped by nostalgia.

Just a few months earlier, in June, is when Murphy's grave first became the subject of national attention. An article appeared in the *Daily Racing Form*, a widespread racing newspaper, proclaiming that Murphy's grave had been discovered in Mobile, Alabama, on the property of Willie Cottrill.[169] Cottrill had owned the horse Buchanan, which Murphy had ridden to victory in the 1884 Kentucky Derby. On account of the "warm feeling" that had developed between owner and jockey, Cottrill supposedly had Murphy's body shipped to Mobile so he could be buried with the family. As with many of its human interest pieces, the *Form* is scant on sources and attribution, so it is uncertain where exactly this information originated.

Days later, the *Daily Racing Form* issued a sheepish apology for falling "victim to a bit of apparent folklore." Murphy had not been buried in Alabama. He had received a lavish funeral in Lexington, and is buried in his home city, insisted angry "old timers" in letters to the *Form*.[170] The identity of these "old timers" is also not provided. We can only

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[168] Associated Press, "Isaac Murphy Enters Racing Hall of Fame."
[169] Joe Thomas, "Mad Delight, 25 Years Old Has Yearling Colt in Sales; Youngster Is by on Trust; Jockey Isaac Murphy Buried Alongside Owner Cottrill," *Daily Racing Form*, June 27, 1955, The Daily Racing Form Archive, University of Kentucky Libraries.
[170] Joe Thomas, "Kentucky: Steeplechaser Ancestor in $100,000 Class Dam, Bloodroot, Has Three in Select Group Lexingtonians Tell of Isaac Murphys Burial," *Daily Racing Form*, June 30, 1955, The Daily Racing Form Archive, University of Kentucky Libraries.

speculate that they are older racing fans who may have been young children at the time of Murphy's death, or who had received this information passed down from older relatives.

Though it was apparently widely known that Murphy was buried in Lexington, the exact location of his grave remained unknown. The quest to find Murphy's grave involved a man named Frank Borries, Jr. Borries worked as an Extension Specialist of Press Information for the Agricultural Extension Service at the University of Kentucky. He was a local history buff, and his genuine love of history led him to pursue a master's degree in History from the University of Kentucky, which he completed in 1960. Borries recalled that his grandmother was at the very first Derby in 1875 which partially explained his interest in horse racing's history.[171] His wife Betty assisted with his Murphy research, and, after his sudden death in 1968, assembled it and published it as a book.[172]

Frank Borries became close friends with Keeneland's head librarian, Amelia Buckley. Buckley had become the first full-time head of the Keeneland Library in 1954.[173] Buckley and Borries collaborated extensively on the Isaac Murphy project and, from reading several years' worth of their correspondence, each served as a resource for the other. Buckley provided Borries with research and access to Keeneland's materials, and Borries was the man on the ground who was willing to go out and talk to people. In a letter to Borries, Buckley described that she has been interested in the topic of Isaac Murphy's grave since 1955.[174] The exact chronology is unclear. Was she already interested in Murphy's grave before his induction into the National Racing Hall of Fame in 1955? Or,

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[171] Frank Borries, "Frank Borries to Amelia Buckley," March 12, 1961, Keeneland Library.
[172] "Betty Isabel Earle Borries," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, May 26, 2006, sec. Obituaries, https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/kentucky/obituary.aspx?n=betty-isabel-earle-borries&pid=17887435.
[173] Amelia King Buckley, *The Keeneland Association Library: A Guide to the Collection* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1958), https://uknowledge.uky.edu/upk_library_science/1.
[174] Amelia King Buckley, "Amelia Buckley to Millard Cox," March 8, 1962, Keeneland Library.

did the publicity surrounding the event pique her curiosity? In any case, she worked closely with Borries, providing him with archival research material that spurred him onward in his quest.

After two years of false leads, Borries finally got in touch with Eugene Webster, a Black resident of Lexington's East End who knew the location of Murphy's grave. They met up on March 12, 1961 and Webster took him to Murphy's grave. At the time of his burial in 1896, a wooden marker had been placed at the site, but over the years, it rotted away. In 1909, a homemade concrete marker was placed by some Kentucky Association track workers in order to keep the memory of his grave alive. Webster remembered its location because, as a young boy, his father took him there several times to point it out.[175] Webster led Borries to the spot, still signified by the homemade marker over 50 years later.

The concrete marker from 1909 survived Murphy's transfer, but did not accompany him to Faraway Farm. It currently resides in the Kentucky Derby Museum and has been there since 1991. According to the museum's curator of collections, the marker's accession files list Betty Borries as the donor of record, but the curator could not definitively confirm in the museum's records what happened to the marker between 1967 and 1991.[176] However, Yvonne Giles, community historian, was able to provide the answer. Giles met Borries in 2001 at an annual meeting of local historians, where she said she had kept the marker in her basement all those years before deciding to donate it to the museum for safekeeping.[177] In Frank Borries, Jr.'s efforts to honor Murphy with a

[175] Borries, "Frank Borries to Amelia Buckley," March 12, 1961.
[176] Jessica Whitehead to Emily Libecap, "RE: Research: Isaac Murphy Grave Marker," April 22, 2021.
[177] Yvonne Giles to Anastasia Curwood, "Re: Churchill Downs Champions Day April 27," April 20, 2021.

new gravesite, he nearly lost to history the original marker which had been lovingly built by members of Murphy's own community. The image of Murphy's multiple public disinterments and headstones, orchestrated by white Kentuckians, is a striking contrast to that of the original marker, built by his contemporaries but languishing forgotten in a dusty basement.

Patronizingly, Borries described Webster as "cooperative" and "very dignified" because he "never said a word about money the whole time…he didn't ask for a cent."[178] Borries, in what I imagine was an extremely awkward interaction, insisted that Webster accept five dollars for his trouble. Though a seemingly isolated and insignificant gesture, Borries' dealings with Webster symbolize Borries', and others' approach to Murphy's memory. Though governed by what they believed to be good intentions, Borries and other white Kentuckians like him ended up ignoring the intentions or preferences of Lexington's Black communities to uphold their own sense of doing right by his memory.

In addition, there is a certain irony in the fact that Murphy's grave was never really lost at all. While the Mobile, Alabama newspaper staked its incorrect claim to Murphy's grave, and while Borries and Buckley fruitlessly searched for over five years, Webster and other Black locals, in their shared collective memory, had known exactly where Murphy's grave was for 65 years. All that the white researchers would have had to do was ask.

Galvanized by their discovery – at last! – of Murphy's grave, Borries and Buckley set about brainstorming a proper monument to Murphy's memory and first decided on a marker to be placed at the African Cemetery No. 2. Borries drafted the text which read:

ISAAC MURPHY
1861-1896

[178] Borries.

> In this cemetery lies buried Isaac Burns Murphy, negro jockey. First man to ride three Kentucky Derby winners (1884, 1890, 1891), his record tied in 1930 by Earl Sande, was broken by Eddie Arcaro in 1948. Murphy's lifetime winning average was 44%. His high integrity and skillful horsemanship brought honor and acclaim to Thoroughbred racing.

Borries, after consulting with Buckley, mailed his draft along with persuasive letters to the Kentucky Historical Society and the Historical Markers Association.[179] Though he and Buckley repeatedly followed up with them, creation of the marker stalled until 1967 – six full years after discovering the grave and drafting the marker in 1961. Whether this was due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, or reluctance to build a marker to a black athlete remains unknown. In 1967, a marker was finally created, though the text changed significantly. The cemetery reference was removed, combined with text about Man o' War, and added to their new joint memorial, at the intersection of Russell Cave and Huffman Mill Roads.[180] Borries originally drafted the marker text with the intention of placing it at Murphy's original gravesite at African Cemetery No. 2. However, Murphy was disinterred from his original grave at there and reburied next to Man o' War at Faraway Farm in 1968 before he was moved for the second time in 1976. How did this move happen? How did plans for a modest, state-funded, roadside marker morph into a public spectacle? Part of the reason had to do with the white public's attitudes towards African Cemetery No. 2. Described as abandoned, unkempt, and bleakly neglected, opinion pieces and letters to the editor imply that the cemetery was beyond rescue. Though some of these authors, who were white community members, expressed vague wishes that someone would clean it up, no action was ever planned or taken towards restoring it. One *Lexington Leader* article praised the Catholic churches of Lexington for cleaning and improving two

[179] Frank Borries, "Frank Borries to Historical Markers Association," July 29, 1961, Keeneland Library.
[180] "Historical Interest," *Lexington Herald*, August 18, 1967, Keeneland Library.

Catholic cemeteries of similar age and disrepair. "The *Leader*," the author concludes pointedly, "hopes that the example provided by these two cemeteries will lead to the cleaning up and improvement of…the No. 2 Negro cemetery."[181] One letter to the editor was much less subtle. "The relevant point is the socio-economic degradation of black people that it bespeaks; the striking handicaps of a people!" The letter goes on to suggest completely leveling the land and consolidating its dead into one compact monument. The writer, one John W. Caulder, concludes, "if such a united result [is] satisfactory, then it would demonstrate the feasibility of…self-reliance!"[182] According to Caulder's logic, if Black Lexingtonians cared about their ancestors, then they would properly preserve their cemetery. Caulder, and many of his contemporaries, felt that Murphy deserved better than the "degradation" African Cemetery No. 2 had to offer.[183]

Isaac Murphy's grave and its perceived unsuitability epitomize many cultural influences and reflect a precedent that may not be readily apparent. To better understand these, one must look first to how African American experiences with death inform African American culture, and second, to the history of exhumations and reburials. The cultural historian and professor of African American Studies Karla Holloway writes in *Passed On: African American Mourning Stories* how she "explores a century's worth of experience with black death and dying to argue that African Americans' particular vulnerability to an untimely death in the United States intimately affects how black culture both represents itself and is represented."[184] She continues, explaining that Black Americans throughout

[181] "Catholic Churches of Lexington Improving Old Burial Ground," *Lexington Leader*, May 3, 1961, Keeneland Library.
[182] John W. Caulder, "John W. Caulder to Editorial Staff," *Lexington Leader*, 1961, Keeneland Library. I assume Caulder is white.
[183] In the future, I hope to search for this topic in Lexington's Black newspapers.
[184] Karla F. C. Holloway, *Passed on: African American Mourning Stories: A Memorial* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 2.

history have been uniquely "haunted" by death throughout their lives due to "the residue of riots, executions, suicides, and targeted medical neglect."[185] Her most effective and heartbreaking chapter is "Mortifications: How We Die," dedicated to the ways in which Black Americans die – lost in disproportionate numbers to suicide, sickness, murder, and lynching. "In such death," writes Holloway, "being black selected the victim into a macabre fraternity…collectively, the story of how we died shaped a tragic community narrative."[186] In all, Holloway's book illustrates quite vividly how death is both symptom and conclusion of the Black experience in America. This explains part of Isaac Murphy's story. Murphy's experience of both his early death and his postmortem life are in line with Holloway's explanation of the ways in which elements of Black life are continued in death.

Isaac Murphy is not the only public figure whose body underwent multiple moves after his death. According to cultural historian Michael Kammen in his book *Digging up the Dead: A History of Notable American Reburials*, there is a unique significance to reburials and the act of digging up and reburying important people. It is not a new practice; since the days of the Ancient Greeks, people have moved the remains of the dead. He refers to the reasons for, and implications of reburial as the "cultural politics of exhumation" and posits that reburials are mostly about pride – national pride, sectional pride, regional pride, and racial pride. The concepts of pride of place and pride of possession are important to our understanding as well. Some people are reburied for matters of pride of place; that is, the place where they are buried is what matters. Others are reburied because possessing, or

[185] Holloway, 2.
[186] Holloway, 57.

having physical control over, their body is what matters to those involved in the reburial. Isaac Murphy's case involves a little of both.[187]

In addition to the aforementioned issues of pride of possession and pride of place, the explanation for Murphy's reburial involves the influence of a tobacco businessman, a flashy publicist, and a flair for the dramatic. In 1967, a perfect storm occurred which resulted in Murphy's reburial at Man o' War Park, the dedicated corner of Faraway Farm where the horse had once stood stud. The reburial began with a savvy publicist who saw Murphy's grave not as a site of memorial, but one of opportunity.

Ted Worner was a New York-based press agent who had a knack for creating attention-grabbing publicity stunts. Over the course of his career, he had promoted the youngest girl to ever attempt swimming the English Channel, created an event out of Major League Baseball's millionth home run, and organized a celebrity bocce ball tournament for Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas.[188] However, Worner was proudest of a project he completed in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1967. Worner was tasked by its vice president, Stuart Bloch, with promoting the Kentucky Club Tobacco Company. Inspired by a recent newspaper story about Murphy, Worner formed the idea to sponsor a reburial and monument dedication at Man o' War Park. He proudly recalled that the whole affair "cost my client only seventy-five hundred dollars."[189] Bloch, formerly president of the Mail Pouch Tobacco Company in West Virginia, was no stranger to advertising gimmicks.[190] Mail Pouch Tobacco sponsored the paintings of its logo on hundreds of barns throughout

[187] Michael G. Kammen, *Digging up the Dead: A History of Notable American Reburials* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 8.
[188] E.J. Kahn, "Worner, Revisited," *New Yorker*, April 6, 1981, 32, New Yorker Archive.
[189] Kahn, 33.
[190] Charlie Kleine, "How West Virginia's Mail Pouch Changed the Face of Advertising," West Virginia Public Broadcasting, December 9, 2015, https://www.wvpublic.org/post/how-west-virginias-mail-pouch-changed-face-advertising.

Appalachia and the Midwest and, much like Burma Shave signs or Muffler Men, became ubiquitous markers of the landscape in these areas.[191] Installing a new grave for Murphy would be yet another way in which Bloch and his tobacco companies would shape the world in which they existed.

And, so, arrangements were made for Murphy's remains to be removed from the cemetery in which he had peacefully rested for seventy years. His removal occurred on April 25, 1967, and Borries took meticulous photographs of the event. When the concrete vault that had once held Murphy's casket was unearthed, it was pried open to reveal that it was empty, save for a single silver casket handle.[192]

Four years earlier, in 1963, Borries had interviewed some older Black residents of Lexington to ask them about Murphy. A woman named Mrs. Emaline Smith informed him that Murphy's grave was robbed a few years after his death, and that the "beautiful purple casket" he was buried in had been stolen. His body, supposedly, was returned to the grave in a plain coffin. "The story…grows more interesting," wrote Borries after recounting the conversation.[193] Indeed, for what truly happened to Murphy's body? One theory involves the medical school at Transylvania University. In the nineteenth century, medical schools procured bodies for anatomy dissections in a variety of unethical ways, including body snatching from freshly dug graves in cemeteries.[194] Transylvania University engaged in the

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[191] Associated Press, "Harley Warrick; the Barns of America Bear His Mark," *Los Angeles Times*, November 29, 2000, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2000-nov-29-me-58687-story.html; Elmer Napier, "Barnstorming for Mail Pouch Barns," August 20, 2004, http://www.thebarnjournal.org/people/004/; Richard W. Slatta, *The Mythical West: An Encyclopedia of Legend, Lore, and Popular Culture* (ABC-CLIO, 2001), 333.

[192] The photographs of the disinterment and opening of the vault are held in Keeneland Library's collections.

[193] Frank Borries, "Frank Borries to Amelia Buckley," October 5, 1963, Keeneland Library.

[194] Michael Sappol, *A Traffic of Dead Bodies: Anatomy and Embodied Social Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 2.

practice, too.[195] Was this the fate that befell Murphy's body? It is possible, though unlikely. First, Transylvania closed in 1859, and no medical school in Lexington was formed to fill the vacuum until the mid-twentieth century; instead, Louisville became the central locus of medical education in the state.[196] While grave robbing for medical education "remained steady for much of the nineteenth century" according to historian Daina Berry, the popularity of anatomy had waned, its professors "no longer the leading men of science."[197] And finally, the need for bodies had decreased due to official, more consensual procurement practices.[198]

The most likely explanation for Murphy's body's disappearance is that, much like the grave in which it rested, it was never lost at all. I discussed the matter with Yvonne Giles, a local historian, genealogist, and cemetery expert. She revealed that the absence of any recognizable body is not uncommon over such a long period of time in this particular climate. According to Giles, it would be more likely to find fabric, such as the silk lining of the coffin, instead of human remains.[199] Still, she said, it is most likely that Murphy remained in his grave since his first funeral in 1896. The lurid possibilities of grave robbing and body snatching demonstrate fears many enslaved people felt before death. According to Berry, "Even in graves, the souls and spirits of the enslaved rested lightly. Would they

[195] James R. Wright, "Early History of Transylvania Medical College: The Saga of a Disputed Autopsy Precipitating a Duel and Grave Robbing," *Clinical Anatomy (New York, N.Y.)* 32, no. 4 (May 2019): 489–500, https://doi.org/10.1002/ca.23335.
[196] Hampden C Lawson, "The Early Medical Schools of Kentucky," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 24, no. 2 (1950): 172.
[197] Daina Ramey Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh: The Value of the Enslaved from Womb to Grave in the Building of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2017), 181; Sappol, *A Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 314.
[198] Sappol, *A Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 320.
[199] Yvonne Giles, interview by Emily Libecap, February 5, 2020.

be exhumed, reburied, or removed? Enslaved and free blacks worried about their corpses being disturbed after death."[200]

Murphy's move to his new grave, and accompanying celebrations, occurred on May 4, 1967. Attendance included officials such as Lexington's Mayor Fred Fugazzi, Fayette County Judge Joe E. Johnson, and representatives from Churchill Downs and the Jockeys' Guild. Some three hundred members of the public also attended, echoing the crowds who attended Man o' War's funeral twenty years prior. Frank Borries was there, too, as was Eddie Arcaro. Arcaro, a decorated jockey of Italian heritage, won the Kentucky Derby five times, the Triple Crown twice and numerous other classic races during his career in the 1930s-50s.[201] He served as Honorary Chairman of the event and described feeling a kind of kinship with Murphy. "I'm sure if we had lived at the same time, we would have been great friends," said Arcaro.[202]

Newspaper accounts of the event drew the same parallel between Murphy and Man o' War. "The greatest and the mostest in the horse world will be placed side by side next month," reads one.[203] "Nothing could be more appropriate than for this champion among champions to lie beside that other great champion, Man o' War," asserted another.[204] It is certainly bold to declare that *nothing* could be more appropriate for Murphy than being moved to the Man o' War Park. The family of Will Harbut, the Black groom who worked with Man o' War throughout the horse's entire life, would disagree. During Man o' War's move to the Kentucky Horse Park in 1976, officials asked the Harbut family if they would

[200] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 193.
[201] Encyclopaedia Britannica Editorial Staff, "Eddie Arcaro," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed April 15, 2020, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eddie-Arcaro.
[202] John Alexander, "Isaac Murphy Honored Again," *Lexington Leader*, May 4, 1967, Keeneland Library.
[203] "Reburial of Great Jock to Be in Park Here," *Lexington Leader*, March 29, 1967, Keeneland Library.
[204] "Two Great Champions Honored At Park," *Lexington Herald*, May 3, 1967, Keeneland Library.

like Will's remains disinterred, too, and reburied alongside the horse. His wife, Mary, declined. "People stay with people, and animals stay with animals," she explained to a *Herald-Leader* reporter.[205] Like Murphy, Harbut was viewed first in the context of his relationship to horses, and second as a human being with dignity, autonomy, and family of his own.

Though Murphy was not enslaved when he died, the way his body was commodified both during his life and especially after his death was influenced by slavery's legacy. After death, slaves' bodies acquired what the historian Daina Berry calls a "ghost value."[206] Their bodies were still valuable, in quantifiable dollar amounts, because they were used in popularly-attended medical dissections, which were marketed as entertaining curiosities. Murphy's new gravesite at Man o' War Park was intended as a tourist attraction or a place where locals could bring a picnic lunch and revel in Murphy's achievements. While Murphy's body was not literally displayed for public viewing, it was still an object at the centerpiece of amusement and curiosity for whites.

As symbolic as Murphy's grave is, one must also consider the larger implications of the Kentucky Horse Park, billed as place of fun theme park entertainment, as essentially a graveyard. While many theme parks employ imagery of death and cemeteries for campy, macabre effect (the Haunted Mansion ride at Disneyland is one example); however, no theme parks that I could find in the United States contain graves of humans, horses, or both.[207] The Kentucky Horse Park has one of the former and over fifty of the latter. While

[205] Amy Wilson, "Groom's Son Remembers Life Growing up around Man o' War," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, October 2, 2010, sec. Horses, https://www.kentucky.com/sports/horses/article44052153.html.
[206] Berry, *The Price for Their Pound of Flesh*, 7.
[207] Rebecca Williams, *Theme Park Fandom: Spatial Transmedia, Materiality and Participatory Cultures* (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvw1d4g3.

the Kentucky Horse Park is unique among theme parks for its equine graves, the practice is common on horse farms to commemorate beloved, iconic horses.

These graves serve a purpose for owners, workers, and fans, who build and visit graves to express their admiration and even love for the horses buried there. As pedigree expert Anne Peters insisted in an interview, the graves are not about "bragging rights, or advertisements for their horse's accomplishments, or to help promote and sell the bloodline." Instead, she explained, visiting the graves of famous horses is "very emotional" and owners bury them out of an almost "obligation to share that this horse was special and worthy of being remembered."[208] By visiting graves after a horse has died, one can reflect on its meaning and what it represented when it was alive. She explained further that for many people, herself included, spending a moment at a magnificent horse's grave is a way for people "to claim that greatness for themselves."[209] When Secretariat died, tourists came from around the country to visit his grave at Claiborne Farm and pay their respects.[210] Local author Lucy Zeh's book *Etched in Stone: Thoroughbred Memorials* was compiled in 2000 and lists the locations of hundreds of famous Thoroughbreds' graves throughout Kentucky, along with some descriptions and stories of the horses to whom they belong. Zeh wrote the book in order to educate casual fans and entertain the devoted, in order to "encourage the preservation of existing memorials and the continuation of a great Bluegrass tradition."[211] An archaeological survey of British pet cemeteries provides some additional explanation as to how memorials to animals explain the relationships between them and humans. The

[208] Anne Peters, "Re: Thoroughbred Heritage: Grave Matters," February 15, 2021.
[209] Peters.
[210] Thomas Tolliver, "Horse's Grave Likely to Lure Visitors," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, October 7, 1989, Lexington Public Library.
[211] Zeh, *Etched in Stone*, 6.

"material culture" associated with "animal death and commemoration highlight the human perceptions of these relationships."[212] Since the intention of the Kentucky Horse Park is to "celebrate the history of our relationship with the horse" it makes sense that cherished horses would be buried there, so they may be visited and honored by guests who come to see them.[213]

Yet, I argue there is more to the significance of horse graves at the Kentucky Horse Park than simply a reflection of how adored the horses who occupy them were and still are. It may seem that the presence of gravestones conflicts with amusement and theme parks' roles as places where people go to celebrate the pleasures of being alive. Does incorporating rituals of grief and mourning and its accompanying iconography contradict that? Counterintuitively, no – not at all. Instead, the presence of horse graves at the Horse Park further underscores its identity as a theme park.

This is because theme parks can be sites of religious pilgrimage. In her study of Walt Disney World, historian Cheryl Knight explains that visitors view trips to Disney World as religious experiences. Disney "created ceremonial spaces" in his parks, which in turn established "ritual practices that are akin to those of pilgrimages throughout the centuries."[214] Religion in this context, she clarifies, "helps us navigate what it means to be human…This conception of religion views pilgrimage as a quest for sacred time and space, a longing to exceed routine moments lived in ordinary spaces."[215] Visitors to Disney World do not worship Mickey Mouse as a god, per se. Instead, they engage in a "contemporary

[212] Eric Tourigny, "Do All Dogs Go to Heaven? Tracking Human-Animal Relationships through the Archaeological Survey of Pet Cemeteries," *Antiquity* 94, no. 378 (December 2020): 1614–29, https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2020.191.
[213] "History of KHP," Kentucky Horse Park, 2014, https://kyhorsepark.com/about-us/history-of-khp/.
[214] Knight, *Power and Paradise in Walt Disney's World*, 24.
[215] Knight, 25.

mode of religious expression in the United States" by seeking out communal activities and accessing feelings of "enlightenment" and "renewed spirit."[216] Though the word 'pilgrimage' may evoke images of taxing physical journeys and intense hardship, the expectations of pilgrimages can change and vary throughout time and from culture to culture. The "personal meaning and social relevance of a journey" can preclude the notion that the journey must be difficult.[217] Visitors make the trip to Disney World their own pilgrimage by imbuing the site with significance and finding magic in their experience.[218]

The same processes occur when visitors come to the Kentucky Horse Park and visit the memorials around the property. The trips visitors make to the Horse Park are indeed pilgrimages because they are seeking something transcendent and more meaningful than their daily lives. The relationship between humans and horses is seen as something special, and visitors come in search of moments to revel in that. Though they do not worship horses as deities, many visitors experience intense emotion when communing with living famous horses or visiting their graves. The veneration and reverence with which visitors view horses is strengthened by the act of purposefully undertaking a meaningful journey to the hallowed ground that is the Kentucky Horse Park.

As reverently and respectfully as visitors may treat the fifty-plus horse graves at the park, there is still a strikingly uncomfortable contrast with Murphy's grave. It is a high honor for a horse to be buried with a headstone, and even more so to be buried at the Kentucky Horse Park. Yet, in Murphy's case, his re-reburial at the park was done with patronizingly similar intentions to much more disrespectful effect.

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[216] Knight, 28.
[217] Knight, 25.
[218] Knight, 43.

An additional interesting comparison can be drawn with the exhumation of another Kentucky hero: that of Daniel Boone. When the legendary Kentucky frontiersman died in 1820 in St. Charles, Missouri, he was buried in a humble family graveyard typical of frontiers during that time. He remained there peacefully beside his wife until 1840, when an anniversary commemoration of the siege of Boonesborough rekindled interest in his memory. Kentuckians, feeling a new sense of state pride due to Boone's heroism during the Revolutionary War, made their claim to Boone's body and began agitating to bring him back from Missouri to Kentucky. In 1845, Kentucky legislators authorized the reinterment of Boone near Frankfort, partially at the request of the owners of a new cemetery company who wanted to promote their new business venture. The exhumation of Daniel and Rebecca Boone was messy, disastrous, and undignified. Spectators looted teeth and bone fragments as souvenirs, and the men hired to dig were uncertain if they even exhumed the correct remains. On September 13, 1845, the Boones' remains arrived in Frankfort to quite the fanfare. Thousands of people gathered as the procession went by, and marching bands and fraternal organizations lent a festive and lively air to the event. The cemetery in which the Boones were reinterred did "quite a brisk business" in the immediate aftermath of this spectacle.[219] Like Murphy, Boone's body was moved to satisfy the wishes of those who never knew him in life, but felt he could be valuable to them in death. Also, like Murphy's, Boone's second funeral was commercialized as advertising for a local business and was turned into a spectacle for picnickers and onlookers. The question of race remains, as Boone was white and Murphy was Black, yet they suffered similar fates. One key difference, however, is that those who objected to Boone's exhumation had their voices

[219] Michael G. Kammen, *Digging up the Dead*, 132.

heard. Bitterness had been "brewing" among Missourians who felt their original claim to Boone's final resting place had been violated.[220] In 1888, a Missouri newspaper article described Boone's original grave as "desecrated" for the sole purpose of gratifying "a spasm of Kentucky pride."[221] As recently as 1987, officials from the Missouri county where Boone was originally buried lodged a petition to ask the governor of Missouri to intervene, but the governor declined.[222] Among contemporary authors and community members in Lexington, Murphy's exhumation is a topic of disappointment and grief. However, in the existing written historical record I could access, I found no such accounts. This speaks to the privileging of white voices over Black, in that two men whose bodies were at the center of similar controversies were treated quite differently in the white media.

Returning to the twentieth century, while the symbolism of Murphy's grave acquired new meaning in Lexington, in Louisville, his memory was also invoked to give meaning to the present. As discussed in the previous section, the 1967 Kentucky Derby, which occurred on May 6 just days after Murphy's first reburial at Faraway Farm, took place against a backdrop of dramatic civil unrest. Black residents of Louisville protested against unfair housing practices and their demonstrations threatened the stability of the Derby. Newspapers lamented these disruptions by looking back fondly upon Murphy. The *Thoroughbred Record* complained that while Lexington was honoring Murphy's memory, "other and less pleasant ceremonies were being conducted in Louisville. Members of Murphy's race marched and chanted and flaunted picket signs, and their mood was an ugly one at a time of year when the mood of the old city on the Ohio is usually festive…"[223]

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[220] Michael G. Kammen, 132.
[221] Michael G. Kammen, 133.
[222] Michael G. Kammen, 134.
[223] David Alexander, "Delayed Honors," *Thoroughbred Record*, May 6, 1967, Keeneland Library.

A clear distinction is being drawn between Murphy and "members of [his] race."[224] These "members" in Louisville were nothing like Murphy. Instead, the jockey was respected, not "because he was a Negro or the member of some mob movement whose aims might be lofty but whose methods were detestable. Murphy was respected because he was a man of…unquestioned integrity and infinite dedication."[225] Yet again, Murphy's life, thrust back into public consideration by his reburial, was used as a counterpoint to perceived black disobedience.[226]

Another article did not directly mention the Louisville protesters, but implied the contrast between them and Murphy more subtly. In an article published the day after the Derby, the *Courier-Journal* quoted Andrew Hatcher, President Kennedy's former press secretary who attended the reburial ceremony. Hatcher said, "Murphy was a man who knew neither black nor green power, but whose motivation was from his personal dignity. In these times of civil rights controversy, it is highly fitting that a southern state honor a Negro who was a great man."[227] The true sentiment behind Hatcher's careful words is clear: Murphy was too dignified to think about or participate in black power movements. Apparently, civil rights struggle can be quelled with symbolic gestures of tobacco salesmen and shiny new headstones.

In 1970, state legislation was passed to create what would become the Kentucky Horse Park. According to longtime museum director Bill Cooke, the discussion of whether or not to move Man o' War to a new memorial at the Horse Park was resolved fairly

[224] Alexander.
[225] Alexander.
[226] Around this time, Muhammad Ali refused being drafted into the military, citing race and racism as the reasoning for his conscientious objector claim.
[227] Earl Ruby, "Ruby's Report," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, May 5, 1967, sec. Sports, Keeneland Library.

quickly, and logistical planning began for the move of the statue and of Man o' War's remains.[228] What was less clear was what to do with Isaac Murphy. Though the two had been paired together in 1967, the move of Man o' War to the Horse Park represented a window of opportunity to move Murphy elsewhere. In 1974, State Parks Commissioner Ewart Johnson revealed that the state was open to the possibility of moving Murphy to the Lexington Cemetery, where many other great Lexingtonians were buried.[229] Though Johnson "realized the value of having Murphy's grave at the park," he agreed to defer to Murphy's descendants if they wanted him to be moved to the Lexington Cemetery.[230]

Back in 1962, one year after Frank Borries had discovered Murphy's grave, he was contacted by a man named Albert J. Farmer, of Harford, Connecticut. Farmer congratulated Borries on the publication of his article about the discovery of Murphy's grave the previous year, and informed Borries that he was Murphy's "mother's grandson, or his sister's son."[231] He offered a "personal interview with [Borries] concerning some of the facts that has never been published."[232]

Privately, Borries shared his doubts with Amelia Buckley, the Keeneland librarian. "I had no idea Ike had any such relatives," he wrote, shocked.[233] "And I cannot imagine how this nephew decided to write a year after the publication of the grave story," he sniffed.[234] However, Borries' reply to Farmer is genuine and warm, and Farmer's reply

[228] Bill Cooke, interview by Emily Libecap, August 7, 2020.
[229] John Alexander, "State Would Go Along on Murphy Reburial," *Lexington Leader*, May 9, 1974, Keeneland Library.
[230] Alexander.
[231] Albert Farmer, "Albert Farmer to Frank Borries," May 7, 1962, Keeneland Library.
[232] Farmer.
[233] Frank Borries, "Frank Borries to Amelia Buckley," May 11, 1962, Keeneland Library.
[234] Borries.

provides the illuminating information that Murphy had three younger half siblings, one of whom, Hattie, is Farmer's mother.[235]

Despite Borries' interest in, and appreciation of, Farmer and another relative he identified, Murphy's distant descendants were doomed to play only a minor role in his story. Some of them were present at the first 1967 reburial ceremony at Faraway Farm, though a photo caption only identifies them as "some great-nieces and nephews of the jockey."[236] A letter found in the Kentucky Horse Park archives points to another branch of Murphy's family. Writing in 1974, the Samuels family claims to be related to Murphy and approve of his move to the Park. They "feel that Isaac Murphy has earned and deserves a unique and illustrious resting place in a fine historical setting…[and] are proud and very grateful for the opportunity for a magnificent and beautiful statue to be erected to his memory in the Kentucky State Horse Park."[237] No other communication from Murphy's relatives was discovered after this point, which leaves the question of their continued approval or involvement unanswered.

Construction on the Park began in 1974, and as plans for Man o' War's move to the Park were revealed, angry citizens wrote to newspapers, officials, and the State Parks system to express their disapproval. One woman wrote in a four page letter to Governor Ford, "I'm pleading with you, PLEASE don't allow Man o' War to be dug up and moved to the new Ky. Horse Park…Can't you see how important it is to leave Man o' War where

[235] Albert Farmer, "Albert Farmer to Frank Borries," June 27, 1962, Keeneland Library.
[236] Alexander, "Isaac Murphy Honored Again."
[237] Dee Samuels, "Samuels Family to Robert H Penn," August 30, 1976, Keeneland Library.

he is?"[238] Despite the generally indignant tone, exactly what was important about Man o' War remaining in his original grave is not specified.

Perhaps these angry citizens were right to worry about the move. On September 21, 1976, the disinterment of Man o' War and Murphy began. The process was plagued with problems. The excavators used a backhoe to dig aimlessly for Man o' War's casket which damaged the old concrete, the former gravesite was torn apart on account of the aimless digging, and, perhaps most gruesomely of all, a fragment of tailbone and accompanying hair were nearly left behind in the horse's casket.[239] Still, park superintendent Don Wathen insisted the transfer had proceeded smoothly, in a "dignified" manner.[240] It is possible that Wathen did not make the most honest assessment of the operation's dignity, seeing as he briefly considered keeping the casket handles to make into souvenirs.[241] It is impossible to know what exactly transpired that day, as the transfer was undertaken with absolute secrecy. No spectators, no dignitaries, and no dedications – the migration was "unpublicized if not downright surreptitious."[242] The memorial remained untouched until 2015, when Murphy's headstone was rotated and a new inscription and image were carved on the previously blank backside. Additional interpretive panels were added next to Murphy's grave to discuss his life. Today, the site forms the centerpiece of the Park, its majestic statue and landscaping obscuring the tumultuous, disturbing history of how race and memory shaped this joint grave and how it came to be.

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[238] Deborah Harp, "Deborah Harp to Governor Wendell Ford," 1974, International Museum of the Horse Collections.
[239] John Woestendiek, "Man o' War Transfer Is Called 'Dignified,'" *Lexington Leader*, November 11, 1977, International Museum of the Horse Collections.
[240] Woestendiek.
[241] Maryjean Wall, "Problems Disclosed in Reburial of Man o' War," *Lexington Herald*, November 11, 1977, International Museum of the Horse Collections.
[242] William Robertson, "Grave Misgivings," *Thoroughbred Record*, November 22, 1977, 1893, International Museum of the Horse Collections.

CONCLUSION: THE KENTUCKY HORSE PARK IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Kentucky Horse Park's role as both beacon and reflection of how whites conceived of the Bluegrass continued through the arrival of the new millennium. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Kentucky Horse Park was once again a site where regional identity was formed and proudly broadcast to not only the rest of the country, but the rest of the world. This began in 2000 with the launch of the Imperial China exhibit and continued through 2010, when the Horse Park hosted the prestigious World Equestrian Games, the first time it had ever been held outside of Europe.

The Imperial China exhibit at the International Museum of the Horse fulfilled the Museum's desire to be appreciated on a truly international scale, as its name expressed. The "world-exclusive exhibition" broadened the Museum's reach to include international history, which "really gave the park a new level of credibility," explained John Nicholson, then the director of the Horse Park.[243] According to the park's annual report, the exhibit was the result of the largest marketing and public relations effort in the park's history and therefore received an "unprecedented" level of regional and national publicity.[244] The exhibit, estimates the report, had a $14 million dollar impact on the park, largely due to increased attendance. Whereas 138,532 visitors came to the park in 1999, the year 2000 saw 223,130 visitors – nearly double the previous year.

Momentum kept building at the Horse Park, and it submitted a bid to host the World Equestrian Games in 2004. Governor Ernie Fletcher announced his support for it in July 2004 standing – where else – in front of the Man o' War and Isaac Murphy memorial.

[243] Laurel Scott, "That Was Then, This Is Now," *Discover Horses*, 2007.
[244] "Annual Report" (Lexington, Kentucky: Kentucky Horse Park, 2000), 11, Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives.

Landing the right to host the Games was an enormous boost to Lexington's reputation and its economy. This was not the only time that Fletcher would employ horse tourism to enhance Kentucky's public image to the rest of the world. That same year, in 2004, Fletcher's administration, in conjunction with the Commonwealth of Kentucky, launched a campaign to pick a new tourism slogan, which Kentuckians could vote on via the Internet.[245] The options were: "Kentucky: Unbridled Spirit," "Kentucky: Where Legends Are Born," "Kentucky: Make History," or "Kentucky: Limitless."[246] This attempt at a rebrand caught the attention of late night television host and comedian Jay Leno, who mocked the campaign on his show, suggesting the slogan "Kentucky: Got Teeth?"[247] This Appalachian hillbilly stereotype of Kentuckians has a long history rooted in ideas of race, class, and whiteness.[248] To Fletcher, who was on the cusp of launching a bid for Kentucky to host a globally prestigious equine competition, Leno's comments were quite unfunny. In a prickly letter to Leno, Fletcher wrote: "Your humor showed to the nation the stereotypes we in Kentucky are working to eliminate" and gave examples of the state's fine cultural products – including horses – as evidence to disprove the stereotype.[249] After appearing on the show and getting in a few barbs about Los Angeles, Fletcher stated the

[245] Jack Brammer, "Kentucky Seeks New Tourism Campaign Slogan; Will It Be 'Kentucky: Unbridled Spirit' or 'Kentucky: Limitless' or 'Kentucky: Make History' or 'Kentucky: Where Legends Are Born,'" *Lexington Herald-Leader*, October 2004, Republished on Hotel-Online.com, https://www.hotel-online.com/News/PR2004_4th/Oct04_KentuckySlogan.html.
[246] Brammer.
[247] Joe Biesk, "Fletcher to Plug Kentucky on 'Tonight Show,'" *Lexington Herald-Leader*, July 27, 2004, Newspapers.com.
[248] Anthony Harkins, "Colonels, Hillbillies, and Fightin': Twentieth-Century Kentucky in the National Imagination," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 113, no. 2/3 (2015): 421–52.
[249] Biesk, "Fletcher to Plug Kentucky on 'Tonight Show.'"

next day: "I really didn't appreciate the jokes, but on the other hand you have to be able to laugh at yourself, just as we do here in Kentucky, and move forward."[250]

Kentucky's reputation bruised, but successfully defended, attention returned to the World Equestrian Games. As then-director Nicholson explained in 2007 as he looked towards the future, "The greatest thing about the World Equestrian Games is not what it will do for the park in 2010, but what it's going to do for the park for all the years afterwards."[251] Nicholson was correct. The event had an impact of over $200 million on the state, according to a master's of public policy thesis which studied its economic implications.[252] Much of the infrastructure that was built for the Games was built with the intention to reuse it for many years to come. That the infrastructure was built to last was not solely a practical concern, however. The impetus to define and build Lexington's legacy was interwoven with the desire to make Lexington a city worthy of such an honor. The city was quite literally cleaned up; for example, a big pile of dirt leftover from a construction project which had lingered next to Oliver Lewis Way was finally moved as part of the beautification efforts.[253]

Planners and developers called on the city's Black history to further define Lexington as a city with an authentic and storied past. Perhaps this was born out of a desire to compare with the thousands of years old European cities which had previously hosted the Games. Regardless of the reason, this turn towards Black history in Lexington

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[250] Michael A. Lindenberger, "Fletcher Scores Laughs on Leno," *Courier Journal*, July 28, 2004, Newspapers.com.
[251] Scott, "That Was Then, This Is Now."
[252] Pamela Henderson, "Analyzing the Impacts of the 2010 World Equestrian Games on the Kentucky" (MPA/MPP Capstone Project, University of Kentucky, 2013), https://uknowledge.uky.edu/mpampp_etds/40/.
[253] "Dirt Pile alongside Oliver Lewis Way to Be Moved before WEG," *Lexington Herald-Leader*, accessed February 12, 2020, https://www.kentucky.com/sports/horses/article44048115.html.

coincided with a bubble of interest in Black jockeys. It had already been something of a journalistic tradition to write about the history of horse racing in the leadup to the Kentucky Derby, and Black horsemen inevitably made appearances in these annual glances backward at racing's past.[254] Aside from these yearly mentions, Black jockeys or Black horsemen were not evaluated as a historical phenomenon in a comprehensive way until 1999, with Edward Hotaling's book *The Great Black Jockeys*.[255] From there, the historiography of Black horsemen only grew, with at least five scholarly books on the topic being published between 2000 and 2015.[256] It is unclear which cluster influenced which, or if the two are unrelated. In any case, it is clearly observable that Lexington, as a city, saw great opportunity in preserving and promoting Black history. The first instance of this was the 2007 creation of the Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden in Lexington's historically Black East End neighborhood, and was continued with the building of the Legacy Trail in 2010. After it was completed, the trail physically connected the Isaac Murphy garden with the Kentucky Horse Park. Like so many at world's fairs and amusement parks, this project became a way for visitors to experience commodified, commercialized sociological and cultural ideas through leisure and physical space.

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[254] Jennie Rees, "Derby Countdown Halma, 1895," *The Courier-Journal*, April 11, 2015, sec. Sports, https://www.courier-journal.com/story/sports/horses/triple/derby/2015/04/11/countdown-kentucky-derby-halma/25594293/; Roy Terrell, "Around the World in 80 Years," *Sports Illustrated*, May 8, 1961; "Early Days of The Kentucky Derby: Eventful Happenings in History-Making Years of America's Outstanding Horse Race," *Daily Racing Form*, May 8, 1937, The Daily Racing Form Archive, University of Kentucky Libraries, https://drf.uky.edu/catalog/1930s/drf1937050802/drf1937050802_36_1#q=baden-baden+AND+walker#fq=; "Jockeys Whose Skill Played Part in Kentucky Derbys of the Past," *Daily Racing Form*, May 12, 1911, The Daily Racing Form Archive, University of Kentucky Libraries.

[255] This was not the first time Hotaling had encountered racially-charged topics in his work. In 1988, he became infamous for asking Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder about black athletes, to which Snyder responded with racist pseudoscience.

[256] James Robert Saunders, *Black Winning Jockeys in the Kentucky Derby* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2003); Ed Hotaling, *Wink: The Incredible Life and Epic Journey of Jimmy Winkfield* (Camden, Me: McGraw-Hill, 2004); Joe. Drape, *Black Maestro: The Epic Life of an American Legend*, version 1st Harper pbk. ed. (New York: Harper, 2006); McDaniels III, *The Prince of Jockeys*; Mooney, *Race Horse Men*.

The resurgence of interest in Black horsemen can also be attributed to organic movements that sprung up within the community, as is the case with the group Phoenix Rising Lex. The group attained non-profit status in 2017 and "was born out of an effort to recognize and bring to the forefront of daily conversation, the lives of Black horsemen whose contributions have formed the backbone of the horse industry both in Kentucky and beyond.[257] The spark for the formation of the group came when Pellom McDaniels, the historian who wrote *Prince of Jockeys: The Life of Isaac Burns Murphy* came to lecture at the Keeneland Library. Ever since, the group has dedicated itself to raising the profile of the history of Black horsemen through community outreach.

Today, as visitors stroll through the gates of the Kentucky Horse Park and around the grounds, they are not passively partaking in simple amusement or leisure. Instead, they are actively consuming the residual fragments of race, collective memory, and white nostalgia upon which the Kentucky Horse Park is figuratively and literally built. The park, then, is not just a park, but is rather a monument to the ways in which horses in Kentucky have become vessels for the ways humans create meaning around them.

If these visitors stop by Man o' War and Isaac Murphy's grave, they may be able to glimpse a physical embodiment of these influences, etched in the granite of Murphy's headstone and buried under their feet. And if not, perhaps finally, Isaac Burns Murphy can rest in peace.

[257] "Phoenix Rising Lex: What We've Done," *About Us* (blog), accessed April 5, 2021, http://www.phoenixrisinglex.org/.

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VITA

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