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VISUALIZING SOCIAL JUSTICE

Tracing the Rhetorical Boundaries of College Park through Archival Maps

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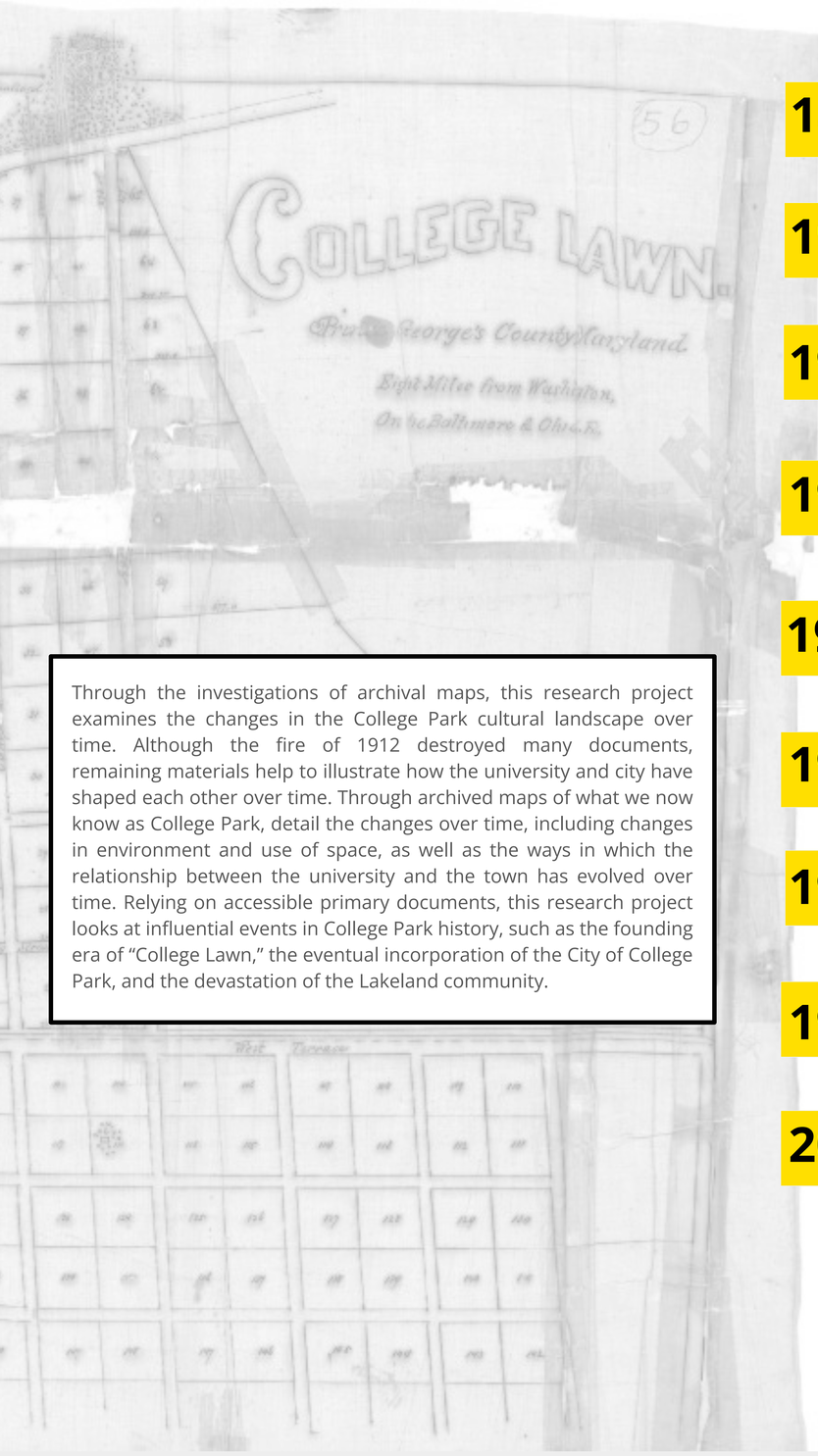


Through the investigations of archival maps, this research project examines the changes in the College Park cultural landscape over time. Although the fire of 1912 destroyed many documents, remaining materials help to illustrate how the university and city have shaped each other over time. Through archived maps of what we now know as College Park, detail the changes over time, including changes in environment and use of space, as well as the ways in which the relationship between the university and the town has evolved over time. Relying on accessible primary documents, this research project looks at influential events in College Park history, such as the founding era of "College Lawn," the eventual incorporation of the City of College Park, and the devastation of the Lakeland community.

1872

College Lawn founded
The founding era saw plats of land, with the potential for growth and early hints of what would become College Park.

1912

The Fire of 1912
A devastating fire that reshaped campus at the time.

1916

Women are admitted to the university
Elizabeth Hook, the first 4-year female student to graduate, began attending University of Maryland.

1945

City of College Park incorporates
After a few failed previous attempts, the City of College Park becomes an official entity in the State of Maryland.

1958

McKeldin Library is completed.
Replaced Shoemaker as the main library on campus.

1969

Hagerstown Hall opens.
First co-ed dorm, altering previously strict rules for female students.

1970

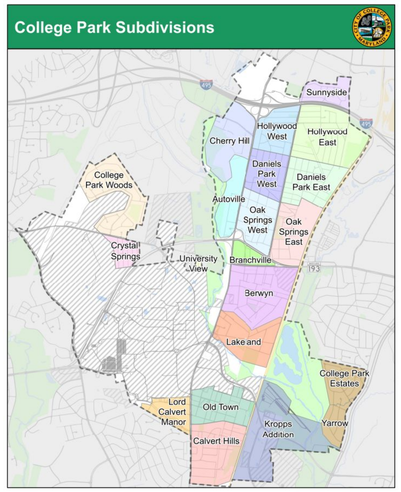
Lakeland "Urban Renewal" Plan approved
Request for federal "redevelopment" assistance that did not help or update the neighborhood.

1980

Lakeland neighborhood decimated
By 1980, 70% of Lakeland families had been displaced.

2020

Restorative Justice Commission begins
The City of College Park established the RJC to promote knowledge of the city's need to account for Lakeland and provide additional RJ plans for the future



Maps can be understood as metaphors.(1) Although often viewed as immutable fact and technical data, they are visual interpretations of information and data: art paired with (cartographic) sciences. As Harley reminds us, deconstructing a map means considering the artifact as the product of many factors.(2) Archival maps allow us access to a past as a moment in time and space, revealing how identity was constructed and boundaries were drawn.

In maps, we can see the rises and falls, the moves made in the name of "progress," and the devastation that can take shape.

As we watch the landscape and structures of College Park shift around us (and here on campus learn, and relearn, construction paths), it's important to investigate the ways in which the legacy of the University of Maryland is signified in archival maps. Additionally, maps can help us trace the relationship between the university and the city of College Park, help illuminate the materiality of the neighborhoods here, and provide categorizations for inviting people who make up the community to contribute their memories of this place. In other words, maps represent how we account for identity and how we leave traces of our society.

Research projects like this one focused on maps, a broader FIRE:VSJ's College Park Collective Memory project, and other university-level projects like the 1856 Project, mark a new shift in the way we account for our history, the events that shaped the place where we stand, and the people who live and work here.

Maps cannot escape the political process of power; the traces left by archival maps can help us understand how those power dynamics have moved and shifted over time.(3)

Footnotes

(1) Panneels, Inge, "Map as metaphor," from *Mercator Revisited: cartography in the age of discovery: conference proceedings,* ed. Soetkin Vervust, Bart Ooghe, and Philippe De Maeyer, 25 (2012): 69-70.
(2) Harley, J.B., "Deconstructing the Map," from *Cartographa,* 26(2), 1989, 1-2.
(3) Harley, J.B., "Maps, Knowledge, and Power," from *Geographic Thought: A Praxis Perspective, ed.* Henderson, G., and Waterstone, M. (New York: Routledge, 2009).
Archival Map images from MD Map Collection at the University of Maryland.
Neighborhood Map, City of College Park, https://www.collegeparkmd.gov/neighborhoods