

Still We Rise Materials Packet

# **LIVE -WORK - PLAY /PUBLIC SPACES**

To be printed double-sided, flipped on the longside



### **Douglass Grammar & High School**

Named after abolitionist Frederick Douglass, the original Douglass Grammar and High School was located at the corner of Kansas and 4th Avenue in Segundo Barrio. Established in 1891, it was the only El Paso school to serve Black students. It was the school's mission to provide a rounded and equitable education to all of their students as they were barred from other institutions of learning. Many of the educators banded together to show students their heritage and validity in a society that was socially, racially and economically stratified.

The school closed in 1920 and then relocated to its present location on Eucalyptus Dr. in Central El Paso near Five Points. Generations of students have hosted reunions and get togethers to celebrate their unique educational experience and to celebrate how far they all have come since their school days at Douglass. It stands as a reminder to various generations of the opportunity and progress that was made despite adversity.

Today, the buildings that were formerly named Douglass School still stand. A historical marker was erected in front of the original Douglass School at the Kansas and 4th Avenue intersection.

### **History of Black Beauty Salons**

Beauty salons have also been a pillar to African American communities as sources for political and social discourse. Beauty salons uniquely allowed women to organize amongst themselves for political and social change. In the salon, women felt comfortable to express their concerns about happenings in the community. The salon also served as a makeshift space of learning as beauticians acted as liaisons on how to register to vote, citizenship education classes, local activism, and health outreach. They were also the place to learn about the latest fashions, poise, and etiquette. In El Paso during the mid-century, beauticians formed a club to provide mutual support to each other in their profession.

### **Let's Talk About Hair**

According to Native El Pasoan, Angie Barraza, historically, it was more common for African American individuals to receive hair services out of black person's homes in the early to middling decades of the 20th century. As discovered through reconstructing El Paso's Black Wall Street, several beauty salon services were indeed provided out of many homes such as The Glamour Beauty Salon, owned by Mrs. C.B. Mathis at 304 N. Raynor. In terms of education, Ms. Barraza refers to the lack of formalized beauty school as "El Paso's underground hair network" where women learned from one another how to style textured hair.

Social mores in the mid-century dictated straightening the curl to mirror non-textured hair. Nevertheless, as the years passed, many Black women have considered their natural curl a mode of resistance and a way of reclaiming Black Pride.

### **History of Black Barbershops**

This history of Black barbers dates back to the 19th century where owners of enslaved individuals leased out their men and women to groom and barber white men in the surrounding areas. They were forbidden to cut other Black men's hair and strictly told to only cater to white customers.

In the 20th century, many African Americans saw advancement and empowerment in this field as being a barber was considered a profession that required formal training from a school. Henry M. Morgan opened the first chain of barbershops known as 'The Tyler Barber College' in 1934. Thousands of African American barbers have been formally trained throughout the decades from this institution.



I could sing a mournful song  
With its metre doleful, long  
I could turn reformer, ever shouting "Don't."  
I could tell a tale of woe,  
Set to measure sad and slow,  
But I won't.

I can sing a cheering lay  
Sing of lovers happy, gay,  
In a rippling rhyming rhythm that will thrill.  
I can make this old world smile,  
And forget its cares awhile,  
And I will.

- Bernice Love Wiggins