



150 Years of Elgin Texas History on Display....

May 16, 2022

ELGIN, Texas—The City of Elgin is hosting a yearlong Sesquicentennial celebration in honor of the community's founding in 1872. 2022 is a year for the entire community to commemorate, educate and celebrate the rich history and highlight the cultural fabric of the last one hundred and fifty years.

The Elgin Sesquicentennial committee is proud to put 150 years of Elgin history on display in the recently unveiled light pole banner project. The commemorative series of pictorial history banners can be seen on Lee Dildy boulevard and in the historic downtown area beginning this week. The banners share snippets of the community's iconic past, such as the railroad. The banners also share history that requires harder conversations such as the segregation of our community and our schools from 1872 through the late 1960's. The images selected for the banners are historic photos courtesy of Elgin Historical Association and the Depot Museum, as well as some imagery artistically modified by local artist Collin Sheehan. The banners were designed by local graphic designer, Sonia Browder and produced by Sign and Banner in Bastrop, Texas. The banner project was funded by the Sesquicentennial Committee and installed by the City of Elgin Public Works Department.

The pictorial history contains a total of ten different images spanning historical and cultural references since the City's founding in 1872. The banners are tied to specific cultural aspects and local heritage and include images of the Railroad, Tourism, Education, Agriculture, Entertainment and Business.

- The train engine image recognizes the beginning of the town Elgin, due to flooding of the Lower Colorado River, the rail line that would run from Galveston to Austin was moved north and became the heart of Elgin.
- The Washington School image recognizes the historic segregation of our schools in Elgin. Washington High School closed in 1967 due to school district integration and was changed to a middle school and then an elementary school in subsequent years. The school was known as the Home of the Eagles and is now known as Booker T. Washington Elementary School. It will host the Sesquicentennial Founder's Day Birthday Bash on Saturday, August 20th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- The image for Agriculture, recognizes the extensive farming supported by the Blackland prairie soil in the Elgin area. Agrarian culture continues in Elgin today.
- The Family image remembers that picnics were a common activity for families to gather especially on Sundays after church. Reunions are still a mainstay in Elgin, especially during the annual Western Days celebration.
- The image of the City Hotel for Tourism reflects that Elgin had two rail lines and was a thriving

community with visitors traveling on the Union Pacific Line north to south and the Katy line east to west through Texas. Elgin welcomes visitors with open arms today.

- The image of the El Tex theater shares the classic architecture of the historic district and the once segregated theater on Main Street which had a separate entrance and seating area. The theater was located next to what is today, Prosperity Bank on Main Street in historic downtown.
- The image of a barber shop shares the aspect of Community tied to local businesses. This photo was taken at 113 North Main Street which operates today as Custom Cuts owned by Frank Martinez.
- The image for Market Days reminds us of the earliest days of Elgin when the downtown streets were filled with wagons and horses especially on Saturdays, the traditional market day of the times.
- The 1961 Golf Team image celebrates the Brickyard boys, state champions in both 1959 and 1960. The golf team was organized and supported by Buddy Prewitt, owner of Elgin Standard Brick, now Acme brick. Mr. Prewitt built a golf course at one of the brick plants on the east side of town.
- The 1946 Washington High School Basketball Team image celebrates the Black young men who played for the Washington School in the then segregated school system. They played on a dirt court and had no home games due to the lack of facilities for Black students in Elgin. Washington School was the 1949 Conference B Prairie View Interscholastic League State Champion.
- Pucketts Garage, shares a classic example of downtown Elgin and the architecture intact today in the district which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- This image for School Children in 1917 is the children in the segregated Mexican School, which was integrated in 1948 thanks to Minerva Delgado's national historic court case which included the Elgin school district.
- The photo of the EISD football team recognizes the “Cinderella” team that came in second in the State UIL Championship game in 1958.

The banner images are available online at www.etx150.com . In addition, Elgin Short Histories, a series of articles about the history of Elgin shared weekly online at the same site and in the Elgin Courier, provide detailed information about many of the banner themes, locations and community history. Special thanks to Debbie Cartwright, T. Berry, Sydna Arbuckle and Judy Davis for collaborating on this press release.

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Join the celebration for the Elgin Sesquicentennial – attend an upcoming event, highlight 150 years of Elgin in your business, proudly display a yard sign, and volunteer throughout the year. Visit us online at www.etx150.com and follow us on facebook @etx150. For more information on all things #etx150 connect with us by emailing infoetx150@gmail.com or give us a call at 512-229-3227.