



Rogers Washington Holy Cross

BLACK HERITAGE, LIVING HISTORY

SELF-GUIDED TOUR - WALKING



FEATURED HOMES

- A. Mims House - 2502 Weber Ave
- B. Scales House - 2509 Weber Ave
- C. Marshall House - 2508 Givens Ave
- D. Snell House - 2506 Givens Ave
- E. King House - 2400 Givens Ave
- F. Calhoun House - 2401 Givens Ave
- G. Kirk House - 1908 Maple Ave
- H. Thompson House - 1906 Maple Ave
- I. Poole House - 2400 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
- J. Phillips House - 2310 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd

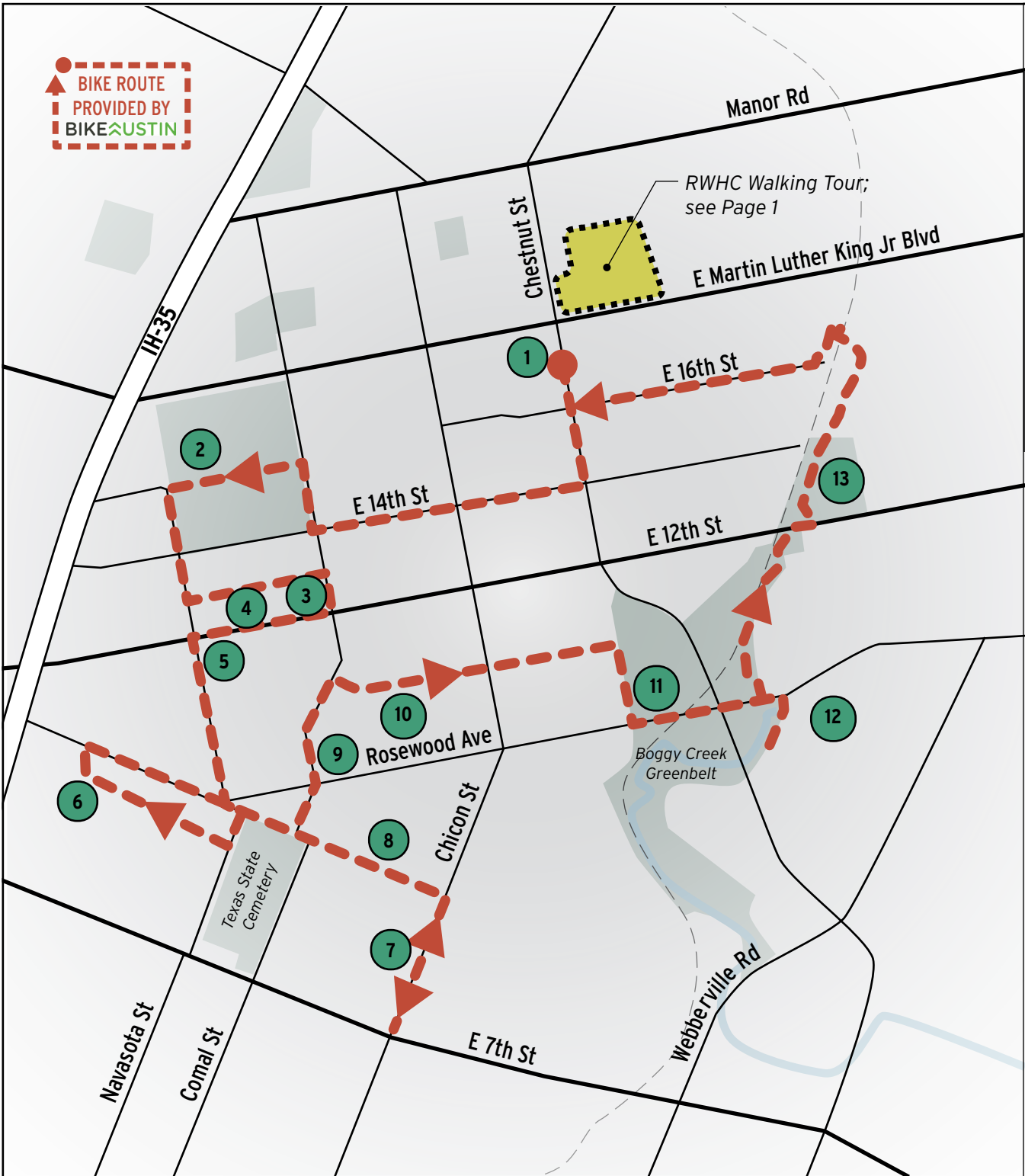


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SELF-GUIDED TOUR - CYCLING



- POINTS OF INTEREST
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- 2. Oakwood Cemetery
- 3. Phillips Upshaw & Richard Funeral Home
- 4. King-Tears Mortuary
- 5. TSAT/House of Elegance
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- 12. Old LC Anderson High School
- 13. Downs-Mabson Fields



UNDERWRITERS:



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ABOUT THE TOUR

This self-guided tour is a companion piece to *Rogers-Washington-Holy Cross: Black Heritage, Living History*, Preservation Austin's 2021 Virtual Homes Tour. It showcases homes featured in the film as well as East Austin sites with important ties to this historic postwar community.

Many locations on this tour are not open to the public. Sites are meant to be experienced from the public right-of-way. Please be mindful of owners' property and privacy.

The route begins with a walking tour of the RWHC Historic District, starting at 2502 Weber Ave. The corresponding seven-mile bike route provided by Bike Austin begins at David Chapel at E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd and Chestnut Ave, and continues in a loop counterclockwise.

ACCESS THE BIKE ROUTE THROUGH RIDE WITH GPS [HERE](#).

Street parking is available throughout the neighborhood if needed. All sites are accessible by foot or car as well. Please do not park in David Chapel's surface lots.

We thank you for supporting this year's 2021 Virtual Homes Tour! If you enjoyed the event and would like to help us bring more programming like this to our community, become a Preservation Austin member today at [preservationaustin.org](https://www.preservationaustin.org).



BIKE  AUSTIN

FEATURED HOMES

A. Mims House - 2502 Weber Avenue (1961)



Educators Carnegie Harvard Mims, Sr. and his wife Mae moved to Austin in search of better opportunities for their four children. Mr. Mims was the first Black principal of an integrated high school in Texas at Central High in San Angelo. Despite the segregation and redlining of the

Jim Crow era, the Mims made a comfortable home for their family, who flourished here. Their son, Carnegie Harvard Mims, Jr., was the first ombudsman at UT, and their daughter, Brenda Malik, was one of the first African American TV broadcasters in Austin.

B. Scales House - 2509 Weber Avenue (1959)



Captain Norman Scales, Tuskegee Airman and Austin's first Black fighter pilot, built this home in 1959. The Tuskegee Airmen were a segregated squadron of African American fighter pilots who served in WWII and were known for their immense bravery. After completing over 70 missions and surviving a

plane crash, Captain Scales returned to civilian life and built this home with his wife, Lydia, for his family of four. For his service, Captain Scales was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross and has a street named in his honor in the Mueller neighborhood.

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C. Jackson-Marshall House - 2508 Givens Avenue (1959)



Marion Jackson was one of the first Black USPS mail carriers in Austin. His wife Sophia, a home economics instructor, was referred to RWHC by her colleague at Huston-Tillotson, Dr. John King. After their passing, their daughter Lavon moved into the home with her husband, Dr. General Marshall,

and their three children. Dr. Marshall grew up caddying at Lions Municipal Golf Course as a young boy living in Clarksville, and witnessed the day in 1951 when the course became the first of its kind to desegregate in the South.

D. Snell House - 2506 Givens Avenue (1958)



Jimmy Snell served as the City of Austin's first African American Mayor Pro Tem from 1975-1981. On council, he pursued the implementation of equal employment opportunity programs and fought for Juneteenth to be declared a holiday for City employees. He was later elected

Travis County Commissioner, a position he held until 1988. His wife, Joanna Snell, was a registered nurse employed at the nearby Holy Cross Hospital, which served the African American community of East Austin until its closure in the mid-1980s.



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E. King House - 2400 Givens Avenue (1959)



Dr. John Q. Taylor King and his wife Marcet built this contemporary home for their family of six in 1959. Dr. King, an army general, civic leader, and proprietor of King-Tears Mortuary, was also the longest-serving president of Huston-Tillotson University. During segregation, the house was a

waypoint for academics, entertainers, and politicians passing through town. Notable visitors to the King Home include Eleanor Roosevelt, Butterfly McQueen of *Gone With the Wind* fame, jazz musician Lionel Hampton, and many others.

F. Calhoun House - 2401 Givens Avenue (1959)



T.C. and Thelma Calhoun built this home in 1959 during Mr. Calhoun's 40-year tenure as principal of Kealing Junior High, a segregated school for Black students. Mrs. Calhoun, also an educator, was a Supervisor in the segregated Travis County Schools. Their home is unique in the neighborhood for its

distinct, low-lying roof and California style. Originally designed to include a pool that was never installed, the sliding doors seen throughout remain a vestige of this original design intent.

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G. Kirk House - 1908 Maple Avenue (1962)



Lee Andrew Kirk was the city's first African American Postal Clerk and his wife, Willie Mae Kirk, was a school teacher and lifelong leader of civil rights actions in Austin. Mrs. Kirk was well-known as an adroit hostess and cook, and the home was a locus of entertainment for local and national figures- including

Diana Ross and The Supremes, though Mrs. Kirk was unaware of their fame at the time! The Kirk's youngest son, Ron, was the first Black mayor of Dallas and served in President Barack Obama's cabinet as the U.S. Trade Representative.

H. Thompson House - 1906 Maple Avenue (1963)



Irene Thompson, the longtime registrar and secretary at L.C. Anderson High School, commissioned pioneering Black architect John S. Chase in the design of her home after the passing of her husband Oscar. Mr. Thompson, a zoologist, was Chase's contemporary at UT, and

among the first class of African American graduate students at the university. The civically minded and politically active Mrs. Thompson frequently entertained and hosted a number of fundraising events for the Democratic Party here.

I. Poole House - 2400 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (1964)



Ira Poole happened upon the vacant lots of the Washington subdivision while he was a student at Huston-Tillotson University. A consummate patriot, in the 1970s Mr. Poole began decorating his yard with Americana to educate his students about United States history. Over the years, his

collection has become a local icon unto itself and has been featured in numerous publications and TV programs. Today, Mr. Poole is one of the longest remaining residents of RWHC.

J. Phillips House - 2310 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (1964)



Mrs. Della Phillips enlisted architect John S. Chase in the construction of this magnificent home at the corner of East Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Maple Avenue. Among his many accolades, Chase was one of the first African American graduate students admitted to the University of Texas

and the first licensed Black architect in the state. Mrs. Phillips, a retired teacher and co-owner of Phillips-Upshaw funeral home, built this home for herself after the passing of her husband. The Phillips House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2021.



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- Herbert Muschamp, NY Times architecture critic

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POINTS OF INTEREST

1. David Chapel - 2211 E. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard (1958)



The soaring bell tower of David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church overlooks the RWHC neighborhood from across E. MLK Blvd. The congregation originated in 1924 in South Austin, and in 1958 hired John S. Chase to create a modernist design at this new site.

Chase used his master's thesis from UT, "Progressive Architecture for the Negro Baptist Church," to gain clients within Baptist congregations since he was unable to find work in the Jim Crow South. Chase's David Chapel, one of his first major commissions, is one of the most significant works in his career and one of Austin's most important architectural landmarks from any era.

2. Oakwood Cemetery - 16th & Navasota Streets (1839)



Oakwood Cemetery was established in 1839 as the "City Cemetery." In 1856, the Texas Legislature granted the property to the City of Austin, and in 1908 the City officially changed its name to "Oakwood." The cemetery has a significant place within Austin's African American community as the site of the historic "Colored

Grounds," a segregated section of the cemetery north of the main gates at 16th and Navasota Streets. The unmarked grave of Reverend Jacob Fontaine, a formerly enslaved person who founded the First "Colored" Baptist Church in Austin, is located in this section, indicated by a Texas Historical Marker.

3. Phillips-Upshaw & Richard Funeral Home - 1410 E. 12th Street (1920)



In 1954 Gene Phillips, husband of RWHC resident Della Phillips, established Phillips-Upshaw Funeral Home with George Upshaw in this ca. 1920 mortuary. Mr. Phillips began his career as a mortician at the historic Tears Funeral Home, the first African American mortuary in Austin. The success of Phillips-Upshaw provided Mr. and Mrs.

Phillips a comfortable middle-class lifestyle, as evidenced by the exquisite home Mrs. Phillips would later build for herself. After the passing of Mr. Phillips in 1960, Mrs. Phillips became a co-owner of Phillips-Upshaw. The funeral home was later purchased by J.M. Richard, an AISD retiree who tirelessly advocated for school integration.

4. King-Tears Mortuary - 1300 E. 12th Street (1955)



In 1932, Charles and Alice King founded King Funeral Home on E. 6th Street. They later merged with the historic Tears Funeral Home, becoming King-Tears Mortuary in 1955. After Mr. King passed his son, RWHC resident Dr. John Q. Taylor King, assumed leadership of the family business.

He tapped family friend John S. Chase to design this new, and very modern, masonry building for King-Tears on E. 12th Street. Funeral homes were significant cultural establishments for Black communities, particularly during segregation when white undertakers refused to serve African Americans. Today, King-Tears Mortuary remains in the King family and continues to be a vital institution in East Austin.



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5. Teachers State Association of Texas Headquarters/House of Elegance - 1191 Navasota Street (1952)



The Teachers State Association of Texas was established during Reconstruction to promote educational opportunities and improved working conditions for African American students and teachers. Many RWHC residents were members of the organization, including T.C. Calhoun, who served as president from 1962-63. The 1952 headquarters on Navasota Street was an early design of John

S. Chase, who graduated from UT's School of Architecture that same year. The building was later home to the House of Elegance, a beauty salon that operated here for decades. The National Register-listed building is currently under construction for future use by UT's Division for Diversity and Community Engagement.

6. Ebenezer Baptist Church/11th Street Business District - 1010 E. 11th Street (1955)



This historic Black congregation was founded in 1875 and its current Gothic Revival church building was erected in 1955. Many RWHC residents worshiped at Ebenezer, including Thelma and T.C. Calhoun. Mrs. Calhoun ran the children's choir for many years and Mr. Calhoun was a member of the church's "Bright and Early Choir," one of the first to broadcast over

the radio. Ebenezer is situated just south of the historic 11th Street Business District, a vibrant neighborhood of Black-owned businesses that served the community during segregation. Notable spots include the Historic Victory Grill, Hillside Drugs (now Hillside Pharmacy), as well as now-demolished institutions like the Deluxe Hotel and Crescent Institute.

7. King-Seabrook Chapel/Huston-Tillotson University - E. 7th Street & Chicon Street (1974)



Huston-Tillotson University (H-T) is a historically Black university in East Austin that originally existed as two schools, Samuel Huston College and Tillotson Institute. The two merged as Huston-Tillotson College in 1952 on the campus of the former Tillotson Institute. RWHC is replete with H-T alumni, former staff, and professors, most notably Dr. John Q. Taylor King, who was the university's longest-serving president from 1965-1988. During his tenure, H-T worked with

Austin architects Brooks, Barr, Graeber and White to plan and realize most of the characteristic buildings found on campus today, including the Brutalist King-Seabrook Chapel and Bell Tower (1974). In 2021, Huston-Tillotson was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

8. Blackshear Elementary School - 1712 E. 11th Street (1936)



Blackshear School was the first organized public school for African Americans in Austin. It began in 1891 as the Gregory Town Colored School in one of Austin's oldest Freedman Communities. By 1933 the school was in grave disrepair and poorly staffed. The Austin School District received a WPA grant in 1936 to build new,

segregated facilities for several schools within the city. The Gregory School relocated to a modern building on E. 11th Street and was renamed Blackshear Elementary after a local African American educator. The new school soon had a library and provided hot lunches for students. After attending Blackshear, students matriculated to Kealing Junior High and L.C. Anderson High School.



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9. Carver Library, Museum, and Geneology Center - 1161 Angelina Street (1961)



Austin's first library, then known as the Central Library, was built in 1926 and originally located at Guadalupe and 9th Streets. In 1933, the residents of segregated East Austin successfully petitioned the City for their own branch, and the Central Library building was moved to its current location on Angelina Street. Known for many years as the "Colored Branch," it was renamed in 1947 after the African American scientist and inventor George Washington Carver. RWHC resident Willie Mae Kirk, a prominent civil rights activist, was instrumental in saving the original building from demolition during the library's expansion in the 1970s. Today, the historic building houses the genealogical center of the Carver Library and Museum complex and is listed in the National Register.

10. Kealing Junior High - 1607 Pennsylvania Avenue (1986)



Dedicated in 1930, Kealing Junior High was the first junior high school for Black students in Austin. The school was named after Hightower Kealing, an African American educator. Most of the children in RWHC attended Kealing where their neighbor, T.C. Calhoun, served as the school's principal for 40 years. Despite the landmark

Brown v. Board Supreme Court case of 1954, integration of public schools was slow-moving in Austin, and in 1971 the court ordered the closure of Kealing and L.C. Anderson High School to force integration. Following a fire that devastated the old building, AISD reopened Kealing in 1987 as a magnet school at its original site.

11. Rosewood Neighborhood Park - Rosewood Avenue & Chestnut Avenue (1929)



In 1928, Austin's new City Plan forced the migration of Black and Latinx Austinites east of what was then East Avenue, now I-35, by denying city services to those who resisted relocation. Shortly after implementation of this segregationist plan, Rosewood Neighborhood Park was created as the first public park for African

Americans in the city. Since its inception, Rosewood Park has been a recreation hub within East Austin and is host to an annual Juneteenth celebration that has taken place there since 1930. In 2019, the park was designated as a Lone Star Legacy Park by the Texas Recreation & Parks Society.

12. Yellow Jacket Stadium/L.C. Anderson High School - Hargrave Street & Neal Street (1953)



Established in 1884, L.C. Anderson High School was Austin's only high school for Black students during segregation. Originally named the Robertson Hill High School, it was renamed in honor of educator L.C. Anderson in 1907 and the school moved to several locations before the "new" Anderson facilities were erected here in 1953. Yellow Jacket

Stadium, seen here, was one of only a few Black public high school stadiums in Texas at the time. Today, AISD is building a new Eastside Memorial and International High School on the Anderson site. As part of the new building, AISD is constructing a community space that will include displays on the history of the school and its alumni.





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13. Downs Field - E. 12th Street & Alexander Avenue (1954)



Downs Field is a historic ballpark in East Austin and the current home of the Huston-Tillotson University Rams. The venue is now part of Downs-Mabson Fields, a City of Austin Park, but first existed as the athletic facility for Samuel Huston College. Beginning in 1927, the site was home to the Austin Black Senators, Austin's first Negro

League baseball team, which played here until professional baseball integrated in the 1940s. Native Austinite and future Hall of Fame shortstop Willie Wells played with the Black Senators during this time. The field, as it exists today, was dedicated in 1954 as Downs Field, after Karl Downs, former president of Samuel Huston College.

Images of Featured Homes and David Chapel are by Lauren Kerr, Preservation Austin's 2021 Homes Tour Photographer.