

# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail



**Modeled after the City's award-winning Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Trail, the Highwaymen Heritage Trail project is designed to commemorate Fort Pierce's world-renown mostly self-taught landscape African American artists and help convey their plight, fortitude, entrepreneurial spirit and accomplishments.**



# **The Highwaymen Heritage Trail**

## **Scholars and Collaborators**

**Professor Kristin G. Congdon, Professor Emerita, University of Central Florida**

**Patricia Borns, University of Miami, Multi-media Journalist, Miami Herald**

**Professor Walt Hines and Students from IRSC Kight Center for Emerging Technologies**

**Highwaymen – Al Black, Mary Ann Carroll, James Gibson, Carnell Smith**

**Doretha Hair Truesdell, Widow of Highwayman Alfred Hair**

**Zanobia Jefferson, Retired Art Teacher at Lincoln Park Academy**

**Marjorie Harrell, Lincoln Park Matriarch**

**Lincoln Park Main Street**





# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail

## Phase I

Funded through Grant from Florida Humanities Council and  
CDBG 'Art in Public Places' Activity

Included design and creation of website, trail map,  
promotional materials, and three (3) trail signs



# **The Highwaymen Heritage Trail**

## **Final Phase**

**Application submitted to FHC - December, 2013**

**Award announcement - February, 2014**

**Five (5) Trail Signs**

**Advertising and Promotion**

**Interactive Trail Map**

**Historic newspaper stories, photos, etc.**

**Links and advertisements for Lincoln Park and Fort Pierce restaurants,  
tourism venues and to Highwaymen websites**

**Promotion for Highwaymen, Lincoln Park and Fort Pierce events**

**Opportunity for visitors to leave comments and suggestions**

# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail Map



# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail

## Trail Signs

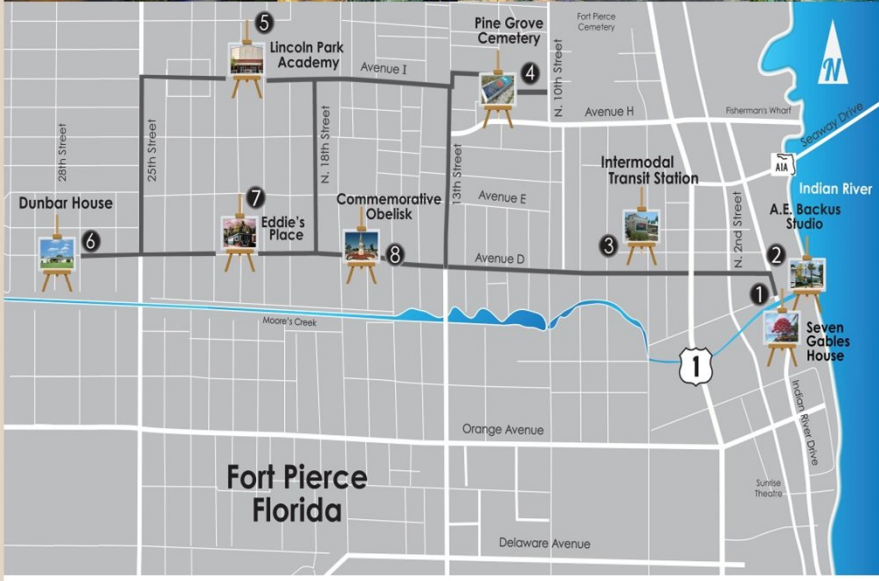
Large Kiosk: 5' tall, 4' wide, 2-sided high pressure laminate, full-color, 3/16" thick

Trail Marker: 3' tall, 2' wide, 1-sided high pressure laminate, full-color, 3/16" thick

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Sign Type</u>	<u>Location</u>
Phase I	Large Kiosk	482 N Indian River Drive (House of Seven Gables) <i>(Installed next to existing Zora Hurston Trail sign)</i>
Phase I	Trail Marker	2804 Dunbar Street (The Dunbar House)
Phase I	Trail Marker	1907 Avenue D (formerly Eddie's Place)
Final	Large Kiosk	10 <sup>th</sup> Street & Avenue K (Pine Grove Cemetery)
Final	Large Kiosk	725 Avenue D (Intermodal Transit Station)
Final	Trail Marker	122 Backus Avenue (A.E. Backus Studio) <i>(Installed next to existing Zora Hurston Trail sign)</i>
Final	Trail Marker	1806 Avenue I (Lincoln Park Academy) <i>(Installed next to existing Zora Hurston Trail sign)</i>
Final	Trail Marker	Avenue D and 15 <sup>th</sup> Street (Round-About - Obelisk)

# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail

TheHighwaymenTrail.com



- 1 Seven Gables House**  
482 North Indian River Drive  
The Chamber of Commerce and the beginning of Zora Neale Hurston Dust Tracks Heritage Trail.
- 2 A.E. Backus Studio**  
122 Backus Avenue  
Some of the Highwaymen met at the home of acclaimed landscape artist A.E. "Beacon" Backus, their mentor.
- 3 Intermodal Transit Station**  
North 8th Street and Avenue D  
The west wall of the Intermodal Transit Station features 24 engraved plaques featuring the names of each artist mounted on a huge mosaic of a colorful Royal Palociana tree, used by many of the Highwaymen artists in their own art.
- 4 Pine Grove Cemetery**  
10th Street and Avenue K  
Location of decorated graves of three Highwaymen - Alfred Hair, Livingston "Catto" Roberts and Johnny "Hook" Daniels. When Pine Grove Cemetery was started, blacks and whites were still segregated; Pine Grove is where blacks were buried, whites were buried elsewhere.
- 5 Lincoln Park Academy**  
1806 Avenue I  
Some of the Highwaymen attended the school and Zora Neale Hurston was a substitute teacher here. Zorobia Jefferson taught art to several Florida Highwaymen at Lincoln Park Academy.
- 6 The Dunbar House**  
2804 Dunbar Street  
Alfred Hair painted here - he often hung his paintings to dry on a clothes line. He lived here with his wife Doretha and their children.
- 7 Eddie's Place**  
1907 Avenue D  
Eddie's Place was a juke joint where several Florida Highwaymen congregated. Alfred Hair was shot and killed here in a bar fight by Julius Funderburk, a local ranch hand.
- 8 Highwaymen's Trail Obelisk**  
Avenue D and 18th Street  
This grant-funded 20-foot obelisk features mosaic duplicates of Highwaymen paintings. It was created by noted Florida artist Stephanie Jaffe Werner.

The Florida Highwaymen

- Curtis Arnett
- Hezekiah Baker
- Al Black
- Ellis Buckner
- George Buckner
- Robert Butler
- Mary Ann Carroll
- Johnny Daniels
- Willie Daniels
- Rodney Demps
- James Gibson
- Alfred Hair
- Issac Knight
- Robert L. Lewis
- John Maynor
- Roy McLendon
- Alfonso Moran
- Harold Newton
- Lemuel Newton
- Sam Newton
- Willie Reagan
- Carnell Smith
- Charles Walker
- Sylvester M. Wells
- Charles Wheeler



# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail

TheHighwaymenTrail.com



## They Captured the Essence of Florida



- Curtis Arnett
- Hezekiah Baker
- Al Black
- Ellis Buckner
- George Buckner
- Robert Butler



- Mary Ann Carroll
- Johnny Daniels
- Willie Daniels
- Rodney Demps
- James Gibson
- Alfred Hair



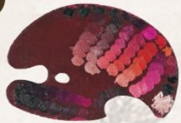
- Isaac Knight
- Robert Lewis
- John Maynor
- Roy McLendon
- Alfonso Moran
- Harold Newton
- Lemuel Newton



- Sam Newton
- Livingston Roberts
- Willie Reagan
- Carnell Smith
- Charles Walker
- Sylvester Wells

# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail

TheHighwaymenTrail.com



## EDDIE'S PLACE

**E**ddie's Place (also called Eddie's Drive-In), a juke joint on 1907 Avenue D, is the place where twenty-nine-year-old Alfred Hair was shot to death on the night of August 9, 1970.

There are many versions of what happened that night to the beloved leader of the Highwaymen. What is definite is that his killer was Julius (aka J. L. or Jitterbug) Funderburk, a 31 year-old migrant fruit picker who was known to Alfred and his good friend and fellow Highwayman, Livingston Roberts. After those facts, the story is told in many ways that often conflict, which is not unusual when describing events of this magnitude.



Eddie's Place by Herold Newton

Alfred Hair was home painting that Sunday evening when Livingston "Castro" Roberts came by and suggested they go to Eddie's to play pool and grab a beer. After the game, most people agree that an argument ensued over a woman named Beneva, who was once Funderburk's girlfriend. Castro, who loved to tease his friends, is said to have playfully teased Funderburk, by insinuating that Alfred and Beneva were having an affair. As soon as Castro saw that Funderburk was taking the ribbing seriously, he stopped. In a rage, Funderburk went to his car and got a gun. Returning to the bar, he hit Castro with the pistol and knocked him off his barstool.

Meanwhile, Alfred was at the jukebox playing one of that summer's most popular hits, "War" by Edwin Star. As the song blasted, "War! Huh! Good God Y'all! What is it good for? Absolutely nothing!" Funderburk shot Alfred twice as he was trying to leave.

Someone drove Alfred to Fort Pierce Memorial Hospital in his treasured Lincoln Mark III, though it isn't clear whom. Castro told his sister Gertrude Walker that he gave Alfred mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on the way to the emergency room. People who knew him well say that he would not have been calm or clear-headed enough to perform such an act. Castro also claimed that Alfred was still alive when they reached the hospital.

One version of the story is that the hospital staff did not respond quickly, and Alfred died waiting for help. Others disagree. Alfred was so well-known and loved in Fort Pierce, they say, that it is hard to imagine that anyone, white or black, would not have done everything they could to save him.

Alfred was pronounced dead at 11:40 p.m. Grief instantaneously streamed over family, friends and the entire Lincoln Park community. Everyone's story of Hair's death is that the hospital waiting room and parking lot were filled with people in shock.



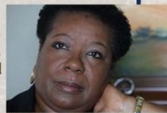
Alfred Hair

Alfred's wife Doretha says that he was dead when she got to the hospital. She lived only five minutes away and she knew before she walked in the door. She could feel it. She was combing her daughter's hair at home when the phone rang with the news of the shooting. She was no stranger to tragedy as she had watched her father kill her mother when she was 16. She jumped in her car, and drove herself to the hospital, turning one corner too fast. Doretha remembers, "But I knew he was gone. I knew when I was at that corner of 29th Street. And, everything was over at that moment."

Livingston Roberts and others blamed themselves for Alfred's death. Several felt they could have done something to save him. Doretha speculates that maybe they should have called for an ambulance; maybe Alfred shouldn't have gone to the bar that night; and maybe he couldn't have been saved after being shot twice.

Thousands came to Alfred's funeral and the community began a long process of grieving. Roberts left town shortly afterward, thinking no one would forgive him for his part in the event.

Julius Funderburk turned himself in to the police within hours of the shooting. He knew that if he didn't, he'd be a dead man. He was convicted and served five years in prison for killing Alfred Hair. When Funderburk was released, A.E. "Beanie" Backus, the acclaimed landscape artist and Alfred's mentor, quietly worked to keep him from returning to Fort Pierce. Backus grieved with the rest of Alfred's friends and did what he could to protect Alfred's family. Julius Funderburk died in 2012.



Doretha Hair Truesdell

## THE DUNBAR HOUSE

TheHighwaymenTrail.com



# The Highwaymen Heritage Trail

**I**f one place in Fort Pierce could be identified as the epicenter of the Highwaymen's early experience, it would be the home of Alfred and Doretha Hair, generally referred to as "the Dunbar house." This was where Alfred Hair painted and perfected his business approach. An easy walk from Avenue D, the Dunbar house was a gathering place for would-be artists and salesmen in the 1960s.



The home of Alfred and Doretha Hair, 2804 Dunbar Street

In and around the house, paintings were created, frames were made, and enthusiastic salesmen loaded their products into car trunks to sell. A competitive spirit was born at the Dunbar house, along with a strong belief in a prosperous future.



Alfred Hair

Fortuitously, the American Dream for dozens of artists, their families, and friends became a reality during the mid to late 1960s. According to Carnell Smith, in the early days, they worked hard for long hours Monday through Friday. They painted on a cheap roofing material called Upson board. They made their frames out of door trim. They hated to waste paint. Paint cost money, and money was what it was all about.

It wasn't unusual for the energetic Hair to make 20 or more paintings in a single day, and good times were evident as well. Nicknamed "Banana Boat," Hair frequently barbecued various kinds of meat on a grill at the Dunbar house and shared it with anyone who came around. Beer was readily available, as was a good story and friendly bantering. He often told people he wanted to make enough money to always have a Cadillac and to be a millionaire. He drove a Caddy but died before making a million.

Because Hair was so prolific, his mentor, A.E. "Beanie" Backus suggested he adopt a ghost name. According to Alfred's wife, Doretha Hair Truesdell, "He said Alfred was selling too many paintings with his name on them and was cheapening the work."



Taking Backus' advice, Hair created approximately 75 works under his ghost name - Freddy - between 1966 and 1967. According to Doretha, the 'Freddy' paintings were a collaboration of the husband and wife team, with Doretha painting some of the basic elements like the skies and backgrounds and Hair adding the details like trees, shadows, birds and people.

While we cannot really know what it was like for the Highwaymen in their early days, we can imagine that it must have been exciting, disappointing, hopeful and discouraging - all at the same time. For young African Americans living in Jim Crow-era Florida, there were very few options. They overcame the impasse by teaching themselves to paint then defied all barriers to get their works out to the public.

The Highwaymen were and are to this day a true phenomenon, not only artistically but also as an untold chapter of black history. Their stories, along with their paintings, inspire us to rise above our surroundings and circumstances and do things our own way, apart from the status quo.

The Dunbar house has been remodeled since the early days, but still remains a place of great historical value.



Alfred Hair is the founding member of the legendary group of artists known as The Highwaymen, famous for their original Florida landscape paintings.



# Thehighwaymentrail.com

*The Highwaymen Trail*

HOME

INTERVIEWS

ARTISTS

HERITAGE TRAIL

LEGACY



## THE HIGHWAYMEN LEGACY

The Highwaymen, also referred to as the Florida Highwaymen, are 26 storied, world-renown African American landscape artists who originated in the City of Fort Pierce. The Highwaymen Heritage Trail is a self-guided engaging and educational experience that recognizes these mostly self-taught landscape artists who have strong local, state, national and international significance.

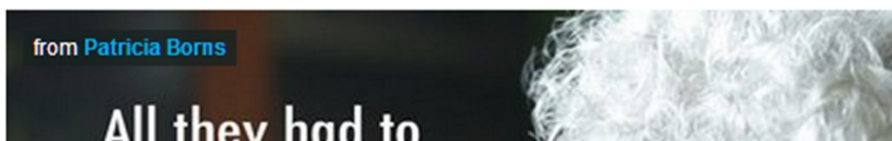
We cordially invite you to explore this website that is designed to compliment the Trail's large kiosks, site markers and significant public art. It is chocked full of oral histories, professional research, video and dynamic images that we hope will help convey the plight, fortitude, entrepreneurial spirit and accomplishments of these late Jim Crow-era African American Florida Hall of Fame artists from Lincoln Park, an iconic minority neighborhood in Fort Pierce.



GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME



IN CAME THE LIGHT



CURTIS ARNETT

HEZEKIAH BAKER

AL BLACK

ELLIS BUCKNER

GEORGE BUCKNER

ROBERT BUTLER

MARYANN CARROLL

JOHNNY DANIELS

WILLIE DANIELS

RODNEY DEMPS

JAMES GIBSON

ALFRED HAIR

ISSAC KNIGHT

ROBERT LEWIS

JOHN MAYNOR

R. A. MCLENDON

ALFONSO MORAN

HAROLD NEWTON

LEMUEL NEWTON

SAM NEWTON

LIVINGSTON ROBERTS

