

Courage. Dignity. Determination.

African American History
Sarasota / Manatee County Region

Tell our stories so that everybody knows who we are. The people who hate us don't know us. It's not because people love to hate.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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SARASOTA
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
CULTURAL
COALITION

The logo for the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition features a stylized sunburst or leaf-like pattern in shades of orange and yellow, positioned to the right of the text.



Introduction

Why the Sarasota / Manatee County Region?

10 Reasons. Sarasota is ranked one of the best places to live in the U.S. But conditions were unfavorable for Black pioneers and their descendants from the time of their arrival in 1800s, until the Civil Rights Movement and later. Newtown has existed for 110 years. Now “sites of memory” where they established community are recognized on national historic listings, coveted designations, and markers.

There are at least 10 Reasons (and more) that the Sarasota / Manatee County destination should be selected as the location of the Florida Museum of Black History. Criteria one provides the historical significance of people and places, timelines and archival news clips, photos and references that support this thesis.

One reason Sarasota must be considered is related to its history related to Native people. The Angola Settlement that existed along waterways in Manatee and Sarasota Counties is listed on the Underground Network to Freedom of the National Park Service. Angola is also poised to receive a UNESCO listing [UB2] [UB3] of the International Scientific Committee of the Routes of Enslaved Peoples.

Another major reason is outlined in this proposal. Florida is surrounded by water. But there was a time when only two miles of the state’s coastline was available for African Americans to enjoy. Sarasota Civil Rights activists asserted their right to enjoy the sand and surf. In doing so, their work is listed on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail alongside iconic sites such as Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama.

We are telling Sarasota’s story. It is a city rich in African American history with a wealth of historic resources. Young leaders with little money, influence or power banded together; and through tenacity, courage, creative solutions, and determination tore down racial barriers. Today, the world community has access to information online about their exploits.

10 reasons prove why Sarasota is the best destination for the Florida Museum of Black History.



Criteria 1: Historical Significance

Recently, a New York Times “36 Hours” column (March 14) described Sarasota’s African American community of Newtown, the year it was established and recorded oral history interviews with Black pioneers.

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/14/travel/things-to-do-sarasota.html?unlocked_article_code=1.ck0.XfAE.lkUp9aOG-fM3&smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare.

The work was only a segment of a more expansive research initiative to document the 100-year history of Newtown, among the city’s oldest neighborhoods. Newtown Alive chronicled the contributions and achievements of Black pioneers and activists during the transformative Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The work of activists positioned Sarasota alongside iconic Civil Rights destinations.

The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition, Inc. (SAACC) formed after significant research was completed for the City of Sarasota by consultant Vickie Oldham of Vickie O. Heritage Productions, Inc.

SAACC was founded to illuminate the accomplishments and heritage of visionary pioneers. The Coalition is resolute in its commitment to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical tapestry of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond. A driving force behind the resurgence of Newtown, a vibrant and thriving community that honors the African American experience is SAACC’s arts, cultural and history center at the historic Leonard Reid House. It is a beacon where individuals converge to live, learn, work, invest, and celebrate.

Why Sarasota as the destination for the Florida Museum of Black History? Stories about the Angola Settlement, beach desegregation, the area’s lynching history, its Major League Baseball Hall of Fame inductee John “Buck” O’Neil; and the historic resources completed and available to the public are reasons. Also, the historic designations of Overtown/Rosemary District and Newtown, the listing of the Leonard Reid House on the National Register of Historic Places and SAACC’s significant collection of Harlem Renaissance art stored at the Ringling Museum are points of pride. Currently, the artwork is on display at the Reid House. Reason #9 is because the largest Black organization in the country founded Dr. Carter G. Woodson called the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is located in Sarasota. Manasota ASALH’s mission is to promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history, and culture to the global community. Dr. Woodson is called the “Father of Black History.” Reason 10 details the awards received for all of the Black history projects completed by humanities scholars, Newtown and Overtown residents, staff at the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County, SAACC’s board of directors, philanthropic organizations, private donors, and volunteers.



Reason 1: The Angola Settlement



“Angola ranks as one of the most important locations related to African American history and heritage in Florida and the southwest.” Dr. Canter Brown

A multi-disciplinary initiative called “Looking for Angola” attracted the attention of the British Broadcasting Corporation shortly after it began in 2004. Dr. Canter Brown’s research (1990) jumpstarted the community-based public archaeology program. Vickie Oldham, a community scholar from Sarasota, created and led the initiative to locate material remains of the maroon community (Howard 2013, Baram 2014). The project began with forums to share the extant research and reach out to residents about their knowledge. A documentary was produced by Oldham, and test excavations were completed. The interdisciplinary team’s logo represented an image of a maroon and Seminole at Angola.

Since the 1600s, formerly enslaved Africans from plantations in Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas came into Spanish Florida seeking freedom. They were promised freedom by adopting Catholicism and fighting against the Americans. By the late 18th century, a community called Sarrazota (also known as Angola) existed in the Tampa-Sarasota Bay area and its residents included free people of color, formerly enslaved Africans, some of whom were called Black Seminoles, and Seminole Indians. All were driven out of their villages and towns by American incursions into Florida.

That maroon community thrived on Florida’s southwest coast from 1812-1821.

Angola was similar to many documented maroon communities which existed in North America during the Colonial period, but their presence was largely underreported by historians. The settlement near the Manatee River is believed to be one of the largest maroon communities in North America. The residents found a haven of safety and a beacon of freedom from slavery and the vengeance of Andrew Jackson by living undetected, surrounded by dense vegetation and rough terrain.



Over the early 19th century, maroons created communities at Prospect Bluff, Suwannee, and Angola, continually being pushed south by threats of slave raids and US military interventions. Attacks destroyed Prospect Bluff in 1816, Suwannee in 1818, and Angola in 1821. But the struggle for freedom continued. Map credit: Uzi Baram

Quick Facts: The Raid Of Angola

- **The Adams-Onís Treaty signed in 1819**, converted Florida from a territory of Spain to a territory of the U.S. and no longer a haven for freedom-seeking Africans. Andrew Jackson was determined to rid the territory of Seminole Indians and free people of color.
- **Andrew Jackson became the provisional governor** of Florida in 1821 (and later the seventh U.S. President).
- **Jackson, a slave trader, and owner** was determined to rid the territory of maroons (Seminole Indians and free people of color) as a result of battles fought against them.
- **As many as 750 people lived in the Angola Settlement.** They came in waves, as more battles were won and lost, and more Black Seminole survivors retreated further south into Spanish Florida, according to historian Dr. Canter Brown.
- **Jackson sought permission** to destroy the maroon community.
- **U.S. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun** directed Jackson to take no action.
- **Jackson quietly refused the order** and sent his allies to destroy the Angola community.
- **Men, women, and children** were killed in 1821.
- **A remnant of Angola survivors escaped** to Central Florida and others ran south, crossed the gulf stream at Cape Florida (present day Key Biscayne) and landed on Andros Island in The Bahamas where there is a descendant population of Black Seminoles.
- **The destruction of Angola in 1821** effectively eliminated the presence of free African American people in the area until 20 years after the end of the Civil War.



Red Bays Village is a community on the northwest coast of Andros Island where many Angola descendants reside.

Rev. Newton's History Of Red Bays

In 1821 the United States acquired Florida from Spain, setting the stage for three wars against the Seminole Indians. Previous to the United States taking over Florida, it had been a haven for runaway slaves from Georgia and Alabama, and these people had joined the Seminole Indians.

The Negroes now found themselves again in the position of being captured as runaway slaves and moved further and further south in Florida to escape the Americans who were moving in. They were driven to the Everglades and to Cape Sable, where they met Bahamian Privateers and pirates who told them of the free land to the east of the Bahamas as part of the British Empire having abolished slavery in 1838. In ones and twos, in their dugout canoes, the Negro Seminoles crossed the Gulf Stream and landed along the Western Shore of Andros from the Souther Cays south over a 30-year period. Some Seminole Indians apparently also migrated as a result of their long struggle with the white men. They congregated at Red Bays, and their history and a description of the settlement as it is today, follows.

Red Bays, a settlement of Andros Island, is a very small community. It has a population of 88 and lies North and South on the West Side of the Island.

The largest portion of the settlement is owned by the Lewis family who came from America in about 1840. The first Lewis came with his wife and children in a small boat to seek freedom, and was the grandfather of Mr. Joseph Lewis. He landed at one of the creeks, named "Blue Creek," and went about 20 miles inland, where he stayed for several years until a hurricane sent water covering a portion of the land where he was, which he named after himself, "Sammy Lewis."

After the hurricane he came along shore until he reached the place now called "Red Bays." He stayed there for some time and afterwards purchased about 10 acres of land. He was later joined by the other families: the Blowlegs, Russells and the McNeils. The population grew and they made a church where they used to worship God.

The 1866 hurricane did great damage to this Settlement and many houses, boats and lives were lost. It was said that as the eye of the hurricane came over the Settlement the spongers went on Red Cays to secure their sponges, and while there an argument was in progress. The tide came from the West and covered the Cay. Of the 38 men on the Cay only eight survived, the rest drowned and a part from those who were on their boats, the survivors were compelled to move to a higher part of the land. The Russells, the McNeils and the Blowlegs moved to the eastern part of the island, to Lowe Sound, Nicoll's Town and Mastix Point where the families of many still survive. The Lewis family moved to the Lewis Coppice south of the Red Bays. This was a high stand of timber, so high that the first man who went through it was lost for two days, which is why that part of the coppice is

ing prosperity to the community until some evil-minded men got together and received the goods and never paid. This discouraged the members, and the union was broken up.

In the years 1945 and 1946 Mr. Newton launched a new idea, that of the fruit growing. The people were encouraged to select sour orange seeds and plant these into pots made from red soil earth. These seeds stayed in the earth for about two months more. When they got big enough, the sweet orange shoot was budded on to the sour orange root. This new idea proved successful and soon even the skeptics came to join the fruit-growing program. The program was carried on until the death of Mr. Newton in 1950. He will be remembered by all for his outstanding effort for the people of Red Bays, especially those who were sometimes able to ship as much as 3-4,000 fruits per year to Nassau.

The Agricultural and Marine Products Board encouraged this program and sent budding equipment, oil emulsion and other necessities. Then Hurricane Betsy, the destroyer of 1965, came.

During the long years of the early part of the Red Bays history, there was no school, and only those people who had relatives in Lowe Sound or other settlements were able to send their children to school, the other children having to stay at home without schooling.

For this reason, many people cannot read or write even now. My father, a grade six scholar at that time, became sorry for the people and in the year 1935 applied for the position of headteacher of Red Bays. This was granted by the former Board of Education.

He was obliged to work for six months without payment. After that he was paid 12 pounds per year. He worked under these conditions for some time and was later able to have the designation of the school change from "Grant-in-Aid" school to "Public" school. The government owned no land at the settlement at that time and by the kind permission of the late Rev. Daniel Dean, the writer's grandfather kept school in the Baptist Church for about four years. With the assistance of the community he was able to have built in 1939 a large school made by pine torch, wattles and tatch leaves. About 1941, a few bags of cement and a few pounds were given to make the floor. This building lasted for 21 years before it collapsed. Mr. Newton did all his teaching in this building and did a fine job.

After Mr. Newton's death in 1950 (Sept. 1) the writer succeeded him and worked in the same building for six years before the first school house ever built in Red Bays was under my supervision. I also taught for five years under sun and sky with trees as shelter from sun and rain. When the present school building was finally built the following proverb was put up in it: "He who laughs last laughs best," and again, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Psalm 27:14.

Another outstanding effort done by my father was the road leading from



WELCOME: Town sign includes illustration of Seminole scene.



RED BAYS

The people began to farm, and although being engaged in the sponge industry, were more successful in the fruit growing, and this made the settlement a fruit-growing center.

The late Mr. Watkins Lewis, father of Joseph Lewis, brought 65 acres of land and lived here more than 96 years before he died. Thirty acres of land was used for farming and fruit growing. Fruits were sold and exchanged in the United States by an old man, Captain Kelly, of the "Heaths Darling" who paid the people in money and clothes for the fruit and sold them in the United States. This ship used to anchor at a grass patch named "Harbour Island Grass" just abreast of the hutlover, a sound inland leading out to Lowe Sound from Red Bays. Going through this sound, boats must be pulled as far as two miles to reach deeper water.

In 1899, another severe hurricane afflicted the settlement. As the wind began to come up, the men went down to secure their boats but the tide that happened in the earlier hurricane caught them unaware and separated them from the land, and it was obvious that the water could cover the spit of the land they were on. Mr. Joseph Lewis decided to swim for his life and struck out towards the settlement. But the tide carried him in a different direction and he spent two days and two nights in the water along with the frogs, snakes and other creatures, holding on to pieces of driftwood. Finally, the only survivor of the men who left the settlement, Lewis arrived at Quarter Master, a now uninhabited little settlement about four miles from Lowe Sound. The rest of the people suffered loss of crops and fruit trees, but the water never covered the settlement.

It came as far as the brow of the hill and stayed here. Another dangerous hurricane was the 1926 one. I was at the time about one year old. Many houses were broken down but there was no loss of life. Trees were broken but the inhabitants kept on planting.

After these hurricanes, things were very poor. A little supply of food and lumber was given by Government in the whole area but very little reached Red Bays. However, the people continued to succeed in their fruit growing despite all the disasters.

During the years 1935 to 1950, my father was interested in farming. About 1940 or 1943, he established a farmer's union association and with everyone working together they made rapid progress. A team of men, women and children were seen every morning going from the settlement to the former Red Bay, where they used to work for the whole day. The chief crops were pigeon peas, beans, corn, and benny (sesame seed). As much as 60 bushels of benny were shipped into Nassau where, at the time, it was sold for a very low price of ninepence a quart. The money was spent to buy food and sold to the members of the union. Charcoal was also burned and sold, the proceeds going to union funds.

This was a great help to the people and was bring-

ing first to establish road building in Red Bays. When he came here, he saw that the Settlement of Red Bays and the nearest neighboring Settlement was made by foot-paths and tracks, between swamps and marshy pine forest, and he pitied their condition.

My Forsythe, acting as District Commissioner at that time (1937-1945), gave a grant of five pounds to start the road to the Bay. When this money was spent, Mr. Newton asked the inhabitants to give a few days work as a Community effort. This they willingly did and built the road to a distance of about one-quarter mile. Mr. Forsythe's interest was aroused and he gave a further grant of fifteen pounds. This of course did not finish the road but more than three-quarters of a mile of it was finished. Afterwards the road was brought to completion. Many times in rainy season when officials visited Red Bays Beach, shoes had to be taken off at the bay because two to three feet of water had to be crossed from the bay to the settlement.

In August of 1968, the Owens Illinois Company, properly known as Bahamas Agricultural Industries Limited, generously put through a road to our settlement in order to cut the timber in our area.

The road was officially declared open by the Company at ceremonies held at Red Bays on Aug. 3, 1968 when 200 visitors came. This road immediately allowed the people to sell all of their mango crop without leaving their settlement and in the near future it is likely that bonfish enthusiasts will be coming to Red Bays for the wonderful bonfishing on our shores.

I believe that this is an appropriate spot to finish my short history, as the opening of our road brings the firm chapters to a close, and will be opening up a whole new story.

— Rev. Bertram A. Newton, 76, is a descendant of Seminoles who arrived on Andros in the 1840s. He was principal of Red Bays School for 39 1/2 years and currently is pastor of the New Salem Baptist Church. This story was written in August of 1968 and reprinted from his book, *A History of Red Bays, Andros*.

Rev. Bertram A. Newton, a third-generation descendant of Moses Newton, died in 2013 at the age of 88. Rev. Newton was a preacher, teacher, and justice of the peace. In 1968, Rev. Newton printed a *History of Red Bays*, which was reprinted in the *Seminole Tribune* in April 13, 2001.

The insights from Rev. Bertram start in the 1830s and were researched by the "Looking for Angola" team that facilitated the earlier origin of the ancestors of the people of Red Bays and elsewhere on Andros.

1799-1803	State of Muskogee
1812	Patriots Rebellion and War of 1812
1814-1816	British Fort Prospect Bluff and its destruction
1817	Gregor MacGregor and the Republic of the Floridas
1818	Arbutnot and Ambrister incident and Battle of Suwannee
1818-1821	Negotiations of the Adams-Onís Treaty
1821	Slave raid

Timeline for the international intrigue in the early 19th century.

From the Charleston City Gazette.

Advice to the Southern Planters.

Towards the end of the month of April last, some men of influence and fortune residing somewhere in the western country, thought of making a speculation in order to obtain Slaves for a trifle. For this purpose, they hired Charles Miller, William Weatherford, Adam, alias Allamouchee, all half breed Indians, and Daniel Perimans a mulatto, and under these chief, were engaged about two hundred Cowetas Indians. They were ordered to proceed along the western coast of East Florida, southerly, and there take, in the name of the United States, and make prisoners of all the men of colour, including women and children, they would be able to find, and bring them all, well secured, to a certain place, which has been kept a secret.

The expedition took place, under the chief command of Charles Miller. They arrived at Sazazota, surprised and captured about 300 of them, plundered their plantations, set on fire all their houses, and then proceeding southerly captured several others; and on the 17th day of June, arrived at the Spanish Ranches, in Pointerrass Key, in Carlos Bay, where not finding as many Negroes as they expected, they plundered the Spanish fishermen of more than 2000 dollars worth of property, besides committing the greatest excess; with their

plunder and prisoners they returned to the place appointed for the deposit of both.

But the terror thus spread along the Western Coast of East Florida, broke all the establishments of both blacks and Indians, who fled in great consternation. The blacks principally, thought they could not save their lives but by abandoning the country; therefore, they, by small parties and in their Indian canoes, doubled Cape Sable and arrived at Key Taviniere, which is the general place of rendezvous for all the English wreckers, from Nassau, Providence; an agreement was soon entered into between them, and about 250 of these negroes were by the wreckers carried to Nassau and clandestinely landed. On the 7th of Oct. last, about 40 more were at Key Taviniere, ready to take their departure for Nassau; these were the stragglers who had found it difficult to make their escape, and had remained concealed in the forests.

Now all these Negroes, as well as those captured by the Indians, and those gone to Nassau, are runaway Slaves, from the Planters on St. John's River, in Florida, Georgia, Carolina, and a few from Alabama.

Cannot those Planters who have had their Negroes missing recover them by means of these chiefs I have named, and who are so well known by the parts they have been playing for some time past in the late Indian wars, and discover who are those speculative gentlemen who now hold their Negroes, and if they were lawfully their slaves? Could not all those Negroes unlawfully introduced into Nassau be also recovered by an application to the English Governor, backed by a formal demand from the Government of the United States?

Let the Southern Planters reflect on the above. I can assure them that they may depend on the correctness of the statement I have just given to them.

AN EYE-WITNESS.

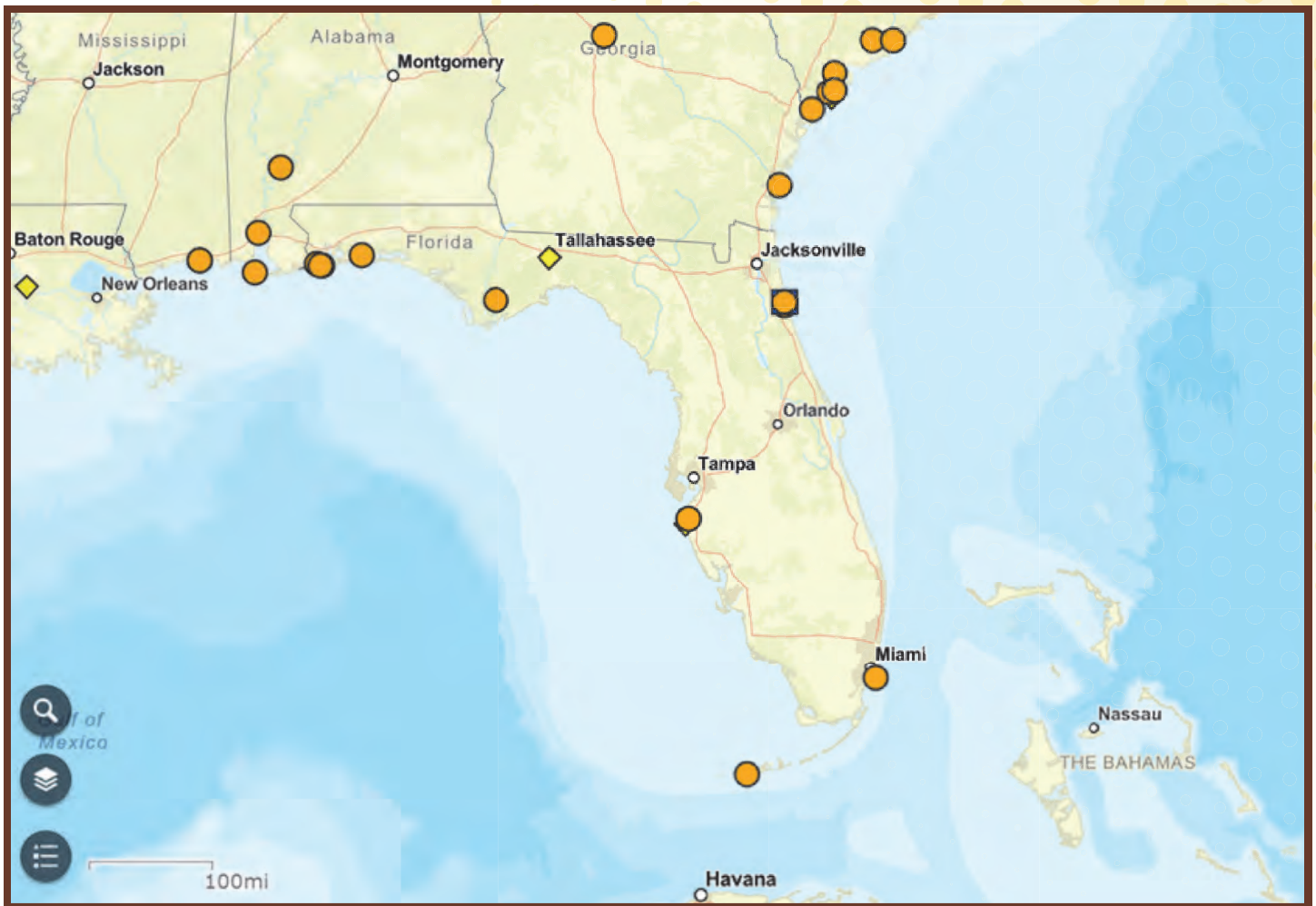
A newspaper account noted "terror thus spread along the Western Coast of East Florida," that is the Gulf Coast of today's Florida. Dr. Brown (1990) located the article about the destruction of the maroon settlement during the late spring and early summer of 1821 in the Charleston, South Carolina, City Gazette and Commercial Advertiser.

The account is chilling and provides a glimpse into the world of ranchos and maroons, and the escape by many to the Bahamas.

That account puts into context the observation of an early Florida historian John Lee Williams who wrote: "The point between these two rivers is called Negro Point. The famous Arbuthnot and Ambrister had at one time a plantation here cultivated by two hundred negroes. The ruins of their cabins, and domestic utensils are still seen on the old fields."

A team of archaeologists began the search for Angola artifacts in 2004. Dr. Uzi Baram then professor of anthropology at New College of Florida unearthed ceramics linked to the period of Angola's existence and to traders operating in the area as well as remnants of a structure's foundation. The most extensive material remains come from the excavations by the Manatee Mineral Spring (Baram 2014, Baram 2021). Notable material culture include:

- 1808 Coin
- Ritual items (a half glass projectile point and a G-shaped ornament)
- Kaolin tobacco pipes
- Pearlware
- A Freshwater Well
- Dog burial



Angola is listed on the Underground Railroad, the Network to Freedom by National Park Service (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/undergroundrailroad/index.htm>).

Beginning in the 17th century and continuing through the mid-19th century in the United States, enslaved African Americans resisted bondage to gain their freedom through acts of self-emancipation. The individuals who sought this freedom from enslavement, known as freedom seekers, and those who assisted along the way, united together to form what is known as the Underground Railroad. Stories of escape demonstrate the significance of the Underground Railroad in the eradication of slavery as a cornerstone of the national civil rights movement. Angola is listed on the NPS Underground Network to Freedom.

To balance the well-known northern escape route to Canada, the National Park Service organized the 6th Annual National Underground Railroad Conference in St. Augustine, Florida in June 2012 to highlight the southern escape route.

Angola organized beginning in the 1770s and grew as refugees from military clashes at Prospect Bluff and Suwannee drove maroons southward. The community, made up of agricultural hamlets, stretched from where the Braden River meets the Manatee River to Sarasota Bay. Archaeological excavations by the Manatee Mineral Spring provide a view of daily life for these freedom-seeking people.



Virtual Reconstruction of the Village of Angola by the Manatee Mineral Spring.

HISTORIC RESOURCES (partial list)

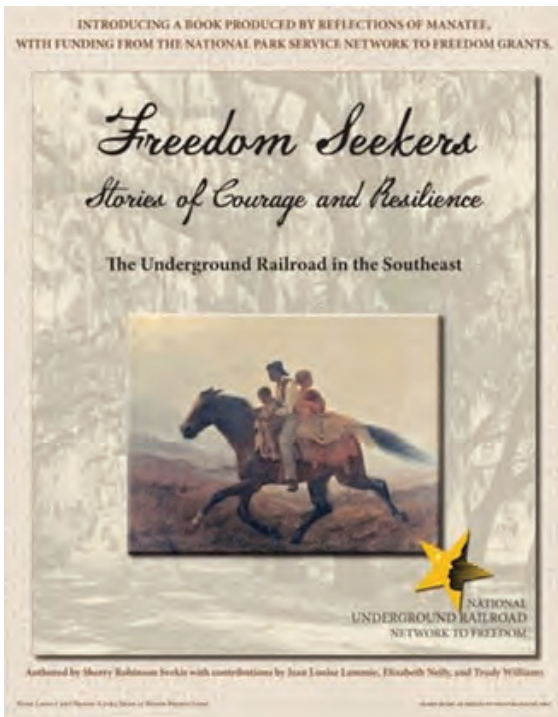
Feature length documentary

- Finding Angola: Documenting Manatee County's First Black Settlement - Sarasota Film Festival <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-h1GK8Ru6w> (60 minutes long, features Baram walking at Manatee Mineral Springs Park and interviews with Vickie Oldham and Rosalyn Howard).
- LCV Cities Tour - Tampa: Angola - Escaped Slave Community https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ_etClbc

School Curriculum Materials

There are available resources about Angola and the Network to Freedom that can be presented as school curriculum to meet state standards.

1. Freedom Seekers: Stories of Courage and Resilience
Reflections of Manatee 2023 publication



2. Looking for Angola tabloids (4):

- Roots of Community
- History
- Archeology
- The Journey Continues

Newspapers in Education 2008 publication



Roots of Community



History



Archeology



The Journey Continues

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[Finding Angola: Documenting Manatee County's First Black Settlement - Sarasota Film Festival](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-h1GK8Ru6w) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-h1GK8Ru6w> (60 minutes long, features Baram walking at Manatee Mineral Springs Park and interviews with Vickie Oldham and Rosalyn Howard).

[LCV Cities Tour - Tampa: Angola - Escaped Slave Community](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ_etClbc) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ_etClbc

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There are available resources about Angola and the Network to Freedom that can be presented as school curriculum to meet state standards.

1. Freedom Seekers: Stories of Courage and Resilience Reflections of Manatee 2023 publication

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Reason 2: Beach Desegregation Trolley & Bus Tour Traces Newtown Car Caravans Route to Integrate Sarasota Beaches

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DAYS OF OPERATION/ HOURS OF OPERATION

Monthly, Group Bookings By Appointment
10 a.m. - Noon; 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

COST OF ADMISSION

\$40/per person

ESTIMATED TOTAL VISITORS LAST YEAR

2017 / 100
September, 2018 / 800

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF STUDENT VISITORS

150

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF GROUP TOUR GUESTS

18 groups, 700 guests

HISTORICAL DESIGNATION

Sarasota County Historic Marker at Lido Beach



MOST MEANINGFUL CLAIM IN CONNECTION TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Sarasota NAACP President Neil Humphrey, Sr. put Newtown on the map of a movement in the early stages of the national battle for civil rights. “Beach wade-ins” of the 1950s drew media attention and opened up an early front in the fight for equal rights years before better-known state and national victories of the 1960s. The wade-ins, modeled after lunch counter sit-ins coupled with activists’ attendance at city and county commission meetings moved the needle toward beach access at a time when less than two miles of state beaches out of a total 2,000 miles were open for use by African Americans.

The campaign to end beach segregation began close to the same time as the Brown vs. Board of Education decision and occurred before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became the leader of the Civil Rights Movement. As a result of the highly publicized car caravans and wade-ins (there are over 1,800 stories about “the Negro Beach Issue” in Sarasota that appear in an archival newspaper database), activists began pushing for the integration of beaches in locations such as St. Augustine, Miami, Rainbow Beach in Chicago, throughout Mississippi and in South Africa.

A bus tour of historic Overtown and Newtown includes tracing the same route of beach activists. It is led by a community scholar who describes significant locations along the route and their meaning. Wade-in participants step aboard to share their personal experiences of traveling in the caravans. The most moving part of the tour is the ride on the Ringling Bridge across Sarasota Bay to the beach.

ARTICLES, NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE CLIPPINGS

Several documents are included and a partial list is in the bibliography

Desegregating Sarasota County Beaches

African American leaders and residents of the Newtown and Overtown communities came to Sarasota from small towns in Florida and southern states for employment, and opportunities to improve their lives. Of paramount importance were three institutions: church, family and school.

Upon arrival, they faced the challenges of Jim Crow policies. An indomitable spirit led residents to survive the harsh realities of living in a “sun down town.” They built their own homes, churches, schools; and established self- help benevolent organizations, two thriving business districts and a village where residents exercised control over their lives.

Segregation prohibited access to public accommodations that Sarasota’s white residents enjoyed. African American leaders began asserting their rights and articulating their desire for equal access to county beaches before Rosa Parks’ arrest for refusing to give up her bus seat to a man in Alabama on December 1, 1955. The Brown vs. Board of Education decision had become law close to the same time period. Back then, only a small circle of community organizers knew about the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

African American leaders in South Florida challenged the segregation of public beaches in 1946, but faced continuous roadblocks and barriers. The Urban League of Greater Miami and Negro Service Council developed an idea similar to lunch counter sit-ins that attracted national media attention. The Negro Professional and Business Men’s League also voiced concerns about the paucity of public beaches open to blacks. They penned a petition asking Broward County Commissioners for a “public bathing beach for colored people.” The request produced little action.

In Florida, less than 2 miles of beach was open to blacks out of 2,000 miles of beach that stretched across the state.

In 1951, a campaign began to open public spaces to Newtown residents with a simple request for a beach. Newtown entrepreneur Mary Emma Jones attended a Sarasota County Commission meeting and requested that lawmakers provide a beach for “colored residents.” The same year, county commissioners purchased its first public beach.

In 1952, after voters approved a recreational bond that included beach acquisition, commissioners proposed a swimming pool in the black neighborhood.

Another Sarasota leader, frustrated over the lack of progress over the beach issue, began to more aggressively organize for change. Sarasota NAACP president Neil Humphrey Sr. served in the Navy during World War II. He moved from Plant City, Florida to Sarasota looking for a better quality of life for his family in 1935. After starting a business called Humphrey’s Pharmacy, located in the heart of Newtown’s business district, he became a respected community leader. Residents purchased over-the-counter medications, snacks, household goods and the African American weekly *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper.

Mr. Humphrey read about news events and experienced the same impatience and uneasiness of civil rights leaders throughout the country.

In a *Herald Tribune* article, written in celebration of Newtown's 2014 centennial, reporter Ian Cummings wrote:

"Newtown had no beaches. Only nine miles away, others enjoyed the best beach in the world. The white sands of Lido were close. But for children growing up in Newtown 60 years ago, those beautiful sandy shores were off-limits. There were no signs posted, and no laws on the books prohibiting use. It was "understood," say people who remember the 1950s."

Mr. Humphrey attended another commission meeting to advocate for a beach on behalf of black residents and continued calls for desegregation. The requests fell on deaf ears and were met with resistance from white residents and hand wringing among city and county officials.

In September 1955, several carpools of Newtown residents led by Mr. Humphrey challenged the old order by piling into cars, and driving to Lido Beach. They swam and walked the shores.

A *Tampa Morning Tribune* article on Friday, September 30 published the headline, "Sarasotans Calm as Negroes Swim at City's Lido Beach."

On Oct. 3, 1955, about 100 black residents in a car caravan returned to the shores and waded in the water.

"It was a time of challenges," said the late Dr. Edward E. James II, a community activist who was involved in the caravans as a high school student. "They didn't want to do anything to hurt the tourist trade. But that didn't mean they weren't malicious and ironclad in what they would do, like other Southern towns."

Black swimmers continued breaking unwritten rules at Lido Beach and made front-page news. Police officers came to monitor the scene. Articles dubbed the civic crisis "The Negro Beach Issue" and described Sarasota as a "powder keg."

County and City Commissioners refused to advance the request and even closed Lido Beach temporarily claiming erosion as the cause. Longboat Key town leaders banned public beaches. After delays and denials, committees were organized to research a suitable location for a "colored beach" and develop a plan for purchase. Public officials and staffers also attended conferences with others throughout the state. Several sites on Casey, Longboat and Siesta Keys were discussed; also a manmade island between Lido and Siesta Key that required transport by ferry. Beach residents of Siesta Key and Midnight Pass balked during a meeting that lasted 5 hours with 27 speakers. A beach set aside for enjoyment by black residents never gained public approval.

Mr. Humphrey consulted with Tampa NAACP leaders and pushed for full beach integration. Older black residents comfortable with segregation and fearful of clashes with whites and a backlash were satisfied with the status quo and said, a "half loaf is better than none."

Meantime, city officials advanced a proposal in 1956 to construct a community pool in Newtown to quell the controversy. At a public meeting County Commissioner Glenn R. Leach said:

"I didn't come out here to ram a swimming pool down your throats. But we just felt you would be

satisfied with a swimming pool where you don't have to be worrying about jellyfish and stingrays." Amid a sea of stoic faces, a member of the black community stood up and drew laughter in the chamber. "If white folks can put up with jellyfish and stingrays, I think maybe we people can put up with them too."

City officials dedicated a community pool in November 1957 at what was known then as the Newtown Recreation Center. During the ribbon cutting, a group of Newtown residents sent a clear message. They left the ceremony to hold a wade-in at Lido.

After many editorials, articles and debate about the issue, a beach in south Venice more than 40 miles from the community was unofficially sanctioned for Newtown residents and their guests. The landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It prohibited the segregation of public accommodations and made it a crime to keep Newtown residents from any beach anywhere.

Similar to the school district's compliance with the Brown vs. Board of Education decision six years after passage, it took several years more before Sarasota County beaches were fully integrated. Mr. Humphrey put Newtown on the map of a movement in the early stages of a national battle for civil rights. Beach wade-ins drew media attention and opened up an early front in the fight for civil rights, years before better-known state and national victories of the 1960s.

The word desegregation became a byword and battle cry for activists integrating beaches in locations such as St. Augustine, Miami, Rainbow Beach in Chicago, throughout Mississippi and South Africa. A bus tour of historic Overtown and Newtown includes traveling the same route of beach activists. A tour stop is Jetson's Gallery. Its walls are filled with archival photographs and newspaper articles documenting the actions of NAACP members. A community scholar points out the location of Mr. Humphrey's Pharmacy and the flagpole where carpoolers met. Wade-in participants Pam Cherry Moreland, Wade Harvin and former Sarasota mayor Fredd Atkins step aboard to share their personal caravan experiences. The most moving part of the tour is traveling on the Ringling Bridge across Sarasota Bay to the beach.

Sarasota “Wade Ins”

TIMELINE

The goal of wade-ins by African Americans residents in Sarasota was to gain equal access to safe public beaches and pools. The work of Sarasota NAACP president Neil Humphrey, Sr. influenced national wade-ins in Rainbow Beach, Chicago, throughout Mississippi and in South Africa.

There was little action on beach integration in Florida until the mid 40s when Broward County’s black leaders set the stage for a campaign to begin.

1945

African American leaders in Dade County began planning to challenge and draw attention to the issue. Under the Urban League of Greater Miami, Negro Service Council members developed a spin off of the lunch counter sit-ins that had attracted national attention. They proposed nonviolent “wade-ins” to gain equal access at Florida beaches and pools. Wade-ins began at Baker’s Haulover Beach.

African Americans entered the water with white beachgoers.
Activists anticipated court challenges after arrests.

1946

May 14 - The Negro Professional and Business Men’s League of Fort Lauderdale attempted to make the concern over lack of public beaches a recognized issue. Members presented a petition before the Broward County Commission requesting “a public bathing beach for colored people.” The county appointed a committee to research the issue, but there was little action.

1949

City of Fort Lauderdale officials attempted to address the request again but were unsuccessful.

1952

The first sign of change came when the Fort Lauderdale Hotel Association publically supported a campaign for an African American recreational beach.

1953

Broward County’s only “colored beach” was purchased by developers. It became known as Galt Ocean Mile. The sale meant African Americans had no beach options. Broward County finally purchased a strip of land in the Everglades for use by African Americans, but there was no road to the isolated shores. A ferry provided access but was unreliable and took a while to reach the destination. The beach had no facilities, tables, shelter, or bathrooms.

1955

June 17 - 125 residents in Sarasota's African American community of Newtown attended a County Commission meeting to speak against a proposed swimming pool that would put an end to the request for their own public beach. No vote was taken on the issue, although there was a discussion about finding a suitable location. A committee was organized to study the issue.

October 3 - 100 Newtown residents piled into cars and staged wade-ins at Lido Beach. City of Sarasota officials placed "no parking" signs to turn around the caravans and closed the beach. Anticipating that it was a temporary closure, Sarasota NAACP leader John Rivers returned to the beach soon after. The caravans expanded.

A series of articles about beach access in other communities in the state were published locally. Reports found that less than 2 miles of Florida's coastline was "set aside for Negro use."

Nov. 29 - Longboat Town Council banned public beaches. The Longboat Key Town Council located in Sarasota County banned public beaches.

1956

Mid-February, the Sarasota County Commission appointed a citizen's committee to submit recommendations for the location of a "Negro" beach. One recommendation listed land near Midnight Pass on Siesta Key (same location recommended by a group two years prior). Another recommendation was the construction of a community swimming pool.

300 Midnight Pass and Siesta Key residents attended a commission meeting to speak against the plan. The meeting lasted five hours.

June 6 - At Booker school, architects presented a plan to construct the Newtown pool.

September 7 - Sarasota County Commissioners discussed fencing in all beaches and requiring the purchase of a \$1.25 car tag to access the beach.

September 25 - Sarasota County Commissioners reject the Siesta Key location.

Pulitzer Prize winning writer and Siesta Key resident Mackinley Kantor lambasted commissioners and threatened to write an article in a national publication to expose what he termed "cowardice."

October 2 - Sarasota city officials announced plans to construct a neighborhood pool for two reasons: 1) improve recreational facilities in Newtown; 2) prevent Lido Beach integration.

1957

November 27 - A "colored swimming pool" was dedicated to appease Newtown residents. A group left the ribbon cutting to continue wade-ins demanding equal access to public beaches.

1960

In September, wade-ins gained more news headlines. The NAACP filed a lawsuit supporting black residents in Miami. The court order was not enforced. Discrimination of public swimming facilities continued.

1961

During summer months, there were frequent wade-ins in Fort Lauderdale. Activists faced police officers and Ku Klux Klan members carrying axes.

1962

Fort Lauderdale officials filed a lawsuit blaming blacks for causing “chaos” and “disturbing the peace.” A state judge ruled against segregated beaches there.

1964

June 17- St. Augustine black and white activists held a 2-hour wade-in.

A week later, on June 24, white beachgoers in St. Augustine set up a physical barricade preventing black waders from entering the water. The court order compelled police to provide protection. That night, white groups held a rally of anti-black speeches and 300 whites marched against beach integration.

The next day, African Americans entered Monson Motor Lodge, a testing ground for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Black swimmers entered the motel’s pool. The hotel manager poured a bottle of acid into the water and an off duty policeman jumped into the water and beat the swimmers who were later arrested. Photos of the act went “viral” allowing a worldwide audience to view the violence.

June 22 - Police arrested 22 waders in St. Augustine. A Danish photographer was brutally beaten.

June 25 - The most violent incident occurred in St. Augustine during the Civil Rights campaign. Whites and police officers attacked 75 waders. That night, 500 whites attacked St. Augustine protesters, hospitalizing 19 and causing severe injuries.

1964

On July 2, the landmark Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin for the first time. Swimming facilities throughout Florida and the country opened to African Americans.

A beach south of Venice in Sarasota County (40 miles from Newtown), adjacent to the airport and near the sewage treatment plant now known as Caspersen Beach was the unofficial destination for Newtown beachgoers, the few that owned automobiles.

1967

March 13 - Mr. Humphrey affirms the Sarasota NAACP’s priority: to integrate all Sarasota beaches.

14-Man Committee Asked To Study Problem

County Passes Negro Beach Issue To Citizens

The Board of County Commissioners yesterday failed to take the direct action expected, but instead, for the third time in three years, named a citizens advisory committee to carry the much-scuffed ball in the problem of securing a Negro beach.

The action, termed a "double-cross" by a member of the board itself, passed 3 to 2 on a roll call vote.

Tension marked the beginning of the special meeting as a proposal by Commissioner Glen R.

Leach for immediate action was tabled by a majority vote.

Then, after more than an hour's further discussion, the board voted to adopt the move to set up the citizens group. The motion was offered by Commissioner A. D. Corson, who had also moved Leach's proposal be put aside.

Leach protested that the full board had been taken into his confidence in the preparation of his proposal—to condemn land for a fourth public beach to be used by Negroes, to fence in all beaches

and require purchase of a \$1.25 car tag to allow beach use by citizens. He also claimed he had heard nothing of Corson's proposal until it was read and that "I have been excluded for its preparation."

(Complete text of Commissioner Corson and Leach's proposals on page eight)

He added, however, "I am solely interested in the solution, not the means."

Corson said some of the points

in the Leach proposal had merit but that he did not agree with others.

"I hope what you prepared accomplishes the results desired," Leach stated.

After extensive discussion among both commissioners and a number of citizens present, the motion came up for vote, and Leach requested a roll call vote. Voting for it were Corson, Commissioner Edwin F. McCann, who seconded it, and Commission Chairman Gustin M. Nelson. Siding with Leach

in opposition was Commissioner Jacob F. Baumgartner.

After the meeting, Leach commented to a Herald-Tribune reporter in passing, "That's what I call a thorough doublecross."

Corson, reading a prepared statement, put forth the suggestion of the use of the advisory committee—with George Higgins named temporary chairman—and said its purpose would be "to determine and recommend such proposals as they deem advisable for the establishment of a public beach." (Continued on Page 3, Col. 3)

100 Negroes Visit Lido Key Again

(Continued From Page 1)

all right for us to use the beach. "When we met with the city commissioners last June they said 'no' — 'help us find a beach for you' — well, we've found one."

Asked if the Negroes are offered a beach of their own, would the lake be, Humphries replied that it could not answer this question, as that when the "proper time" comes we will consider it.

No Answer Given

Then asked if this was a case of the Supreme Court decision, or a vote to obtain a Negro beach, Humphries said that he fore answering he would have to talk with the NAACP lawyer.

In a telephone conversation with Francis Rodriguez, NAACP attorney of Tampa, Mr. Humphries told THE NEWS that the NAACP would leave it up to the Negroes in Sarasota to make their own decision on whether to accept a beach or to press the issue of integration.

Willing To Confer

Humphries, yesterday did not state that the Negroes were ready to talk over the situation with local authorities when he said that they were "willing to sit down with a committee."

The Negroes, traveling in a group of 20 cars, arrived at the beach at 4:30 p.m. About 20 men went swimming while the rest sat on the rocks or walked on the beach.

Handled Of Whites

A handful of white people, who were swimming nearby, paid no attention while two other had the beach.

At 8:30 p.m. the Negroes came out of the water and drove off again in a procession.

Police stopped one car on its arrival at the city and issued a summons for an improper matter.

While a few of the cars had out of town license plates, all the Negroes were Sarasota residents.

City-County Problem

As reported in THE NEWS on Friday, Mayor Ben H. Hawkins Jr. has put the problem of acquiring a beach for the Negroes up to the county commission.

The county commission had been attempting to find a suitable beach, but at Commissioner Gustin M. Nelson said, "The problem is everybody's problem."

Nelson said that every time the county suggests that a Negro beach should be located in the city, that the city commissioners protest.

Our Town

(An Editorial)

The time has come for Our Town to face the facts of life. We have before us the delicate question of providing the Negroes with their own Gulf beach, hoping that they will accept it and use it.

If they don't, then, under the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Negroes will force the issue of integrated public bathing beaches.

In a tourist town this, we must say, will play havoc with our economic life — for Sarasota depends upon tourists. And the Negroes too should realize this, for most of them earn their living working in jobs related to the tourist business.

Thus something should be done now! Not next week, not next month — BUT NOW!

THE NEWS calls upon the City Commission and the County Commission to appoint a committee to handle the problem — for the City Commission has done nothing, merely passing the buck to the County Commission, which, in turn, has wasted a lot of time studying the useless idea of pumping up a beach in the bay for the Negroes.

There is no denying the rights of our Negro citizens to have a bathing beach on the Gulf.

Thus a committee of say, one City Commissioner, one County Commissioner, two ministers, two citizens, one representative from each Sarasota newspaper, and four Negro leaders, should be appointed to iron out the problem.

The Negro representation should contain not more than one member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Likewise, the committee should not attempt to hold a public hearing, but instead, meet in executive session so that the problem could be talked out and settled without any histrionics.

There must be swift action to forestall further inroads by a determined group that, under the direction of the NAACP, has seized a beachhead on Lido Key, hoping that police will try and stop them from using a public beach.

City police, under the direction of Chief Robert N. Wilson have handled the episode with excellent and intelligent foresight. Actually, they are not the rightful body — the City Commission — are carrying the burden of the problem.

Perhaps one of the main troubles is the lack of leadership on both sides. Authorities are blaming each other, and the Negroes are taking orders from Tampa.

Let's face it folks — squarely and soundly — right now!

Floods Rack Mexico; Relief Pleas Heavy



SARASOTA NEGROES MADE another peaceful trip to the beach along Ben Franklin Dr., on Lido Key yesterday. In the top photo, the man in the center, Neil Humphries, local head of the NAACP, watches some of the 100 Negroes who used the public beach for an hour late yesterday afternoon.

100 Negroes Visit Lido Key Beach

By A. J. RUTENBER

NEWS Political Editor

A group of 100 Negroes, in a peaceful group, yesterday made another trip to a public beach in an attempt to force the issue of having their own beach or, failing that, the point of integration in public beaches in SARASOTA.

Through their spokesman, Neil

Humphries, they made it clear that they will keep coming to the beach along Ben Franklin Dr., on Lido Key.

"We will continue to come to the beach and we have no idea of stopping until the authorities stop us," Humphries, local head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said.

There were no unfortunate incidents to mar the test by the Negroes, as city police, under the personal direction of Chief Robert N. Wilson had the area well covered.

As there is no key ordinance preventing Negroes from using a public beach, the duty of the police, as Chief Wilson put it, was to "maintain order."

Beach Tax Supported

Interviewed on the beach, Humphries said, "We realize this is a public beach, supported by tax payers, both colored and white."

"We as taxpayers feel that it is

(Continued on Page 7)

Police, Tommy Gunners Guard Him

Peron Takes Up Exile

In Argentine

Longboat Town Council Bans Public Beaches

(Continued from Page 1)

unteer fire department's partly completed headquarters.

They gave notice of intention to grant Ned Ulery an exclusive five year garbage collection franchise; appointed a committee of Guy Paschal and Mayor LePage to negotiate a power company franchise; set an eight cents per mile rate for travel of the town clerk and town marshal; and discussed financial matters.

With Attorney Glenn Berry's advice that the town will be "operating from hand to mouth" for the next year, the council planned to file its bills for a more prosperous day.

But unexpected gifts came in. T. M. Moore contributed \$25 to pay for the town's membership in the Florida League of Municipalities and funds to pay about \$100 in bills. These included about \$65 in expenses of Berry.

Ulery paid for a photograph of the town seal and W. A. Wymse contributed a \$25 gift.

Council will meet again next Monday.

Longboat Town Council Bans Public Beaches

LONGBOAT KEY, Nov. 25—The Town Council of this, Florida's youngest community, settled down to business tonight and made short work of Sarasota County's plan to locate a Negro public beach on Longboat Key.

The Town Council passed a zoning ordinance which barred all public beaches from the island. The ordinance also prohibited all future trailer parks, fishing camps, bait selling establishments and public dumps from the Sarasota County portion of the newly incorporated portion of the island.

The Council by ordinance also reaffirmed the zoning regulations which have been in existence for the past five years in the Manatee County portion of the town. A committee of seven island citizens will be named next week as the town's zoning commission. At least three members will be from the Sarasota County section, which will come in for detailed zoning next.

Mayor Wilfred LePage explained the provision barring public beaches in the Sarasota County section was "to take care of immediate dangers." There was no specific reference to the Negro

'Negro Invasion' Of 2 State Beaches Rumored

JACKSONVILLE BEACH, July 3 (UP)—Police here and at Clearwater, today took precautions against a rumored Independence Day "Negro invasion" of white public beaches.

The state president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People denied rumors that the hundreds of Negroes plan to visit the two popular beaches on the Fourth of July, but authorities weren't taking any chances.

In Clearwater, on the West Coast, a quickly-passed city ordinance would allow police to control the flow of traffic to the beach, and here authorities said if any trouble arises a newly-formed auxiliary police force will be called into action.

"As far as I know there is no basis for these rumors," NAACP state President William Fordham of Tampa told the United Press.

"If such a move was planned, I think I would know about it."

The rumblings, however, even reached the state capitol.

Highway Patrol Director H. N. Kirkman said he knew nothing about the situation "except for some unofficial reports and rumblings."

Clearwater city commissioners were uneasy enough about the situation to pass an emergency ordinance designed to keep Negroes from Clearwater Beach.

The law was passed after Mayor Herbert Brown spoke of widespread rumors that two busloads of Tampa Negroes would go to Clearwater in a protest against the lack of Negro beach facilities.

Jacksonville Beach Police Chief Chiles H. Franks said he checked with Negro organizations and Negro newspapers and all deny they know any such "invasion" is planned.

City To Build Newtown Pool

Immediate Work Is Authorized

On \$75,000 Facilities

By BOLIVAR B. O'BRIEN JR., NEWS Staff Writer

Immediate action on construction of a \$75,000 swimming pool development for Negroes in Newtown was authorized by the City Commission last night. At a special conference of the commissioners yesterday, two reasons were given for the action: 1. a desire to improve the recreational facilities of Newtown, and, 2. to prevent the integration of Lido Beach.

Mayor John Klingler said "it is no use to take on the integration battle in the area will be more integrated. It is by this action we can stop the integration of Lido Beach I think we should act immediately."

At the City Commission meeting last night, a resolution authorizing the city to proceed immediately with the swimming pool and bath house at Newtown Recreation Park was passed along with a companion resolution authorizing the city to construct a second pool and bath house when the Newtown pool is completed. The second pool would be for white persons. The location for it was decided upon last night.

The Newtown pool is to be an exact copy of a city pool in Tallahassee. The commissioners said with a capacity of about 300 people. A copy of the plans has been obtained from the city of Tallahassee and the pool is listed as costing about \$75,000. However, City Manager Donald Thompson said it will cost as high as \$75,000.

Plans for the pool will be taken from three sources in the city but, the commission decided there is \$22,000 in the city's general fund, and if no quarters were built the month of October, at which time the general fund would be empty will be available for use.

GOP Caucus To Act On Local Bills

Important action on the Democratic resolution on the local bill privileges vote in the State Legislature is expected at Saturday's Republican legislative caucus in Tallahassee.

The Democratic legislative caucus in Jacksonville is expected to adopt a resolution asking that the legislature act on the local bill introduced by Republican legislators without first reporting the opposition to clear them with local Democratic leaders. But the resolution also would require the House Rules Committee to become effective.

The Sarasota GOP caucus will be for Florida's 22 Republican legislative candidates and for the purpose of directing up a platform for the campaign. Plans for the event will be discussed by Minority Leader Henry B. Bartholomew and George E. Youngberg Jr. of Venice, both seeking re-election. The caucus will also cover such subjects as constitutional revision, abolition of the price fixing process of the State Milk Commission, and the need for a treatment program

Pool For Negroes Opened

The city's \$75,000 Newtown Swimming Pool was opened officially yesterday when Mayor A. Ray Howard cut the ribbon across the pool deck and the pool is reported to be ready for use today. A mob of youngsters swam in with Newtown Recreation Center director Robert Taylor for special youth passes in the pool followed the opening ceremony.

There is attendance used as an inspection tour of the sparkling facility after the ribbon cutting, which Mayor Howard described as "the last ribbon." He will return with the City Commission next month.

The pool will be open from 8 to 10 p.m. school days and from 1 to 5 p.m. weekends and holidays during the school year, according to city official Director Ray Howard.

The membership cards for which the proceeds were being sold yesterday will enable them to use the pool free of charge for all other age groups. Regular admission charges for the pool will be 10 cents for the one living inside the city limits, 20 cents for those living in Sarasota County and 30 cents for those living outside Sarasota County.

Admission charges for adults will be 25 cents for persons living inside the city limits, 30 cents for persons living in Sarasota County and 35 for persons living outside Sarasota County.

Volunteer lifeguards Taylor will be in charge of lifeguards at the pool. A Volunteer Lifeguard Corps will be organized among the boys in the senior class at Booker High School, according to Howard. They will have to take lifeguard training to qualify.

The Jay Mac Stone of the True View Baptist Church of Newtown gave the invitation for the swimming yesterday a 40 percent discount in the use of the pool.

City Parks director Ted Wynn said membership of 15,000 would be needed to pay for the pool which will cost \$75,000. The pool was built by the Royal Palm Pool Co. in a contract of \$60,000. The city added another \$15,000 for a pool and other items.



NEWTON POOL DEDICATED—The city's new swimming pool, built by the Royal Palm Pool Co. Inc., in the Newtown Recreation Center for the city's Negroes is shown during the inspection tour which followed dedication ceremony yesterday. Present today were young people and children. The \$75,000 pool will be open for business today.

U.S. Paroles Jap Criminals

TOKYO, Nov. 26 (UP)—The United States has paroled three Japanese war criminals, the American embassy revealed today. The embassy, in a note to the Japanese Foreign Office, identified the men as Seiichi Magami, a former minor official; Saburo Kobayashi, a former war-aid officer; and Kenji Hirose.

COMING

The
November 29, 31

High

See a
TH

Featuring

- Amper
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- Viting

- Bass
- Gort
- Weather

Join FIRST FEDERAL Christmas Club

300 Island Residents Oppose Proposed Site

Higgins Committee Report Hit

By Siesta Property Owners

A vigorous protest from more than 300 residents of the Midnight Pass area and Siesta Key was made before the Board of County Commissioners today over the proposal to locate a Negro beach on the southern tip of the key. Some of their fire was directed at George Higgins, chairman of the citizens committee which recommended the site.

At a jam-packed and frequently heated meeting which began in the county commission chambers and had to be moved to the county courtroom in Annandale the huge crowd. County Commissioner George H. Leach warned Higgins and said he had been advised not to attend the meeting by his doctor.

Leach Has Been Hit
The Commission has been under doctor's care for a heart ailment and was absent from several meetings earlier in the year due to it. Leach said, "In justice to myself and my family I think it best that I be absent from the meeting." However, he said he would be available when it came time for a vote on the question.

As Leach left the chamber several persons in the crowd remarked, "There goes our last friend walking out the door." Leach's statement was warmly applauded by the operators.
The meeting began with Higgins reading the report of the special 15-member citizens committee which recommended a beach site last Friday. Before he launched into the report he said the county commissioners had appointed the committee and the members had agreed to work on the committee. "They are my friends" he added.

"This brought a loud shout of 'Ho, ho, ho,' from operators many of whom stood along the wall, and took up every available inch of the commission chamber.
At the outbreak Higgins paused and said, "I called you gentlemen."
Chris Tom Annoyed
Higgins said that two things were considered by the committee: (1) location of a site which would host the least number of people and (2) the site which would cost the least amount of money.
He said since the first report was made Friday by the committee, he had decided to make a change in the report and leave the location of the site open to the Board of County Commissioners.
Said Higgins, read the report which was the same as the first report carried in the newspapers the weekend before for the first about the scene road.
"That means the first real outbreak of the meeting, but not the last," Chairman George M. Nelson rapped the gavel and declared the audience would be free to ask Higgins any questions about the report.
He said he thought the committee had the benefit of the complete thinking of the people of Siesta Key.

Meeting Resumes
At this point Nelson interjected and said that since the board was listening in the discussion with Higgins, it might as well listen to it now and put it on the minutes. He declared the meeting back in order.
Several spectators said that because the board had heard the citizens committee report it might be hard to hear the report of the people of Siesta Key.
Donald Bentley, a businessman on Siesta Key, told the board that he had asked to serve on the committee but had been told it "was closed" to any more members. Bentley charged that the people of Siesta Key had been denied a voice on the committee.
Higgins said he didn't appoint the members to the committee and if some couldn't serve.

Committed Himself
George B. Conroy, who said he was representing a group of 300

Negroes' Demands Is Cause

By FURMAN ARTHUR
NEWS STAFF WRITER
County commissioners today called a halt to all work on county beaches not presently under contract in a move to meet the latest of Negro demands for desegregated use of these areas.
In a surprise step, Commissioner Glen K. Leach advised these paid-for contractors rejecting a bid for the Manatee Beach project, calling off other beach projects and requesting a beaching seeking permission to sell the beaches next May.

Repeals Beach Theory
Leach based any of his protest on the proposition that the Negro population of Sarasota express its acceptance of the theory of a separate beach. If this is not done, he urged that the county sell its three beaches and refund the 120,000 bond issue.

His action followed the opening of bids for the erection of a beach glass on Manatee Key. Leach announced to report the sale bid, submitted to the city and county.

Unstable Site
James Nevill, a resident 1400 Midway Pass Road and GOP on the board, said that the site was not the best number of people and (2) the site which would cost the least amount of money.
He said since the first report was made Friday by the committee, he had decided to make a change in the report and leave the location of the site open to the Board of County Commissioners.
Said Higgins, read the report which was the same as the first report carried in the newspapers the weekend before for the first about the scene road.
"That means the first real outbreak of the meeting, but not the last," Chairman George M. Nelson rapped the gavel and declared the audience would be free to ask Higgins any questions about the report.
He said he thought the committee had the benefit of the complete thinking of the people of Siesta Key.

Negro Beach Findings Summarized

Race Is Said To Prefer Own Way And Ask No Gifts

These Negro beach findings are in good or better shape for the Negro community, the report says. The findings are in good or better shape for the Negro community, the report says. The findings are in good or better shape for the Negro community, the report says.

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Two Property Sales In Area Total \$120,500

Two property sales in the area have resulted in a total of \$120,500, according to records of the county clerk's office. The sales were for a 10-acre tract in the Manatee Beach area and a 5-acre tract in the Siesta Key area.

Bill From West Is Check Charge

A bill from the West is being charged as a check charge, according to records of the county clerk's office. The bill was for a 10-acre tract in the Manatee Beach area.

What someone's thinking on you...
PENINSULAR LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Florida's Oldest Life Insurance Company

Negro Beach Question Reopened

Sarasota's Negro beach controversy again hangs in the air, about a year after the county board passed a resolution in the coastal area.

The problem, which first hit Sarasota headlines five years ago, is being put for committee action for the third time in three years.

It is a simple question, but one which carries with it potential trouble.

Should the county provide its colored citizens with a public beach?

Question Sent To Committee

The question was referred to a committee in 1936, again last year, and now stands a chance of being tied up in another committee as the summer swimming season approaches.

Each time the question was referred to a committee of citizens, referred out of committee, with recommendations and then killed.

Last year the committee recommendations for a Negro beach on Santa Key at Mulholland Pass died under the fire of key residents who lambasted the proposal with a

variety of heavy verbal artillery aimed chiefly at the county commission. The county commission dropped the whole proposal and Chairman G. M. Nelson proposed a beach on the Big Pass south of the city, as well as one for a Negro beach near the Venice Airport on the Gulf, and a bathing beach.

Now the latest plan is to have membership of the county commission, led by Commissioner James D. Neville confer with a citizens committee of Negroes about the problem. It remains to be seen whether the same fate

awaits this effort as has killed previous ones.

Efforts Date Back to 1935

A review of the history of the Negro beach question shows the first normal effort to provide Negro beaches and recreational facilities in the county dates back to 1935. On May 16, 1935, Eddie Bailey, Negro citizen, appeared before the Board of County Commissioners and asked them to consider the matter of a public beach for Negroes.

He was informed that the county was contemplating a \$20,000 swim-

ming pool for Negro citizens in the city recreation area. Bailey advised the board that money probably could be better spent if it went to a beach. He was asked to come back and look over the plans for the pool which they were studying. He said he would and on the meantime he would look for some equipment, property that might be bought.

On May 21, 1935, Bailey appeared again to ask about the possibility of purchasing property for a Negro beach. He was told that if he could find a suitable site that would be suitable at the right price, and could be worked out satisfactorily, that the county would buy it. He was also told that facilities would be placed there and in all probability would be maintained at county expense by amounts of six or seven cents.



NEWTOWN POOL will look like this, according to architects' sketches. The pool, budgeted at \$75,000 to cover cost of construction, may not stop a drive by

Negro residents of Sarasota to gain use of public Gulf beaches. The pool, a T-shaped structure 75 feet by 42 feet, is to be built at the Negro Recreation Center.

Mary Emma Jones, also appeared at the May 31, 1935 meeting and stated she thought a beach would be more satisfactory to more of the people than the proposed swimming pool.

Commissioner Otto R. Leach, who was then serving on the board, told her that in his knowledge she and her associates were the only people that he knew of who were in favor of a beach in preference to the pool, but that if this were the case the commissioners would like to know as to the pool project could be stopped and defray any extra expense.

Architects presented plans for the swimming pool on June 4, 1935 and it was decided to hold a public meeting in the auditorium of Booker School to see if the Negro citizens would accept the proposed pool in lieu of a public beach. The meeting was set for 8 p.m. June 17.

City officials were invited to the public meeting and on June 20, after the meeting, an action was taken by the commissioners and the County Attorney and Commissioner Leach were instructed to go to Tallahassee and look over records of a beach site.

Time moved on and the summer wound until a proposal was made for a beach on Longboat Key. This was vigorously opposed by Longboat residents and no action was taken on the proposal at an Oct. 21, 1936 meeting after the protests.

On Sept. 8, 1936, the county board received correspondence from J. M. Ruyter and Luther C. Hughes Jr., protesting the creation of a beach for Negro citizens which would necessitate transportation by ferry to and from the beach.

Cost Not Brought

Ruyter and Hughes asked that efforts be concentrated towards acquiring a site in the Gulf. Instructions were given to inform them that the number one item on the commission agenda was to seek and try to locate and furnish a Gulf beach.

The beach question did not come up again in county commissioner meetings until June 4, 1938 when Ray A. Siglin, Newtown Negro, cityman, again revived it by requesting that county recreation funds from the sale of beach bonds be used for the purchase of a Negro beach.

Commissioner Nelson asserted that an attempt had been made to do this and that, after a meeting of the county commissioners, city officials and representatives of the Negro citizens it was decided the county would attempt to purchase a beach and build facilities.

Integration Move Planned

However, he reported that after the property was shown to a Negro representative, a meeting was held by the Negro citizens and the information was gained through the press, that a meeting was held and that the commissioners were not invited and the Negro citizens did not want a beach but were going to integrate the other beaches.

Ray Siglin said that if the county would purchase a beach he felt the Negro citizens would use it. He cited incidents in Delray Beach where racial trouble had erupted over mixing of the races on the beach. He said he did not want that to happen here.

After a series of Sunday lunches at the city and county beaches on Lido and Santa Keys by invitation of Negroes, the county commission named a committee to go into the Negro beach problem.

This committee recommended the midnight Pass site be considered and immediate progress were made by key residents leading eventually to the death of the project.

Bond Issue Authorized Legislature Clears Way To Finance Air Terminal

The way was open today for joint financing of the proposed international building at the Sarasota-Manatee Airport following enactment of a legislative bill yesterday.

The legislation allows the two counties of Sarasota and Manatee to hook up a bond issue for the air terminal, splits out the authority of the airport governing body to lease property for film-making purposes, gives the airport authority permission to mortgage property and authorizes the cities of Sarasota and Bradenton and the two counties to invest in airport bonds.

Bill Brings Law

The bill breaking law yesterday without the Governor's signature.

The airport will receive federal matching funds from the Civil Aeronautics Administration for part of the cost of the air terminal. However, the big obstacle in financing the terminal was lack of authority of the two counties to support a bond issue for the reduction of its cost. The bill cleared away this obstacle.

Under the mortgage provisions of the bill, the seller keeps the mortgage.

Hospital Gets Authority

Also enacted yesterday was a special bill to permit the Sarasota County Public Hospital Board to accept and distribute moneys and receipts of the hospital and allow stations of the freshwaters to decide to issue bonds for acquiring hospital sites and make improvements.

The bill also authorized the county hospital board to charge the county for prisoners who are hospitalized here.

\$38,598 Due In Gas Tax

Sarasota County will receive a whopping \$38,598 as the share of gasoline taxes collected in March. It was announced today by State Comptroller Ray Orville.

Meanwhile, the state comptroller reported that \$209,427.31 in sales taxes were collected in this county in April.

Manatee County's sales tax installment for the same month was \$101,472.30 less than last the Sarasota County total.

While sales jumped in both counties, compared to MARCH, the figures showed Sarasota leading far ahead of its neighbor in the north.

The April figure for this county was about \$41,000 more than the amount collected in March and about \$10,000 more than the sum collected in April, 1936.



Missing Mare May Haunt Your Dreams

If you think you're having a nightmare, it might belong to Martyna Whitman.

The woman, who resides at Second Street and Pineapple Avenue, reported to police that her black mare has been missing for a week.

She said a small boy who was keeping the mare at the street under the Walter Quintero, did not tell her the horse was missing until Wednesday.

The missing mare was described as having one white foot and was running without a rope or a halter.

Sarasotan Facing Bad Check Count

A Sarasota woman, Grace Birch, 31, 344 Broadway Ave., was charged yesterday with issuing a worthless check.

She was released after posting \$200 bond. Constable Ed Perpetuo made the arrest. No further details were available today.

Pablo Garcia, 21, a Cuban from Miami, was charged with having no driver's license by State Trooper E. E. Cheatham.

Wesley Jackson, 22, Negro, Tampa and Robert Taggart, 26, Port Myers, were charged with speeding and released after posting \$50 bond.

Bee Ridge Zoning Plan To Be Aired

Zoning for the Bee Ridge area by the County Planning and Zoning Commission will be discussed tonight at 8 p.m. in the courthouses.

It will be the regular meeting of the County Planning and Zoning Commission. The discussion of the Bee Ridge zoning was postponed from last week in order to give the people of the area a chance to meet and make their views known as to it.

Some of the residents expressed objection to industrial zoning in the Bee Ridge area and several will be on hand tonight from the area.

Subdivision Residents Pick Officers

A protest group of 45 Januaria Lakes residents last night elected temporary officers and appointed a subcommittee to appear before the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners Wednesday.

Representing nearly half the families in the subdivision just outside the city limits along 17th Street from North Tuttle Avenue to Rinker Terrace, the proposed new subdivision met in Eastern Baptist Church on 17th Street.

Max Robert A. Reinhold, who had appeared last week at the county commission session, was named temporary chairman, and George D. Wray, temporary secretary. Both live on North Alameda Avenue.

Report To Be Made

One person from each street in the development was picked to collect and coordinate residents' complaints about conditions in the subdivision.

The Rev. Paul Caldwell, Eastern Baptist pastor, and an Alameda Avenue resident, opened last night's session.

Leona Lakes homeowners allege that Leona Lakes Builders does not intend to complete a lake south of the developed portion and that the developers will do nothing to correct paving leakage and storm drainage; and that septic tank discharge appears on lot surfaces and in street gutters.

L. A. Meyer, who with John A. Deacon is an officer of the corporation, is to appear at the county session.

FBI Says Soldier AWOL From Base

The FBI has a hold order on Stanley Willard, Air Force soldier from Greenville, Miss., for being A.W.O.L. He was arrested last week here for petty larceny of an auto license tag and driving on an improper license.

He was bonded over to court on the charge after he pleaded guilty.

Willard also faces a charge of leaving out driver's license.

Car Caravans to Integrate Sarasota County Beaches Oral History Interview Transcripts (Excerpts)

The Newtown Conservation Historic District project was established and funded by the City of Sarasota in 2015. Phase I includes 47 oral history interviews featuring Newtown pioneers, trailblazers and history makers who discussed beach integration in Sarasota County with interviewer Vickie Oldham. Brief video clips of the interviews can be found at: <http://www.newtownalive.org/people/> Podcasts of 10 full interviews are in production.

Sarasota NAACP president, the late John Rivers was interviewed by student Kortney Lapeyrolerie through a collaborative project of Sarasota County Government and New College of Florida. Rivers' interview is among the most viewed oral histories on the website, www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu.

John Rivers

Former president of the Sarasota branch of the NAACP

Well, everything was segregated at that time. And the beach was one of the top [places]. The schools were segregated...my kids were very small...when we came here and...I guess when my oldest daughter was about ten, twelve... we talked about integrating the school system, because it was so far away...

We had students coming all the way from Venice and Laurel, and that was a long distance for kids just starting to school. Some six-year-old, having to get up at four in the morning... to make it to school... and ride twenty miles or more to get to school. ...That was not what we wanted to see, and I didn't want that for my kids here. So, therefore, we took action against that. But we didn't get the school integrated at that time. So, we had to move on with other issues...we had good teachers...all Afro-American...It was very, very good for us. And once I got involved with the action in the city, especially the neighborhood, it was quite fun.

When I came here, the NAACP was already organized at that time...I went to a couple of meetings and they were talking about the things that I was concerned about... Therefore, I started attending... And ...I became an officer and from that to the president...

When we first started going to the beach, it was in Venice because we weren't allowed to go here in Sarasota. And going to the beaches in Venice, we had no problem at all...but...it's eighteen, twenty miles from here down there. And that was a long distance, unnecessary long distance. And we took issue with that. And after going there for a while, we then started to going to Lido Beach. And...we had some problems. The reporters came, and they identified the cars, took pictures of the cars... the tag number and all of that stuff. And from the tag numbers, the system could pick up the names of the people. And some of the people were fired just because they went to the beach...there. But we didn't stop at that time. We went into the water the first time. And then the next day, they canceled out everything, closed the beach on us. And, at that time...I was leading the group. So, we... left Lido...headed back into town on the second day that we were there. Then, I decided, I said... "Let's go back." And we turned around and went

back. And, sure enough, the beach was full of people. And the policemen came back, and say, "Oh, the beach is closing again." I said, "No, no, you go on to town. If we need you, we will call you. But other than that, we don't need you." But, by that time...with the photos that the reporters had taken...some of the people in the city... identified the people that was at the beach... their cars. And some of them was fired the next day because they was at the beach. And the remainder of us continued to go every week until it was a simple thing.

But there was a lot being done before that because when they first started talking about it, there was a group called John Birch Society. Now, who they are and what their activities, I'm not sure. But they was very outspoken against us going to the beach. So, they suggested that they go out in the water, out in the beach waters and then develop an island there, and then get a boat and take us out to the island, and then bring us back on the boat. Well, that didn't fly. So, we continued to work on going to the beach. And, later, a lot of people got involved...people of the school system got involved...talking about the opportunities by having your beach, going to the beach out there on this island...

So, sure enough, they finally came to the conclusion. They said, "Well, okay, we will build a pool in the Newtown area there if you all would accept that instead of the beach." It was about August, late August or sometime around then. And that kind of angered the people, especially leaders at that time.

You had ministers and all involved. And they decided, no, no, no. We don't even want to talk about that. So, I looked at it. I said, "Look, look, wait a minute, let's think." I said, "We don't have a beach. We don't have a pool." I said, "We wait. We don't go to the beach that much in the wintertime anyway...Therefore... Let's accept that, and then we'll have a [pool]. And then when you all bring about the dedication of the pool, I will then take a group and we will go to the beach. And we'll have both." Then, that's exactly what happened there.

Just as Rivers stated, *"In 1957, the county built a new swimming pool in Newtown, hoping to appease residents. The day it opened, another beach caravan set out for Lido Key."*

...We got that one [Lido] under control. So, we wanted to go Siesta... And that was a...nicer beach. And we only had one incident. Some guy came up there with a pickup truck... He got out of the truck, got the bottles, and he put them under each one of the cars that we was there, that was ours...And I was out in the water at that time. And someone called out to me to "come, come, hurry..." So, when I came out, he was still putting his bottles under the tires of the cars. And I walked right up to him and, just nearly nose-to-nose, and I said, "Look, I want you to get every bottle you had out there...I want them out. And I want it out now." So, he looked over and none of his people were there to support him. So, he started pulling the bottles out from under the cars. And that was a victory.

It was NAACP president Neil Humphrey, Sr. who organized the caravans. Humphrey's, a successful Newtown businessman, possessed the necessary financial independence to challenge the establishment. Shortly after the fight for the integration of the beaches came about there was a young man, young at the time, Mr. John Henry Rivers. Moved his family from Mobile, Alabama to Sarasota looking for better opportunities. John passed away this past year. He was an ally and friend in most of the civil rights things that I did in this community. He was assistant to Mr. Humphrey during that time...when the beach caravans would go...The way the city would fight us, a police car would come and say the beach is closed everybody leave. Well our folk would leave and as soon as we got across the Ringling Bridge the beach

mysteriously reopened again.

Though relatively short of stature, [Rivers] was respected, James said. "A real man. He meant what he said and said what he meant." And when it came to actively defending the caravans, Rivers was crucial, James said. "He would sometimes demonstrate what he meant, if you didn't understand it.

One white objector to the African American beach-goers was a man who did business with the residents of Newtown.

According to Rivers,

There [were] some people that didn't like what was going on, and one was an insurance [agent]. He...was out there on the beach. When he saw what was happening, he didn't like it either. But he was collecting the insurance fees throughout the black neighborhood. So, when he disagreed with that and kind of acted up, I called his headquarters the next day and told them, "We don't want him back in our neighborhood...collecting money, when he objects..." So, sure enough, they transferred him out of here, and we didn't see him no more. But, from then on, it was just, just fine. People go out to the beach for every little activity. We used to go there. Masons had an annual day... And we would go out there in the morning and round off an area. And then, go back there when all the people, two or three hundred people, would show up there. No problem at all.

Prevell Barber

Participant in the Car Caravans

B: Uh-huh. You could count the blacks who had a car.

O: How about the beach, could you go to the beach? Did you go to the beach at that time?

B: No you couldn't go to the beach.

O: Why?

B: Well that was for the other people, the whites.

O: Did you want to go to the beach?

B: You was afraid to go.

O: What were you afraid of?

B: You was afraid they was gonna drown you out there.

O: Did you hear about some drowns that occurred? I know Mr. Humphrey's came along later to integrate the beaches.

B: Right. I was with that group.

O: You were with the group that integrated the beaches? Oh tell me about that story please.

B: Well we went out there.

O: So I read that you were not allowed and then you organized a group in one car to go and use the beach. Were you in that one car?

B: Um-hm.

O: That first car that went out there to integrate the beaches, you were in it.

B: Um-hm.

O: Who else was in the car?

B: Ms. Elease Suarez and Mr. Humphrey and myself and it look like her brother-in-law from Key West was in it because he spoke Spanish.

O: Okay now who's car was it that you all took?

B: It had to be Mr. Humphrey's car.

O: Okay why did you all decide to go? Were you afraid?

B: Yes, we were afraid.

O: But you went anyway because why?

B: Well they said God made the water. It wasn't made by man. So it should be exposed to everybody.

O: And describe what happened when you went to the beach. Which beach did you go to, Lido Beach or Siesta?

B: I believe it was Lido Beach.

O: So you drove in the car with the group and you parked and what happened?

B: Well we were approached and called all kinds of names.

O: In the parking lot?

B: Um-hm.

O: Did you get out of the car?

B: Yeah.

O: So you got out of the car and then what, walked to the beach?

B: Right.

O: Did you get in?

B: Yeah.

O: You did stick your feet in the water?

B: Um-hm.

O: Tell me more about what happened that day.
And what day was it? Was it a Sunday or a Saturday?

B: No.

O: It was a weekday.

B: Mhm-hm.

O: So just kinda describe what happened when you went to the beach.

B: Well most of it was just name calling.

O: How long did you stay that day?

B: We didn't stay too long.

O: Maybe an hour?

B: I don't believe we stayed that long.

O: So everybody got into the water?

B: Some of them.

O: You were one that got into the water?

B: Enough under my knees.

O: And then you got into the car and left?

B: Um-hm.

O: Can you describe, were there whites standing at the shore while you were getting into the water?

B: Mhm-hm.

O: And that's where the name calling happened?

B: Mhm-hm.

O: And what did it feel like when you were hearing all these names being called of you? Were they using the N-word?

B: Oh yeah.

O: How was that? How did that feel?

B: I had heard it so much, it didn't bother me.

O: Then you stayed for less than an hour and then left. So then what happened after that? How did you keep organizing? Because I understand more people started going to the beach with you, explain how that went.

B: Well then the others started going.

O: More cars of people. Did you go back?

B: Yes. I didn't go back for a long time.

O: Why?

B: I was afraid.

O: You didn't want to hear those names continue to be hurled at you.

B: Mhm-hm.

O: I see, so eventually I understand from my reading that there were many conversations back and forth about whether the beaches were going to be integrated but the black community just kept pushing and pushing. You were a part of that? And then the leaders said, "well we'll build the community a pool." Y'all weren't happy with just the pool. Why?

B: Well see God had made all that water.

O: All right and so you wanted to be able to enjoy it. Absolutely. And then I read that at first, you were pushing for just a Negro beach. A spot designated for Negroes. And then after getting the NAACP involved from Tampa, they said you can have access to the entire beach, anywhere on the beach that you want to. Not just a part of the beach. You remember that?

B: Yeah.

O: How did it make you feel when it was integrated and that you could go?

B: Well I was so busy that I didn't have much time to go.

O: What were you busy doing?

B: Well working in the store, working in the church, and teaching. I didn't have much free-time.

O: Well I'll tell you what Mrs. Barber, we're really so appreciative that you were in that first car that went. And sacrificed your life and took all of those nasty words, you endured that to enable subsequent generations of African American people to enjoy the beaches in Sarasota. We really really appreciate you for that effort. Did you get involved with any other civil rights moves in Sarasota, say the move to integrate the schools? Were you involved with any of that?

B: No.

O: You were busy?

B: Right.

Wade Harvin

Participant in the Car Caravans

O: Did you go to the beach like what Robert Taylor was describing? Did you go to Siesta?

H: I went to Lido.

O: Oh you could go to Lido?

H: And my present that day...well doing that you sit in a circle. I watch your back, you watch my back. And I don't know if you know Pam Moreland I wouldn't be sitting here if she hadn't screamed.

O: What happened?

H: Kid had walked from here to that wall behind me and he had a rock about yey big and he threw it and she just said, "Look out." After I turned to see what she was talking about. And she said, "Look out," I just laid over her. The thing that startled me was not so much that he threw it but that he didn't run. I said, "Now I'm supposed to get up here and do something to this fella." But the rule was you could not participate and meet violence with violence. And I wondered after that, I said, "How many times I've been at meetings in different areas of Sarasota and that kid was there. How many times." And he didn't it, he finally said, "You Ns go back to Newtown." But that was it. He never run, he didn't look angry and he didn't look frightened and that kind of thing stayed with me still.

O: You participated in those marches and sit-ins?

H: Oh yes.

O: Oh we didn't talk about that part of your life, we have to. And who were the people involved? It was through the NAACP?

H: NAACP, Neil Humphrey and of course friend Justin, and my wife went with me one. She didn't go with me but she was with the other girls.

O: What happened? Where did you go?

H: Went to Lido.

O: In a car?

H: Oh yeah, went in a car. And that's one of the reasons now I still don't go to Lido.

O: You don't go to Lido?

H: Just because of that memory. It's because of that memory. I always think about it and I don't have to think about it if I don't go. If I don't go to Lido I don't have to think about one incident. It wasn't frightening other than the instructions that you were given, is that you can protect yourself only by ducking. You know it's not, if you see him pick it up and get ready to throw and you have one close to you, you don't do that. It's a non-violent movement and I'll be perfectly frank with you, the first time I heard that thing, I said, "Not for me. Not for me."

O: You know we always hear that you don't see black people on the beach or you may not see them in restaurants in Sarasota in large number and all. And I'm beginning to wonder if it's because of—

H: Some carry over.

O: Yes, some carry over from what happened in days of old. Because we know that many of the offspring of the folks who lived here and grew up here, they left and didn't come back. And the remnant of people who are left remember those times like you. And you're saying that you don't go to Lido anymore. Now there are new blacks here that probably go out and about but they don't have that history like you do. And so those are the few that we see probably around.

Jetson Grimes

Newtown entrepreneur of 40 years describes swimming in an old railroad tank behind Galilee Cemetery on a summer day when beaches were off limits to black residents.

O:What did y'all do for fun in the community, Newtown?

G:Well you know when I was kid, being a male you more were adventurous. I know we talk about the integration of the beaches, but I learned how to swim at a place where the train came and we used to call it "The Tank." Where at that particular time the train would have to come and fill up with water because they use coal and steam and stuff like that. And that's where they deposit a lot of water. And where the train came, it was the Seaboard Coast Line, it was right behind the graveyard. And what we would do in the afternoon, the kids, we would go and the water was warm you can even swim there because the water would stay warm. And it was just like we was lucky. You almost had to learn how to swim because you was gonna get drowned because it was kinda like a drop off. But that's where I learned how to swim but I can remember just enjoying. I didn't see I was a poor kid because we used to go in the pastures and ride the horses I mean you know. I used to go out and pick blackberries. We had blueberries we used to pick. So the neighborhood was kinda special. It wasn't that we were deprived of a lot because everybody was poor. So you didn't really see an image of you know – you saw people on the other side of town that looked kinda different but in your neighborhood everybody was kinda like equality of just being where you were and how you were there at that particular time.

Anthony “Tony” Major

University of Central Florida Professor, Newtown resident

We could not go to Lido Beach. We could not go to Longboat Key. To go to the beach we either had to go to Venice or all the way up to the Sunshine Skyway and swim. I guess they thought we [were] going to make the sand black, or something. ‘Cause Lido had the whitest sand in the world. It was rated as one of the top beaches with the whitest sand in the world. But we couldn’t swim there.

Walter L. Gilbert, III

Former Sarasota NAACP President describes Neil Humphrey, Sr.

The one guy that really, really made me want to be more involved was Neil Humphrey, Mr. Neil Humphrey. He owned a drug store; it was a little sundry store that sold some of everything, patent medicines, not a pharmacy type drug store. He had the only business like that in our community. Mr. Humphrey was probably 5’5” might’ve weighed 155 lbs., really soft spoken. If he raised his voice you could hardly hear him. I thought he was a meek little man.

But in these NAACP meetings he was fire and brimstone. He was telling us how we’d go down there, what we’d say, how we were to act. He wasn’t having no troubles. I’m looking at all the other people saying “yes sir, Mr. Humphrey.” It changed my perspective. His persona changed right in my face. I wanted to be like this guy, not only business-wise, I wanted to be a leader like him.

My first step in doing something in the leadership vein was at Sarasota High. My father said, “If you’re going to be upfront, be upfront.” At Sarasota High we didn’t feel that we were being treated properly in the lunchroom. We were sitting there; everyone was talking about it. I said, “Let’s get up, and we won’t eat lunch in here anymore.” Everybody said, “OK.” I said, “OK, let’s go.” Everybody just came. We had a strike at the lunchroom for a week and 1/2 before they decided to bring us in and talk to us. They actually appointed Fredd Atkins and I to the Student Council.

People [white staff] in lunchroom service treated us bad. It went on for a year or so. The other thing, we didn’t have any black cheerleaders although the football team was black. We had a bunch of grievances. We got the kids on the football team [I was a member of the team] to say they wouldn’t play anymore. So what the Missouri team did was nothing new. They gave us two cheerleaders. They changed the process in the lunchroom. We had the meetings to talk about this at my mom’s house. She encouraged us. In fact, while we were striking, she brought us lunch to the school because we wouldn’t go into the lunchroom. That was my first action. We were empowered. We were never afraid.



In the 1930s, Newtown residents began challenging the unwritten rules that had long kept blacks away from Sarasota's beaches. The so-called "beach caravans" of 1935 defied racial segregation of the beaches, though public officials sought to avoid the issue by, among other things, building a city pool in Newtown. The photo above is from a story that ran in the Herald-Tribune in 1935. It said about 100 blacks came to Lido Key Beach in a 19-car caravan. PROVIDED BY THE SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORICAL RESOURCES CENTER

They couldn't arrest us. But they did everything they could to keep us out.

AN CUMMINGS
cumming@heraldtribune.com

SARASOTA — For some kids, going swimming on a hot summer afternoon once meant going to the cemetery.

The easy part was getting there, walking in the sunshine through the gates of Gallie Cemetery on U.S. 301. (The back edge of the property, over by a train tracks, the young swimmers jumped into an old railroad tank set into the sand. It was filled with cold water, and deep enough for diving.)

The creepy part came when the sun went down and they'd make the long, cold walk home.

ing trains, it wasn't exactly safe. Even in the 1940s, it was nobody's idea of a great place for children.

Still, it was all they had.

Back then, in the days of segregation, black residents risked trouble almost any time they stepped outside the Newtown community. There were rules against walking downtown after dark, using certain water fountains, or trying on shoes in a Main Street shop.

And Newtown had no beaches.

Only nine miles away, others enjoyed the best beach in America, as Siesta Key has sometimes been called. The white sands of Lido were even closer. But for the kids

ABOVE: A group of young people visit a beach on Longboat Key back in the 1940s. For many years, undeveloped stretches on the key were destinations for black residents barred from the more popular beaches. PROVIDED BY JAMES ARCHER

ONLINE
To read more on Newtown and see photos, videos and a timeline of events, visit www.HeraldTribune.com/Newtown1935



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Reason 3: Victims of Lynching Memorialized in Sarasota

A Sarasota organization joined the Equal Justice Initiative's effort to share stories about victims of lynching. Attorney and EJI founder Bryan Stephenson presented a keynote speech in Sarasota to a group of attorneys at a fundraising dinner. Afterwards, Manasota Remembers formed with a mission to participate in "a larger project to create an era of restorative truth-telling and justice that changes the consciousness of our nation." Volunteers worked with Sarasota County students on an essay contest; then a committee formed to develop and install a historic marker about lynching. The search for a marker site consumed the most time. Fundraising ensued.

Today, Sarasota is among only eight cities in Florida to recognize victims of lynching. A community remembrance marker was installed on property owned by the Unitarian Universalist Church. It honors the lives of six Black men who were lynched when Sarasota was a part of Manatee County.

- Henry Thomas – March 8, 1903
- Sam Ellis – March 7, 1910
- Wade Ellis – March 7, 1910
- Ruddy – March 8, 1910
- William English – July 1, 1912
- James Franklin – April 4, 1934*

**after Sarasota separated from Manatee County.*

Another victim, Lewis Jackson was listed in the NAACP book, *Thirty Years of Lynching*. Manasota Remembers partnered with a collection of community organizations such as the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition and Newtown Alive to present to the public a memorial ceremony and marker unveiling.

Between the end of the Civil War and the end of World War II, thousands of African Americans were lynched in the United States in violent and public acts of torture that traumatized Black communities locally and throughout the country. The incidences, largely tolerated by state and federal officials, peaked between 1880 and 1940 and represented some of the most brutal violence in American history. The stories about Manatee and Sarasota lynching victims:

Henry Thomas

Parrish, Manatee County, Florida, March 8, 1903

On March 6, 1903, a white girl was sent by her parents in Parrish, Florida to run an errand at a nearby farm. The girl returned home and claimed that during the trip a Black man attempted to embrace and then kiss her. The man then allegedly followed her home and threatened the girl and mother with a gun.

As these allegations spread, a mob formed and focused their suspicion on Henry Thomas, a black man. Reports do not indicate why Mr. Thomas was targeted, but the mob declared their intent to lynch Mr. Thomas before the legal system could or would act. They roamed Manatee County for two days.

On March 8, Henry Thomas was captured near Hickman's sawmill by a white man who claimed he planned to turn Mr. Thomas over to law enforcement. The mob found Mr. Thomas and abducted him for lynching. Although the mob coerced Mr. Thomas to "tremblingly admit" that he had hugged and kissed the girl, Mr. Thomas denied the allegation of rape and maintained his innocence.

The mob took Mr. Thomas to the garden where the alleged assault occurred and proceeded to lynch him. There is no evidence that anyone involved in the lynching of Mr. Thomas was ever held accountable.

Days later, on March 11, The Tampa Tribune reported that the sheriff had received photographs of Mr. Thomas's murder. Despite photographic evidence and many eyewitnesses, local law enforcement and prosecutors granted impunity to the members of the mob.

Mr. Ruddy, Sam Ellis, and Wade Ellis

Palmetto, Manatee County, Florida, March 6-7, 1910

In March 1910, a mob of white men led by law enforcement lynched three Black men over the course of two days in Manatee County, Florida.

On March 6, 1910, a Black man named Mr. Ruddy was lynched following racial violence sparked by a conflict over wages. He was a contract employee.

This dispute between Mr. Ruddy and his boss escalated into a shootout that ended with Ruddy's boss fatally wounded. A deputy sheriff led the mob – with no legal authority – to find Mr. Ruddy.

After his murder, Mr. Ruddy's body was found abandoned near a swamp at his home; no one was held accountable for killing him. Contemporary newspapers reported only his last name. A white man later reported to the sheriff that during the search, he killed Mr. Ruddy. Mr. Ruddy had run for cover in palmetto trees near his home before deciding to act in self defense. When he did so, the man reportedly shot Mr. Ruddy multiple times and left his body abandoned in a swamp near his home, which was later found by the mob.

On Sunday, March 6, 1910, the deputy and mob hunting Mr. Ruddy arrived at the home of Sam and Wade Ellis. The Ellis brothers had no involvement in the death, but were soon accused of interference during the search.

The brothers were killed. No one was charged with their deaths.

Will English

Bradenton, Manatee County, Florida, July 2, 1912

According to a 1910 Census of Manatee County, Florida, a 20-year-old Black man named Willie English was living in Manatee working as a teamster and living in the home of his step-father Henry Oliver, and mother Mollie Oliver. On July 2, 1912, a mob abducted him from the Manatee County Jail in Bradenton, Florida and lynched him.

A white woman had complained that Mr. English had spoken to her in a way she found insulting. Though press accounts provided no further information about the reported conversation between Mr. English and the woman, law enforcement arrested Mr. English, and he was placed in the Manatee County Jail.

The Tampa Tribune reported that after Mr. English was placed in jail, a mob of at least 40 white men from “the various river towns” came and surrounded the county jail close to midnight on July 1 intent on lynching Mr. English.

When the jailer on duty realized the mob was besieging the jail, he resisted, firing upon the mob and demanding they desist. Nevertheless, in a brazen display of disregard for the constitutional rights of Mr. English, the mob opened fire on the jail, broke through the door, confiscated the keys from the jailer, kidnapped Mr. English.

Willie English was shot to death before being hung from a tree.

The Tampa Tribune printed an article the day after Mr. English was lynched stating that the mob killed him “as a warning to others”. In the end, no one was held accountable for the lynching of Willie English.

James Franklin

Bradenton, Manatee County, Florida, April 4, 1934

James Franklin was a middle-aged Black man who worked as a yardman in the City of Bradenton. Little is known about his life in Bradenton and whether he had a family. On March 31, Mr. Franklin was working near a citrus farm when he witnessed a young white girl fall to the ground from a tree. He attempted to help, but after the accident the girl told her father that Mr. Franklin assaulted her.

Police officers searched the city for several days before locating and arresting Mr. Franklin who was working. He denied the claims of assault.

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Reason 4: Baseball Legend John “Buck” O’Neil

“Sometimes, I think God may have kept me on this Earth for a long time so I could bear witness to the Negro Leagues.” - Buck O’Neil

John “Buck” O’Neil is a baseball legend and national treasure. His contributions to baseball spans eight decades. He masterfully identified talent, was a skilled coach and player who broke down barriers for others; and Buck’s mission in life was to honor the legacy of the Negro Leagues.

His story and rise to prominence took root in Sarasota’s Overtown and Newtown communities where he grew up climbing fences to watch baseball greats play during spring training. Buck’s father worked in the celery fields and played baseball. The little boy retrieved balls for local teams as a bat boy.

Quick Facts

- **Born Nov. 13, 1911, in Carrabelle, Florida.** He watched his dad John Jordan O’Neil play local baseball and traveled with him.
- **The O’Neil family moved to Sarasota** around 1920 where his childhood was spent.
- **Major league teams held spring training in the area.** Buck saw Babe Ruth hit a home run while watching the game through a fence.
- **O’Neil was not allowed to enroll at Sarasota High School** because he was Black.
- **He attended Edward Waters College** in Jacksonville.
- **O’Neil started in semipro ball**, then spent time with barnstorming and minor league clubs.
- **He broke into the Negro American League** with the Memphis Red Sox in 1937.
- **He was a Kansas City Monarchs first baseman in 1938** and remained there for nearly two decades.
- **The Monarchs captured four consecutive Negro American League pennants** in the Negro League World Series in 1942 (1939-42).
- **O’Neil was drafted into the Navy** and stepped away from baseball in 1943.

Quick Facts

- **He returned to baseball in 1946**, the year Kansas City reached the World Series again.
- **O'Neil was named Monarchs player-manager from 1948 - 1955**. He discovered and developed future Black baseball players (i.e. Elston Howard was the Yankees first Black player).
- **O'Neil became a scout for the Chicago Cubs in 1955**. He signed future big leaguer Oscar Gamble and future Hall of Famer Lou Brock.
- **The Cubs promoted O'Neil to their major league coaching staff in 1962**. He was the first Black coach to serve on an American or National League roster.
- **He returned to scouting in 1964 and later signed future Hall of Famer Lee Smith** before the Royals brought him back to Kansas City as a scout in 1988.
- **O'Neil created a permanent museum to honor the legacy of the Negro Leagues**. The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum was established in 1990. O'Neil was chairman.
- **17 Negro League legends were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2006**; O'Neil spoke on their behalf at the Induction Ceremony.
- **Less than three months later, on Oct. 6, 2006**, O'Neil passed away at 94 years old.
- **O'Neil was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom** by President George W. Bush.
- **In 2008, a Buck O'Neil statue was dedicated in the Hall of Fame**, and the Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award was established. The award honors "an individual whose extraordinary efforts enhanced baseball's positive impact on society, broadened the game's appeal, and whose character, integrity and dignity are comparable to the qualities exhibited by O'Neil." There is a Buck O'Neil spring training facility in Sarasota.
- **O'Neil was inducted** into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame in 2022.

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Reason 5: The list of historic resources produced about Sarasota's African American community for public use is expansive and increasing.

For over 100 years, African American residents played a major role in the development of Sarasota. Black labor cleared snake infested land for real estate developers, laid railroad ties, harvested celery, helped plat golf courses and labored in the homes of Sarasota's influential power brokers cooking, cleaning, ironing and rearing children.

Historians, a cultural anthropologist, architectural historians, and a preservationist joined volunteers in combing the area's archives and repositories to collect information about Newtown and Overtown's history in 2015 to the present. The Newtown Conservation Historic District project was funded by the City of Sarasota and led by Vickie Oldham.

Residents shared their photographs, documents, and memorabilia.

The research team pieced together an almost forgotten history and produced the following resources for the public's use:

- Research report with over 400 primary and secondary source documents
- Colson Hotel preservation
- Oral history interviews
- Documentaries
- Podcast series
- 15 historic markers
- A Newtown Alive website
- Trolley tours
- Book
- WBTT theatrical play (3rd graders)
- Leonard Reid House renovation and tours
- Downtown murals
- Festivals
- Bronze bust of Black educator Dorothye Smith
- Speakers' series
- Marketing materials



Reason 6: Sarasota's Overtown and Newtown Historic Districts.

- The Florida Department of State's Historic Preservation Office has approved the Newtown community of Sarasota for federal designation to the National Registry of Historic Places as the Newtown Historic District.
- Once approved, the African American Historic District designation of Newtown by the U.S. Department of the Interior will mean that the neighborhood has the largest, by the number of contributing structures, of any African American Historic District in the State of Florida.
- Overtown/Rosemary District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.



Reason 7: Historic Leonard Reid House, the first home of the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition is a contributing structure of Overtown, list on the National Register of Historic Places.

- Leonard Reid and his wife Eddy, original owners of the house, played a significant role in the development of Sarasota's African American community, its growth and evolution from the time of his arrival in 1900 until his death in 1952.
- The Reid House is historically significant because of its existence for close to 100 years, and the family's work in establishing Payne Chapel AME Church (the second Black church in Sarasota), and Reid's leadership in several fraternal organizations in the city.
- The one-story wood Frame Vernacular residential building is important because it provides a visible reminder of a well-preserved example of the most common architectural style of the homes of Sarasota's early African American residents in the community in which they lived.
- The importance of the Reid House is greater because many similar structures have been lost due to deterioration or demolition.
- The structure's notable features: a low-pitched front-facing gable roof with exposed rafter ends; side cross-gable extension; a front-end porch and two end, exterior brick chimney stacks.
- Frame Vernacular is defined as the common wood frame construction technique of lay or self-taught builders.

- Frame Vernacular is defined as the common wood frame construction technique of lay or self-taught builders.
- Reid's daughters Ethel Reid Hayes and Viola Reid obtained a college education and played a significant role in the lives of Black children. The women taught children in a pioneering preschool program located in the Newtown community.

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4. But Your World and My World, 2.
5. "Leonard Reid Family House."



Reason 8: Art collectors and donors gifted the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition, Inc. with a large collection of limited-edition prints by Harlem Renaissance artists, Florida Highwaymen artists and a collection of rare black and white photographs by African American photographer James Van Der Zee. Partial list of artwork:

- Romare Bearden's "Tenor Sermon"
- Jacob Lawrence's "Grand Performers"
- Dawoud Bey's "A Woman and Two Boys Passing"
- Sanford Biggers' "Seven Heavens"
- Judy Bowden's "Mom in Harlem"
- Faith Ringgold's "Born in the USA"



Reason 9: The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) founded by Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black History" is a national organization and has an active branch in Sarasota.

- ASALH has the largest chapter of members in Sarasota who are generous donors to SAACC.
- A past ASALH national president is a SAACC board member.
- In 1926, Dr. Woodson initiated the celebration of Negro History Week. The celebration was expanded in 1976 to include the month of February. It is one of the most important components of advancing Dr. Woodson's legacy.



Reason 10: SAACC, Newtown Alive and its founder have received awards for their history work.

- Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation honors “Reid House adaptive reuse project.”
- Florida Trust for Historic Preservation’s “outstanding achievement” honor.
- Vickie Oldham was named the 2020 Voice of Tourism by Visit Sarasota County.
- Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County.
- Colson Hotel was placed on the “6 to Save” list of historic structures.
- SAACC is listed on the African American Civil Rights Network.
- Association of African American Museums member.
- Vickie Oldham was an invited conference speaker at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Colson Hotel’s approval on the “11 Most Endangered Historic Buildings” list is pending.



Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location

Availability of land for new construction, or availability of existing facilities for renovation and adaptive reuse.

With a grant provided by the Sarasota City Commission, in 2019, the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) recruited local and national architects and museum consultants to begin a review of possible sites suitable for a new African American history, arts, and culture museum. One of the sites studied was Marian Anderson Place, a 13-acre tract near the southeast corner of N. Washington Boulevard (Highway 301) and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Way.



Figure 1 Aerial View of Marian Anderson Place

The site is bounded on the north by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, on the east by the Seaboard Coastline railroad, on the south by 21st Street and on the west by Marian Anderson Place. Although this site scored high marks in the review process, it was not available for acquisition at the time. However, through a collaboration between SAACC and the current property owner, Newtown Gateway, LLC, SAACC proposes Marian Anderson Place as the site for the new Florida Museum of Black History. This property is available and prime for the development of a new museum.

The 13-acre tract will allow the appropriate size and scale for the new Florida Black History Museum. It has both the size and scale to allow ample parking with the ability for expansion of the facility and parking area in the future. It can accommodate both indoor and outdoor events of varying sizes (large and small) as well as exterior interpretive spaces such as a sculpture garden and contemplative settings for a fully immersive experience.

Scale of new construction or renovations

Because of its size, 13 acres, Marian Anderson Place is an ideal location for the scale of the proposed Florida Museum of Black History. It can easily accommodate all requirements for the new structure and future expansion and only needs a portion of the larger site—approximately 4 acres. This size also allows enough area for ample parking and on-site storm water management.



Figure 2 Aerial of site showing the portion dedicated for the museum

Envisioned was a facility that would be between 25,000 and 30,000 square feet and would include:

- Large lobby that could also accommodate small receptions and talks
- Gift shop
- Exhibit space for permanent collections
- Exhibit space for changing and/or traveling exhibits
- Multipurpose event space for large gatherings- banquets, conferences, training, etc. up to 500 people
- Full commercial kitchen
- Black box performing arts theater
- Archival storage
- Research facilities, including visiting scholars' library
- Educational spaces
- Meeting rooms
- Sculpture garden and courtyard
- Roof terrace
- Administrative offices

The site study commissioned by the City of Sarasota included the development of a program for a museum that would be a multipurpose facility to better facilitate the generation of self-sustaining revenues through programming and use of the building and grounds.

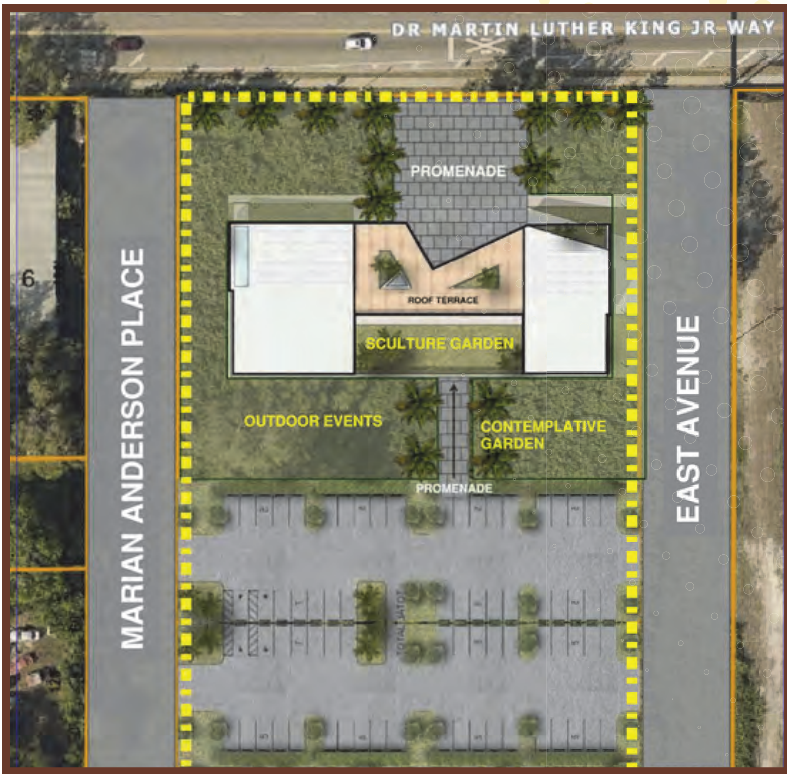


Figure 3 Site context for new museum



Figure 4 Artist's Rendering: Exterior



Figure 5 Artist's Rendering: Roof Terrace



*Figure 6 Artist's Rendering:
Sculpture Garden*

Adaptability of location for site access and parking needs

The proposed site, Marian Anderson Place is highly visible and easily accessible from both N. Washington Blvd. and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way. There are two (2) entry points from Dr. King Jr. Way, Marian Anderson Place and East Avenue. The site is located less than one block from N. Washington Blvd., a major arterial with access to downtown Sarasota and points south, Bradenton and I-275 to the north. I-75 to the east can be easily accessed from either University Parkway or Fruitville Road, both of which are connected by N. Washington Blvd.

Dr. King, Jr. Way is a major urban connector thoroughway that runs east-west with access to Tamiami Trail 1 mile west of the proposed site.

The site is large enough to accommodate both initial and long-term parking needs.

Recent streetscape improvements made on Dr. King Jr. Way include bike lanes, improved intersections, new landscaping, and more easily walkable streets. Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) offers public transportation with access along Dr. King Jr. Way.

Because of its visibility, the new Florida Museum of Black History on this site will become a gateway to Sarasota from the north along N. Washington (301), bookending the planned gateway development by Ringling College near Tamiami Trail, approximately 1 mile west.

Proximity to amenities within a 1-mile radius

- Historic Newtown Community
- Public Library
- Booker High School
- West Coast Black Theater Troupe
- Sarasota's African American History Trail (on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail)
- Historic Leonard Reid House (Current home of SAACC)
- Ringling College
- Community Center

Proximity to amenities within a 2-mile radius

- Sarasota-Bradenton Airport (SRQ)
- Ringling Museum
- Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
- Overtown/Rosemary District
- Arts and Theater District
- The Bay Conservancy
- Sarasota Bay
- John Ringling Causeway
- Downtown Sarasota



Criteria 3: Regional Economy: Data

Talent Supply and Education

The data below will demonstrate that Sarasota County has a vibrant educational system and talent supply. Specifically, each of the data points below highlight that Sarasota County is doing just as well or exceeding the State of Florida's overall performance. Sarasota County's educational system ensures that the youth population is well educated, but it also creates a skilled and readied pipeline of workers for the local economy.

- **Kindergarten Readiness: 57%**
- **State of Florida: 51%**

The Florida Department of Education adopted a statewide kindergarten screening instrument that assesses the readiness of each student for kindergarten based on the performance standards. A score of 500 or higher on the Star Early Literacy assessment administered to kindergarten students during the first 30 days of the school year indicates a student is "ready for kindergarten."

- **3rd Grade Math Scores: 70%**
- **State of Florida: 50%**

Math: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 3rd Grade Math Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond) Standards Assessment.

- **3rd Grade Reading Scores: 61%**
- **State of Florida: 59%**

Reading: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 3rd Grade English Language Arts Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond).

- **8th Grade Math Scores: 54%**
- **State of Florida: 55%**

Math: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 8th Grade Math Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond).

- **8th Grade Reading Scores: 55%**
- **State of Florida: 47%**

Reading: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 8th Grade English Language Arts Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond).

- **8th Grade Science Scores: 55%**
- **State of Florida: 44%**

Science: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 8th Grade Statewide Science Assessment.

- **Highschool Graduation Rate: 90.3%**
- **State of Florida: 88%**

Degree Attainment:

- **Bachelor+: 38.3%**
- **State of Florida: 32.2%**

The percentages of the population age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher.

- **AA+: 47.8%**
- **State of Florida: 42.4%**

AA+: Percentage of Floridians aged 25 and older who have at least an Associate's Degree.

- **Unemployment Rate: 3.4%**
- **State of Florida: 3.1%**

Percentage of unemployed individuals in an economy among individuals currently in the labor force.

It is calculated as $\text{Unemployed Individuals} / \text{Total Labor Force} \times 100$ where unemployed individuals are those who are currently not working but are actively seeking work.

Innovation and Economic Development

This section highlights Sarasota County's vibrant economy. In 2022, there were nearly 10,000 new startup businesses in the county. Coincidentally, almost half of all businesses in the county are "small businesses." Even more so, migration to Sarasota County has resulted in over \$2 billion in Adjusted Gross Income change.

- **Business Start Ups: 9,705**

Number of businesses started in Sarasota County in 2022.

- **Percent Small Business: 44.7%**

Percentage of businesses that operate with less than 100 employees.

- **Income Migration: \$2,326.84 (in Millions per year)**

The amount of Adjusted Gross Income this county gains or loses each year from people migrating into and out of the county.

Infrastructure and growth Leadership

The data points below highlight the effectiveness and readiness of County Infrastructure, but also demonstrate the continued growth in the County. With regard to land conservation and high-speed communications, Sarasota County exceeds levels of the State of Florida. Meanwhile, Sarasota's recent population estimates and forecasts depict continued growth in the county.

- **Land In Conservation: 32%**
- **State of Florida: 31%**

This is the total of local, state, federal and private acres of conservation land, divided by the county area in acres -- January 2022.

- **High Speed Communications: 97.9%**
- **State of Florida: 96.3%**

Percentage of residents with access to 100Mbps broadband.

- **Population (April 1st, 2022): 452.38 thousand**
- **Population Estimate 2030: 501,200 – 551,300**

Recent and forecast total individuals in the county.

Business Climate and Competitiveness

Regarding the business climate and competitiveness, optional sales tax revenue has continued to grow since 2020. An increase in sales tax will allow for governments to increase their revenues and in turn increase their expenditures for public programs. Turning attention to homeowners' insurance affordability, Sarasota County is competitively increasing its standing as the 24th best county out of 63 counties.

- **Local Option Sales Tax Revenue 2022: \$99.36 (Million per year)**
- **Local Option Sales Tax Revenue 2021: \$80.59 (Million per year)**
- **Local Option Sales Tax Revenue 2020: \$72.19 (Million per year)**

This is the amount of Local Option Sales Taxes collected by fiscal year. Discretionary sales surtax, also called a local option county tax, is imposed by most Florida counties, and applies to most transactions subject to sales tax.

- **Homeowners' Insurance Affordability: #24 (Out of all 63 counties)**

The Index ranks homeowners' insurance affordability for each county by comparing insurance premiums to the level of income for the county's households. The county with the most affordable homeowners' insurance is ranked #1 and the least affordable county's ranking is #67. The Index is updated quarterly with new insurance premium information and updated as new household income measures are released for Florida Counties.

Civics and Governance

Focusing on civics and governance, Sarasota County has a much higher level of voter participation in comparison to the State of Florida. This high level of voter participation highlights Sarasota County's astounding community engagement and interaction. Regarding the Inmate Population, Sarasota County's low level of incarceration demonstrates the safety and well-being of the county.

- **Voter Participation: 80.1%**
- **State of Florida: 54%**

Percentage of registered voters that vote, by year.

- **Inmate population: 6**
- **State of Florida: 112,659**

Estimated Inmate Population for individual Florida counties as of April 1, 2020.

Quality of Life

Sarasota County is known for its high quality of life with a myriad of beaches, amazing amenities, and beautiful neighborhoods. While these aspects are great, Sarasota County's quality of life is much more. For example, Sarasota County has a lower poverty rate and "children in poverty" rate than the State of Florida. Not only is the poverty rate lower, but the Per Capita Income in Sarasota County exceeds the State of Florida by nearly \$15,000. On top of these poverty and income statistics, Sarasota County has nearly 300 less criminal incidents reported per 100,000 individuals.

- **Poverty Rate: 8.1%**
- **State of Florida: 12.9%**

The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

- **Children in Poverty: 12.2%/ 7,302**
- **State of Florida: 12.9%**

Percentage of children in families that fall under the poverty threshold.

- **Per Capita Income: \$78,815**
- **State of Florida: \$63,597**

Per Capita Income reflects the amount of money earned per person in a geographical region. The per capita personal income obtained through wages, proprietors' income, dividends, interest, rents, and government benefits. The figure is based on incomes for those living in the area, not necessarily working in the area.

- **Crime Data: 1,659**
- **State of Florida: 1,952**

The number of crimes reported per 100,000 citizens. Data includes both property crimes and violent crimes.

Source: Florida Chamber of Commerce. "State of Florida Metrics." Florida Scorecard, 2023, thefloridascorecard.org/.

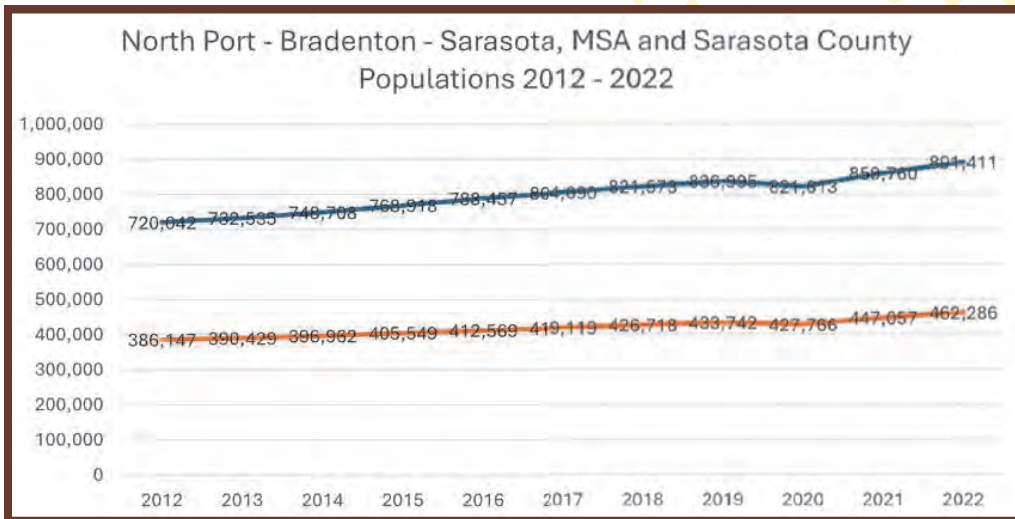
<https://thefloridascorecard.org/>.



Criteria 4: Regional Demographics

Population Characteristics:

The population of Sarasota County and the North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA has grown extensively from 2012-2022. This means that there are more consumers, producers, and workforce available in the county, which leads to greater economic activity. Specifically, from 2012-2022 the MSA has grown by over 170,000 individuals and Sarasota County has increased in population by 75,000 (See Graph and Table Below).



Year	Population	Sarasota County
2012	720,042	386,147
2013	732,535	390,429
2014	748,708	396,962
2015	768,918	405,549
2016	788,457	412,569
2017	804,690	419,119
2018	821,573	426,718
2019	836,995	433,742
2020	821,613	427,766
2021	859,760	447,057
2022	891,411	462,286

Education:

Regarding education, Sarasota County and the MSA are outperforming the state on a myriad of the metrics presented in the table below. For example, the MSA and the County have a higher percentage of high school and bachelor's degree attainment for those over 25 years old, than the State of Florida. Meanwhile, for the 18- to 24-year-old population, Sarasota County independently outperforms the State of Florida with bachelors and associate degrees. (See next page)

	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA		Sarasota County		State of Florida	
2022	Total Estimate	Percent	Total Estimate	Percent	Total Estimate	Percent
AGE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT						
Population 18 to 24 years	52,442	(X)	26,697	(X)	1,845,519	(X)
Less than high school graduate	7,699	14.70%	2,592	9.7%	229,379	12.4%
Highschool graduate (includes equivalency)	20,223	38.60%	8,575	32.1%	638,736	34.6%
Some college or associate's degree	19,166	36.50%	10,939	41.0%	754,968	40.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	5,354	10.20%	4,591	17.2%	222,436	12.1%
Population 25 years and over	659,287	(X)	372,225	(X)	16,104,410	(X)
Less than 9th grade	17,479	2.70%	6,843	1.8%	679,435	4.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	31,805	4.80%	14,543	3.9%	943,495	5.9%
Highschool graduate (includes equivalency)	182,970	27.80%	97,596	26.2%	4,363,609	27.1%
Some college, no degree	129,875	19.70%	70,157	18.8%	2,955,638	18.4%
Associate's degree	61,457	9.30%	31,720	8.5%	1,643,815	10.2%
Bachelor's degree	138,460	21.00%	86,559	23.3%	3,445,343	21.4%
Graduate or professional degree	97,241	14.70%	64,807	17.4%	2,073,075	12.9%
Highschool graduate or higher	610,003	92.50%	350,839	94.3%	14,481,480	89.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	235,701	35.80%	151,366	40.7%	5,518,418	34.3%
Population 25 to 34 years	78,205	(X)	37,491	(X)	2,783,761	(X)
High school graduate or higher	72,627	92.90%	35,147	93.7%	2,556,448	91.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	23,941	30.60%	13,911	37.1%	1,024,580	36.8%
Population 35 to 44 years	79,794	(X)	39,865	(X)	2,799,499	(X)
Highschool graduate or higher	71,466	89.60%	36,726	92.1%	2,528,694	90.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	28,569	35.80%	12,913	32.4%	1,053,736	37.6%
Population 45 to 64 years	223,117	(X)	120,541	(X)	5,726,736	(X)
High school graduate or higher	205,353	92.00%	112,124	93.0%	5,161,026	90.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	75,297	33.70%	47,021	39.0%	1,898,957	33.2%
Population 65 years and over	278,171	(X)	174,328	(X)	4,794,414	(X)
Highschool graduate or higher	260,557	93.70%	166,842	95.7%	(X)	(X)
Bachelor's degree or higher	107,894	38.80%	77,521	44.5%	(X)	(X)

Economy and Business:

The current census data (2019-2021) shows that Sarasota County and the MSA are both growing in the number of establishments. The growth or decrease in the number of establishments is an alternative economic indicator to demonstrate the economic well-being of a geographical area. The continued growth of Sarasota County and the MSA depict a growing and healthy economy.

	Sarasota County	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA
Year	Number of Establishments	
2019	14,331	23,843
2020	14,480	24,240
2021	15,198	25,584

Income and Poverty:

The chart below highlights household income for Sarasota County, the MSA, and the State of Florida. Generally, Sarasota County and the MSA have less households that are in the lower income brackets than the State of Florida. In conjunction, the County and MSA also have a greater percentage of households in the highest income bracket. Additionally, median, and mean incomes in the County and MSA outpace the State of Florida.

	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA	Sarasota County	State of Florida
Label	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Total	391,897	215,125	8,826,394
Less than \$10,000	4.70%	4.1%	5.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.70%	2.8%	3.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6.30%	6.3%	7.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.20%	8.0%	8.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10.70%	10.1%	11.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.20%	16.8%	17.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.00%	14.1%	13.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.40%	18.7%	16.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.30%	6.2%	7.7%
\$200,000 or more	11.60%	12.9%	9.5%
Median income (dollars)	75,631	78,341	69,303
Mean income (dollars)	109,074	116,410	99,349

Geography (land area, density, etc.)

The Census Bureau does not report geographical indicators. Criteria 5 will include geographic data and information.

Age:

While Sarasota might have previously been known as an older or retirement community, the data highlights that the region has a demographic composition that is diverse in age. Having a population composition that is diverse in age will allow for the population to engage in a wide range of activities.

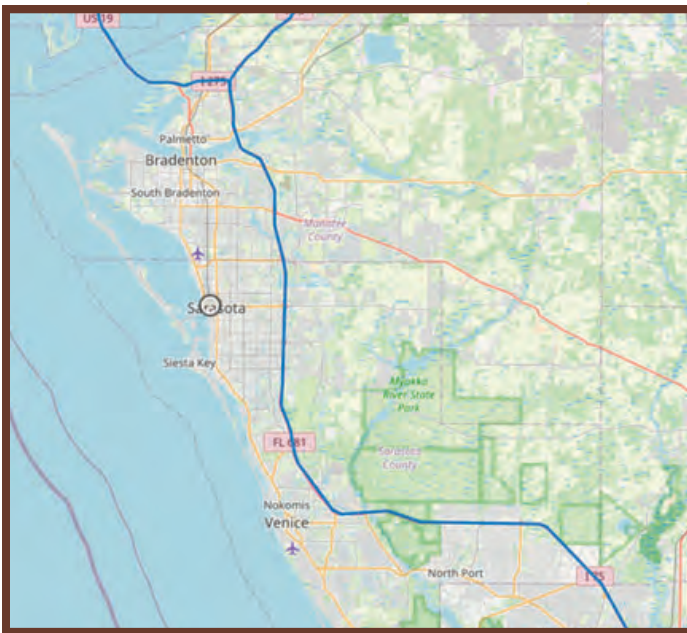
2022	Total	
Label	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA	Sarasota County
Total population	891,411	462,286
AGE		
Under 5 years	32,840	14,417
5 to 9 years	37,336	16,957
10 to 14 years	40,802	19,908
15 to 19 years	39,732	18,533
20 to 24 years	39,801	20,246
25 to 29 years	40,329	18,322
30 to 34 years	42,346	19,169
35 to 39 years	40,928	20,005
40 to 44 years	44,724	19,860
45 to 49 years	43,841	21,027
50 to 54 years	55,176	28,027
55 to 59 years	63,614	31,313
60 to 64 years	71,745	40,174
65 to 69 years	80,131	46,366
70 to 74 years	69,509	38,746
75 to 79 years	74,307	43,701
80 to 84 years	40,425	24,528
85 years and over	33,825	20,987
SUMMARY INDICATORS		
Median age (years)	53.9	57.5



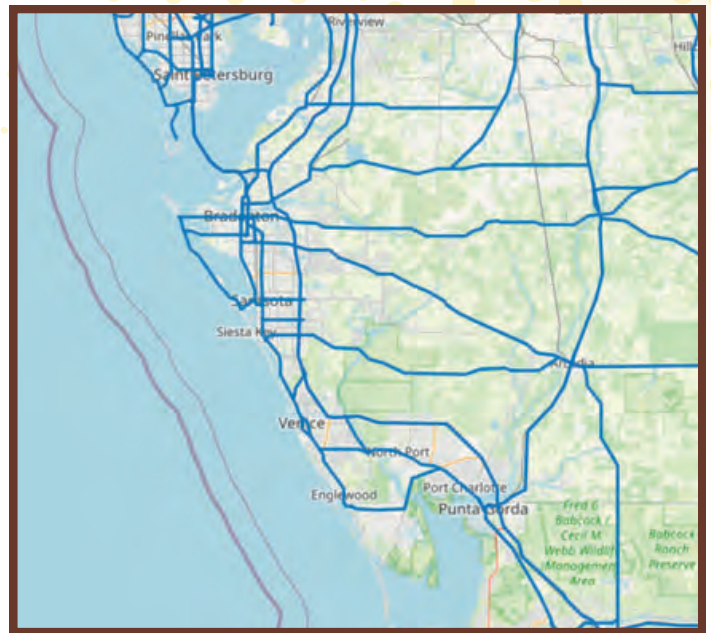
Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure

Existing Interstate Highways

Sarasota County's highway infrastructure is a primary driver in the County's ability to develop. Specifically, Interstate I-75, pictured below, runs through all of Sarasota County all the way to Northwest Ohio, which makes it an essential part of the shipping, tourism, and business infrastructure. On top of easy access to and from Sarasota, there are also a myriad of state roads that make internal travel more accessible. (Map of state roads included below)



Map: I-75



Map: Sarasota Region State Roads

Existing International Airports or regional airports

Sarasota County is home to the Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport and has been named one of the fastest growing airports in the United States. A new terminal expansion project is underway. The new five-gate terminal will cover 75,300 square feet and include a four-lane security checkpoint and five boarding hold rooms with 970 seats. New terminal amenities include a café, bar, restaurant, and marketplace in the double-height connector hall. New restrooms for men, women, and families will be available, also mothers' nursing rooms and pet relief areas. In addition to the Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport, there are five other airports within 130 miles. With the Sarasota/Bradenton Airport and the other 5 surrounding airports, travel to and from Sarasota can be done in multiple ways, with ease.

Availability of public transportation

Sarasota County's Breeze Transit makes the county accessible for tourism, hospitality, and business. The Breeze Transit network includes fixed routes, on-demand, and paratransit services. In 2022, these services provided over 2 million rides. Specifically, there are three transportation services in this program. First, is "Breeze" which entails bus and trolley travel on fixed routes. These routes operate from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday. The second service, "Breeze OnDemand" provides on demand minivans and SUVs for curb-to-curb service upon request. Lastly, "Breeze Plus" is an eligibility-based service, which provides rides to those who are disabled, disadvantaged, and or veterans. Below is a map of the Breeze services provided by Sarasota County:



Sources: Breeze Transit | Sarasota County, FL (scgov.net)

In conjunction with the services provided by the county, the City of Sarasota has implemented a micro mobility program that institutes the use of trolleys and VEO electric scooters throughout the city. The trolleys are free of charge, and the electric scooters are offered at a discounted rate for Sarasota residents. These programs aim to make transportation in the City of Sarasota more accessible and reduce traffic flow.

Alternative Transportation: Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Regarding alternative transportation in the Sarasota County region, it is an extremely safe area for pedestrians and cyclists alike. According to FDOT, in 2019, Sarasota County only had 17 of the 910 pedestrian deaths in the State of Florida. This translates to only 1.8% of pedestrian accidents in the total state, which makes Sarasota a safe and effective region for alternative means of transportation.

Sources: [Performance Data Integration Space \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)
[Transportation Data Portal \(fdot.gov\)](https://fdot.gov)



Sources: [Sarasota-in-Motion-Transportation-Master-Plan-July-2020.pdf \(sarasotainmotion.com\)](https://www.sarasotainmotion.com)

In conjunction with safe pedestrian and cycling, Sarasota County is home to an 18.2-mile paved public park, known as the Legacy Trail. The trail stretches from south county to north county, and there are 14 public access points throughout.



Map of the Legacy Trail



Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support

Black history work in Sarasota has received funding consistently from the public and private sector. It has been a grassroots effort from the beginning. While it is impossible to assign an amount for the media coverage that Black history work has received since 2003 and the in-kind donations of services from volunteers, residents, institutions, and companies, below is a partial list of projects, funding, general resources and media coverage received.

Support from government (federal, state and local)	\$3,340,500.00
Support from private donors	\$1,146,000.00
TOTAL	\$4,486,500.00

A. Angola Project Resources

Looking for Angola is a multidisciplinary research project, aimed at discovering artifacts and Angola’s location. The maroon community thrived on Florida's southwest coast from 1812-1821. It was comprised of formerly enslaved Africans, free Blacks and Seminoles.

The search for the 1800s Black Seminole Settlement includes archaeological field surveys of four sites (underground and underwater); historical research throughout the U.S. and The Bahamas; public lectures; historic markers, the construction of an archaeology laboratory at New College of Florida, the production of documentaries; an educational component for middle and high school students; “train the trainer” workshops, and an international cultural exchange program. Reflections of Manatee, another nonprofit 501 c3 organization received funding for several programs below. A cultural festival organized by Oaktree Community Outreach Inc. engages Sarasota/Manatee and Bahamian residents throughout the state and Bahamian cultural emissaries. The 3-day festival features classes about Bahamian arts, culture, and food. <https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/news-and-profiles/angola-enslaved-people-florida>

Year	Source	Amount	Project Description
2004	The Florida Division of Historical Resources	\$24,000	Tertiary archaeology
2005	The Florida Humanities Council	\$15,000	Public lectures in Sarasota/Manatee Counties
2007	The Florida Division of Historical Resources	\$25,000	Underwater archaeology
2006	The History Channel	\$10,000	Sarasota and Manatee County School programs
2007-2009	Comcast Foundation	\$90,000	Sarasota and Manatee County School programs
2009	US Department of Education	\$1,700,000	Manatee County Schools program
2010	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) + Florida Division of Historic Preservation	\$500,000	New College Archaeology Lab
2015	The Florida Humanities Council	\$15,000	Angola Digital Reconstruction
	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Public history presentations
	The City of Bradenton	\$100,000	Angola Archaeology grant
2018	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #1
2019	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #2
2022	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #3
2023	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #4
	TOTAL:	\$2,599,000	

B. African American History Resources (Newtown Conservation Historic District/Newtown Alive) and the SAACC Museum

The Newtown Conservation Historic District, a project initially funded by the City of Sarasota produced key resources. A branding name change to “Newtown Alive” occurred and the initiative was leveraged to include more needed history products. The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) was established in 2019 to find a location for and oversee the operations of an African American arts, culture, and history center to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical heritage of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond. Its startup location, the historic Leonard Reid House was deeded to the City of Sarasota by a developer and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is leased by SAACC for 50 years at a rate of \$1/year.

The Reid House was renovated and transformed into a new arts, culture, and history center that hosts exhibitions about Black life and history. It is a performance space for Black artists and offers classes about Black history and public programs in drawing, painting, photography, writing, music, acting, health and wellness, leadership, mentoring and entrepreneurship. Presentations are held there and it is a rental space accessible to groups and individuals countywide and, during polarized times such as these, the facility is a safe space for discussions about race, identity, class, social justice, history, and culture. SAACC is negotiating with the City of Sarasota to lease a city-owned parcel for the construction of a larger facility.

Source	Amount	Project Description
City of Sarasota	\$50,000	Newtown Conservation Historic District
City of Sarasota	\$155,000	Newtown Conservation Historic District
Sarasota County Government	\$8,000	Newtown Alive website
Sarasota County Government	\$10,000	Newtown Alive’s Overtown Pioneers Festival
City of Sarasota	\$200,000	Site search for Black Museum and the creation of SAACC, 501(c)3 tax exempt org
Florida Division of Historical Resources	\$8,500	Podcast series (oral histories)
City of Sarasota	\$400,000	Leonard Reid House renovations
The Community Foundation of Sarasota County	\$29,000	Downtown Murals
The Community Foundation of Sarasota County	\$10,000	John “Buck” O’Neil Exhibit (MLB Hall of Fame)
Florida Humanities Council	\$10,000	Beaches, Benches, Boycotts Exhibition
Private Donors	\$12,000	Dorothea Smith bronze bust
Private Philanthropy (Individuals & Foundations)	\$995,000	General Operations support for SAACC
TOTAL:	\$1,887,500	

NEWS ARTICLES

Newtown Conservation Historic District, Newtown Alive, SAACC

2015 – 2023

<https://www.jacksonville.com/news/20160908/when-bradenton-was-home-for-escaped-slaves>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/>
<https://www.visitsarasota.com/get-know-newtown-through-its-history>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/civil-rights-1950s-sarasota-shiela-sanders-found-voice/>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20170211/historic-markers-will-tell-story-of-newtown-community>
<http://gm5-lkweb.newscyclecloud.com/news/20170218/newtown-community-celebrates-history-leaders>
<http://www.yourobserver.com/photo-gallery/newtown-honors-its-history>
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<http://heraldtribune.com.gm5lkstage.newscyclecloud.com/news/20170407/students-volunteer-for-newtown-trolley-tours>
<http://temponews.suncoastpress.com/default.aspx?iid=152463&startpage=page0000001#folio=1>
<http://heraldtribune.com.gm5-lkstage.newscyclecloud.com/news/20170408/you-know-how-we-do-it-in-newtown-trolley-tours-bring-community-together>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20170413/local-community-leaders-want-to-make-newtown-destination>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/LK/20150925/News/605203521/SH/>
<http://www.asalh-manasotafl.org/the-newtown-conservation-historic-district-project/>
<https://www.facebook.com/newtownalive/>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/newtowns-narrative-draws-international-attention/>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/historic-markers-celebrate-the-men-and-women-who-championed-communities-residents-schools-and-businesses/>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/vickie-oldham-how-newtown-youths-shaped-the-communitys-legacy/>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/a-place-we-call-home-historic-markers-tell-story-of-newtown-history/>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/LK/20150925/News/605203521/SH/>
<http://www.floridatrend.com/article/19604/lost-and-found-a-haven-for-former-slaves>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20170522/newtown-alive-project-wins-statewide-historic-preservation-award>
<https://www.visitsarasota.com/museums/newtown-alive>
<https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/newtown-alive-rosalyn-howard-phd/1126058211>
<http://ncfcatalyst.com/newtown-alive-comes-to-new-college/>
<https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/articles/2018/1/23/vickie-oldham-newtown-alive>
<https://www.yourobserver.com/article/newtown-alive-earns-state-recognition>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/sarasota-fourth-graders-will-learn-history-newtown/>
<http://www.newtownalive.org/saving-celebrating-newtowns-stories/>
<https://www.visitsarasota.com/events/newtown-alive-history-speaker-series>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/opinion/20180416/oldham-and-williams-newtown-needs-arts-center-and-museum>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180609/sarasota-county-civil-rights-history-comes-alive-for-local-youth>
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180617/seidman-idea-long-overdue?template=ampart>
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/local/manatee/2020/06/24/therersquos-lynching-history-in-sarasota-manatee-historian-says/41972837/>
<https://www.ncf.edu/news/news/remember-their-names/>
<http://thesaacc.com/>
<https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/news-and-profiles/2020/07/sarasota-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture-announces-location>
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/opinion/columns/guest/2021/06/30/its-time-african-american-museum-sarasota/5365605001/>
<https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/arts-culture/2021-07-30/sarasota-leaders-will-make-their-pitch-for-the-citys-first-black-cultural-center-and-museum>
<https://www.facebook.com/thesaacc/>
https://www.srqmagazine.com/srq-daily/2021-09-10/17932_The-Ringling-and-Sarasota-African-American-Cultural-Coalition-Announce-New-Collaboration
<https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/news-and-profiles/2021/11/sarasota-african-american-cultural-coalition>
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/2022/03/14/plans-progress-sarasota-african-american-art-and-history-museum/9361880002/>
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<https://www.sarasotafl.gov/Home/Components/News/News/2824/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG2holwqG48>
<https://selby.org/events/special-lecture-newtown-alive-conversations-presented-by-vickie-oldham/>
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/2022/03/14/plans-progress-sarasota-african-american-art-and-history-museum/9361880002/>



Criteria 7: Educational Resources

Sarasota County is the cultural hub of Florida. The area is enriched by its visual and performing arts organizations and its cultural offerings. Florida is known for its cultural treasures and Sarasota is the the hub of the state. It's the place where visitors and residents can enjoy museums, art galleries and performing arts spaces. In fact, there are 13 stages within a one-mile radius of downtown.

The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition has signed partnership agreements and hosted special events with 59 arts, culture and history organizations; also, civic and social service groups.

An exciting partnership with the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art will open art classes, exhibition space and community meeting rooms to residents in an 8,000 square feet building located in Newtown. Self + Tucker Architects who designed the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel are the consultants who participated in meetings and site visits to make sure the Ringling structure's design compliments the community where it is situated. The Ringling Museum, established in 1927 is the official state art museum. Florida State University oversees operations.

The partnerships below are reflective of the Sarasota community at large. Each stakeholder is fully invested in the success of SAACC's mission and vision which is to amplify the work of African American artists, cultural influencers, early pioneers and activists through quality programming.

A.Cultural Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Church of the Palms	History lessons and community engagement
Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal)	History lessons and community engagement
Frist Congregational United Church of Christ	History lessons and community engagement
Frist United Methodist Church	History lessons and community engagement
First Presbyterian Church	Community engagement
Light Of the World Church	Art lessons
Bethel A.M.E. Church	Historical discussions
Community Bible Church	Art lessons
Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church	History lessons and community connections
Jewish Federation of Sarasota- Manatee	Social Justice education
Temple Emanu-El of Sarasota	Social Justice education
Unitarian Universalist Church	Equal Justice Initiative Lynching Marker dedication

B. Educational and Social Services Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Star Lab	Early Readers history program
Booker High School	Historical Tours and Volunteer program
Manasota Freedom School	Historical tours
Sarasota Housing Authority Youth Thrive	Student art program and history tours
The Association for the Study of African American Life and History	Community education partnership bringing history of the African American experience.
Florida Holocaust Museum Tampa	Civil Rights Historical exhibit
Greatness Beyond Measure	Artist and talent development
Sarasota County Department of Health	Health services awareness and education program
Betty Jean Johnson North Sarasota County Library	Community engagement and awareness of Library resources
Precious Jewels Academy	Student arts program
Equal Justice Initiative	Lynching Marker Recognition program
AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program	Resident work force training program to become Griots (story tellers and guides at the Historical Leonard Reid House)

C. Civic and Philanthropic Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Brotherhood of Men	Mentoring program
Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation	Program planning and support
Community Foundation of Sarasota County	Program Planning and support
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Bradenton Alumnae Chapter	Mentoring Program
Gamma Xi Boulé Foundation	Internships
Gulf Coast Community Foundation	Nonprofit mentoring program
The Links, Incorporated Bradenton/Sarasota	Music lessons
Masala Giving Circle of the Community Foundation of Sarasota	Reading Room dedication and design
William G. & Marie Selby Foundation	Program planning and support

D. Community Organization Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association	Community engagement
Manasota Black Chamber of Commerce	Entrepreneurs meet and greet events
Newtown Community Redevelopment Agency	Community Planning discussions
Sarasota Chamber of Commerce	Building Community Awareness of available resources
Sarasota County Tourism Development Council	Marketing and Community connections
Visit Sarasota	Marketing
University Town Center Mall Benderson Development	History events and community connections

E. Religious Congregation Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Church of the Palms	History lessons and community engagement
Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal)	History lessons and community engagement
Frist Congregational United Church of Christ	History lessons and community engagement
Frist United Methodist Church	History lessons and community engagement
First Presbyterian Church	Community engagement
Light Of the World Church	Art lessons
Bethel A.M.E. Church	Historical discussions
Community Bible Church	Art lessons
Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church	History lessons and community connections
Jewish Federation of Sarasota- Manatee	Social Justice education
Temple Emanu-El of Sarasota	Social Justice education
Unitarian Universalist Church	Equal Justice Initiative Lynching Marker dedication



Letters of Support Index

1. **Senator Joe Gruters** Florida Senate, District 22
2. **Ms. Debbie Trice** Commissioner, City of Sarasota
3. **Mr. Phillip Lanham** President/CEO, Gulf Coast Community Foundation
4. **Dr. Larry R. Thompson** President, Ringling College of Art and Design
5. **Mr. Darren L. Gambrell** Associate Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs, University of South Florida
6. **Mr. Uzi Baram** Professor Emeritus, New College of Florida
7. **Mr. Terry Connor** Superintendent, Sarasota County Schools
8. **Ms. Jennifer O. Rominiecki** President & CEO, Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
9. **Mr. Steven High** Executive Director, John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art
10. **Mr. Trevor D. Harvey** President, NAACP, Sarasota Branch
11. **Mr. Vincent P. Foderingham** Sire Archon, Gamma Xi Boulé of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity
12. **Daniel Boxser** Co-President, The Boxser Diversity Initiative
13. **Mr. Marvin B. Austin** President/CEO, Black Communities Working Together
14. **Dr. Rachel Shelley** Principal, Booker High School
15. **Ms. Mary Butler** President, Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association
16. **Ms. Melanie S. Thomas** Founder & President, Greatness Beyond Measure
17. **Mr. Dale Booker** President, Masala Giving Circle
18. **Ms. Kathryn Chesley** Board Member, Historical Society of Sarasota County
19. **Ms. Kim Patton Manning** President – Board of Directors, Friends of the Sarasota County History Center
20. **Mr. David Baber** President, Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation
21. **Ms. Lois B. Wilkins** Board Chair, Friends of Betty J. Johnson North Sarasota Public Library
22. **Ms. Virginia J. Haley** Former President, Visit Sarasota County
23. **Dr. Washington Clark Hill** Board Chair, Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

SENATOR JOE GRUTERS

22nd District

COMMITTEES:

Regulated Industries, *Chair*
Appropriations
Appropriations Committee on Agriculture,
Environment, and General Government
Appropriations Committee on Health
and Human Services
Commerce and Tourism
Community Affairs
Transportation

SELECT COMMITTEE:

Select Committee on Resiliency

JOINT COMMITTEE:

Joint Committee on Public Counsel Oversight,
Alternating Chair

March 6, 2024

Alissa Slade Lorane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lorane,

It is with great pleasure that I write to endorse Sarasota as the location chosen for the Florida Museum of Black History.

Overtown was Sarasota's first historical black community. Now known as the Rosemary District, Overtown was established in 1884 when Lewis Colston arrived in the area. By 1920, Overtown was a thriving community that played a pivotal role in the development of both the city and county of Sarasota. In 2002, Overtown was listed on the National Register of Historic Places forever encapsulating this historic place.

Sarasota is also a first class tourist destination. Sarasota features world famous beaches, visual and performing arts theaters, festivals, shops, and distinctive cultural experiences for everyone. Overall, millions of individuals visit on a yearly basis to partake in these numerous experiences.

I wholeheartedly feel the addition of the Florida Museum of Black History would further build upon Sarasota's reputation as Florida's Cultural Coast. I strong recommend Sarasota as the chosen location for this museum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Gruters".

Joe Gruters
State Senator

REPLY TO:

- 381 Interstate Boulevard, Sarasota, Florida 34240 (941) 378-6309
- 316 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5022

Senate's Website: www.flsenate.gov

KATHLEEN PASSIDOMO
President of the Senate

DENNIS BAXLEY
President Pro Tempore

Mayor Liz Alpert
Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch
Commissioner Kyle Battie
Commissioner Erik Arroyo
Commissioner Debbie Trice



Marlon Brown
City Manager
Shayla Griggs
City Auditor and Clerk
Robert Fournier
City Attorney

March 4, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Member:

The City of Sarasota has led the way in producing historic resources such as a research report about the 100+ years of our African American community's history, oral history interviews, 15 historic markers, educational materials, Black heritage trail brochures and the renovations of the historic Leonard Reid House that serves as our City's first free-standing African-American History museum.

The City of Sarasota's financial commitment has been unwavering. Investments to ensure that significant Black history stories are documented and preserved include:

- Newtown Conservation Historic District \$50,000
- Newtown Conservation Historic District \$155,000
- Black Museum location search \$200,000
- Leonard Reid House move and renovations \$400,000

Courage, dignity, and determination describe the Black activists who organized nonviolent wade-ins to desegregate county beaches here. Their efforts predate the rise in prominence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mrs. Rosa Parks.

Sarasota's Black history stories had local, national, and international impact. Activists kept neighborhood schools open and changed the way city elections are held. It is for these reasons that I believe Sarasota is the best location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

I appreciate that it will take collaborative partnerships to make the facility a thriving institution and will continue to support the City of Sarasota's participation in the effort.

Thank you for considering the City of Sarasota for the location of the Florida Museum of Black History.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Trice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "D".

Commissioner Debbie Trice

GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

March 7, 2023

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Task Force Members of the Florida Museum of Black History,

We are a proud partner of our community's collective efforts to support the location of a new Florida Museum of Black History here in Sarasota County. We are known for our culture of arts and performance, as the original winter home of the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus, The Ringling Museum, and the historic Asolo Theater.

However, Sarasota's Black history past mirrors other southeastern communities during that period, but predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence, as a non-violent protest strategy for local beach integration was replicated by civil rights activists in Texas, California, and South Africa during apartheid. Activists' beach wade-ins are listed on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites.

Major League Baseball Hall of Famer John Buck O'Neil, who is a national treasure, was reared in Sarasota's Black community, Overtown. Overtown and its neighboring Newtown is listed on the state's historic register and is awaiting national historic approval. O'Neil played in the Negro Baseball Leagues and was the first Black coach of a major league team. His decades of work and sacrifice finally received recognition when he was featured in Ken Burns' baseball documentary. Today, a 40-foot mural of O'Neil is on the wall of a building in downtown Sarasota, in addition to four other murals in that area, also depicting Black history stories.

Sarasota has a proven track of amplifying African American history through the production of historic resources including a research report, 15 Black history markers, a Newtown history book, trolley tours, a website, a podcast series, documentary shorts, and downtown murals show respect for the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of Florida's Black pioneers. Our town is only one of three cities in Florida to pay homage to its victims of lynching through the installation of a historic marker.

In 2018, the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) was created to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical heritage of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond. SAACC's fundraising efforts to open a Black arts center (Leonard Reid House) and history museum has netted close to \$1 million in donations in a year. Today, SAACC partners with 44 arts, culture, civic, social, and educational institutions.

GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Together with our donors, we transform our region through bold and proactive philanthropy. We are inspired by the bold vision of Sarasota being the home of the Florida Museum of Black History and we look forward to partnering proactively to make this vision a reality.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PPL', written in a cursive style.

Phillip P. Lanham
President | CEO



Ringling College
of Art + Design

Office of the President

March 8, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

I am pleased to write this letter to support the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) and their request for the new Florida Museum of Black History to be located in Sarasota, FL. As President of Ringling College of Art and Design, I am proud of the close relationship our campus community has built with the SAACC over the years; in particular the many projects we have collaborated on with President and CEO Vickie Oldham at the helm.

The heart of the Ringling College campus is located on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way and directly adjacent to Sarasota's historic Newtown neighborhood. In recent years, Ringling students have collaborated with both Newtown Alive and the SAACC on a number of projects to showcase and highlight the important Black histories locally. These projects have included erecting 15 historical markers, student work on websites for Newtown Alive and the SAACC; T-shirt designs; and placard designs for historical trolley tours.

The historic Sarasota activists' beach wade-ins are listed on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites. On Sarasota's Lido Key, murals can be seen depicting the caravan protests that led to beach integration, created by Ringling College Galleries Director and artist Tim Jaeger, and a marker that offers more details from that history. The markers and mural are part of a community project to bring those stories into the larger narrative of Sarasota. Ringling College also offers a Newtown History Book class in partnership with Newtown Alive. The product of this class will be a 48-plus-page book designed by students that will detail the history of the racial struggle for beach integration throughout Sarasota County in the 1950s and 1960s. Ringling students have been working with the SAACC to bring the historic Leonard Reid house back to life as a museum and community center. Reid pioneered Overtown, the first Black community in Sarasota and just minutes from Ringling College's campus.

Ringling College is a creative, inclusive community composed of people with diverse beliefs and backgrounds worldwide. Diversity of thought and perspective is integral to our mission, and we are relentlessly uncompromising in our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

It is more important now than ever before to do all we can to elevate and celebrate the histories of underrepresented communities. I hope the Task Force will strongly consider Sarasota as the location of the Florida Museum of Black History so that our community members, campus community, and many Sarasota visitors can access the critical, historical stories of our great city.

Sincerely,


Larry R. Thompson
President
Ringling College of Art and Design

March 8, 2024

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members:

Thanks for your work in providing recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History. As you develop plans for the museum's location, we ask that you consider Sarasota as the most suitable destination in the state for the facility. This site would complement the richness and beauty of the area from an aesthetic and historical perspective.


The work of researchers in documenting African American history is ongoing. As a result of their commitment, many resources are available to the public.

The Newtown Conservation Historic Team (now known as Newtown Alive) and the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition have a proven track of amplifying African American history through the production of a research report, 15 Black history markers, a Newtown history book, a website, podcast series, documentary shorts, downtown murals, and trolley tours that show respect for the sacrifices, challenges, and accomplishments of Black pioneers.

As the Assistant Director for the Office of Multicultural Affairs, at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, I provided an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to take a trolley tour, hear presentations, and learn about key historical facts that helped shape Sarasota's development.

Thanks for considering Sarasota as the site to construct the facility. It would greatly benefit the institutions of higher education such as the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, Florida State University Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, New College of Florida, the Ringling College of Art and Design, the State College of Florida, and our students.

Sincerely,



Darren L Gambrell

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CHANCELLOR

University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee • 8350 N. Tamiami Trail, SMC C305 • Sarasota, FL 34243-2049
(941) 359-4340 • Fax (941) 359-4298 • www.sarasota.usf.edu

March 4, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members,

I am writing to encourage locating the Florida Museum of Black History in Sarasota. The Sarasota region has a robust Black history and is leading one of the nation's most impressive community-based heritage initiatives. The FMBH will find wide ranging civic support and a robust audience and the facility will accelerate multiple heritage programs, expanding the region's moniker as the Cultural Coast.

I participated and continue to contribute to one of those heritage programs, and the details illuminate the reasons for placing FMBH in Sarasota.

Starting in 2004, a community scholar organized an interdisciplinary research team of historians, cultural anthropologists, archaeologists with educators for, as the program is known, Looking for Angola. Two decades ago, Angola was a local legend about a haven for escaped slaves, interpreted to be by the Manatee River only in meager form in obscure archives; in this quarter of the 21st century Angola is recognized by the National Park Service as a station of the Underground Railroad, the location and details are published in reports and peer-reviewed publications, and celebrated by descendants of those freedom seekers in a Back to Angola festival; a city park includes commemoration of the maroon community and the festival is featured by Visit Florida and local tourist organizations; the heritage is embraced by a wide range of residents as a legacy of this region. As Vickie Oldham, who led Looking for Angola, has noted many times: the spirit of Angola lives on.

Angola on the Manatee River is the first Black community in the region. Its people are known as maroons and as Black Seminoles. The history of the settlement started in the 1770s and though the community was destroyed in 1821, the descendants keep its spirit alive and the commemoration keeps the spirit of freedom burning bright.

The National Park Service considers the Underground Railroad movement as the first Civil Rights Revolution in the USA; Sarasota provides a significant and inspiring location for one of the most successful events of the 20th century Civil Rights Revolution: at Lido Beach in

Sarasota, the 1950s Wade-in peacefully desegregated the coastal waters. Noted on the US Civil Rights Trail, thanks to the efforts of Vickie Oldham – who took her heritage as social action skills from Angola on the Manatee River to Newtown in Sarasota – there is a robust Black history bursting internationally across the media and providing a place-based heritage that enriches peoples' lives.

Sarasota is the ideal location for the Florida Museum of Black History for its Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region.

Displaying the history and archaeology of Angola at FMBH and the Wade-in are just two of the significant features of Cultural Coast. During my academic career, I encountered and made contributions to revealing the significance of Luis Fatio Pacheco (1800-1895) time on Sarasota Bay, the politics of Louis and Irene Colson being buried in the 20th century segregated Rosemary Cemetery in downtown Sarasota, the Wright Bush House (built in 1920), deeding of land for the Galilee Cemetery as a Black burial ground, and the role of the first Jewish mayor of Sarasota in relationship to the African American community during the Boom Times. And there is much more. And, please note, I engaged in these facets of Black history without the topic being my primary research focus – the extend of the heritage is so great that, as a community-minded scholar, I was fortunate to be able to partner and contribute to researching and representing these chapter of Florida Black history.

I trust these strands of history support the application for the FMBH to be placed in Sarasota. I will offer my services, as I know many other residents will as well, to continue the legacies of courageous, determined people that enrich the heritage of Florida.

Sincerely,

Uzi Baram

Uzi Baram
Professor Emeritus
New College of Florida
Baram@ncf.edu



Office of the Superintendent

1960 Landings Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34231

941-927-9000 • fax 941-927-2539

SarasotaCountySchools.net

March 6, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

As the Superintendent of Sarasota County Schools, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for selecting Sarasota as the ideal location for the Florida Museum of Black History. This initiative aligns with our educational goals and our community's deep commitment to acknowledging and celebrating African American history.

Sarasota boasts a rich historical tapestry that profoundly encapsulates the African American experience, making it a compelling candidate for the museum. I want to highlight a few of Sarasota's notable contributions that underscore its suitability for this honor:

The Angola settlement, parts of which expanded into Sarasota, represents a pivotal chapter in African American history, intertwining with Native American heritage. Angola's recognition on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and its pending designation as a UNESCO Slave Route site of memory testify to its historical importance and the profound stories awaiting to be shared through the museum.

Sarasota's proactive involvement in the civil rights movement, particularly the beach wade-ins, is a testament to the city's role in national civil rights discourse. These actions had a transformative impact locally and resonated nationally and internationally, contributing to the broader struggle for civil rights and setting a precedent for peaceful protests across various regions, including during pivotal moments in South Africa's fight against apartheid.

Sarasota's commitment to preserving and celebrating African American history is further evidenced by the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition's efforts and the city's robust tourist infrastructure. The proposed museum will benefit from Sarasota's vibrant cultural scene, accessibility, and ongoing dedication to educational and cultural enrichment, as seen through various initiatives, including historical markers, murals, and the preservation of significant districts like Newtown and Overtown.

Selecting Sarasota as the site for the Florida Museum of Black History will honor the city's substantial contributions to African American history and ensure the museum's success by leveraging the region's rich cultural heritage, educational focus, and strong community support. We are excited about the potential for this museum to serve as an educational resource, providing invaluable learning opportunities for our students and the community.

Thank you for considering Sarasota as the home for the Florida Museum of Black History. We are eager to support this initiative in any way possible and look forward to the opportunity to contribute to this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Terry Connor
Superintendent of Schools

March 11, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

It has been a pleasure for Marie Selby Botanical Gardens to partner with Vickie Oldham and the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition to present compelling programs to residents. We learned about the work of African American pioneers who were groundskeepers for the Selbys from Newtown Alive researchers who recorded oral history interviews with descendants. The stories illuminated the generosity of the philanthropists and the tight bonds formed with workers.

We hosted a program featuring family members of Lymus Dixon Sr. and Grover Yancy, for instance. The presentation was well received and is available to view on our website.

The work of the Florida Highwaymen artists was the subject of another program, an exhibition, talk and art sale in partnership with SAACC. Residents filled the campus to hear fascinating stories about life in 1950s Florida.

Sarasota is an ideal location the Florida Museum of Black History. Visitors already enjoy our botanical gardens, beautiful beaches, restaurants, cultural arts programming and golf courses. An institution that amplifies African American history will be another great option for residents and visitors.

There is infrastructure already in place that presents history trolley tours and historic house tours. Related history publications are distributed. Sarasota began the work to document Black history 20 years ago.



DOWNTOWN SARASOTA

1534 Maund Street, Sarasota, Florida 34236
TEL 941.366.5731



HISTORIC SPANISH POINT

401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229
TEL 941.366.5731

We welcome new visitors to our community who want to experience vacation options, as well as residents interested in learning more about the beautiful place that we call home.

Sincerely,



Jennifer O. Rominiecki
President & CEO
Marie Selby Botanical Gardens



DOWNTOWN SARASOTA

1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, Florida 34236

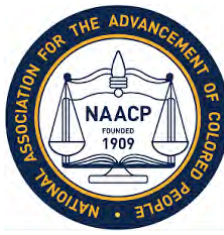
TEL 941.366.5731



HISTORIC SPANISH POINT

401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229

TEL 941.366.5731



March 11, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

The Sarasota NAACP's role in local, state, and national civil rights is undeniable. Our first president Mr. Neil Humphrey monitored the actions of our members throughout the country in the 1950s. Sit-ins by activists were underway. Mr. Humphrey was an entrepreneur, a former navy man and a community leader who courageously organized wade-ins to desegregate Sarasota County beaches.

The second Sarasota NAACP president followed using the same tactic to assert the rights of Black residents to enjoy the sand and surf. From 1955 until the 1964 Civil Rights Act passed, activists participated in car caravans to "wade in the water."

Their courage, dignity and determination earned Sarasota a designation on the US Civil Rights Trail with iconic locations such as Ebenezer Baptist Church and the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, AL.

The actions to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. The work of Sarasota activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and the non-violent protest strategy for beach integration was emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California, and South Africa during apartheid.

USA Today featured our community's victory and a commemoration in a 2022 story:

<https://www.yahoo.com/now/sun-sand-civil-rights-uncovering-100216695.html>

Beach desegregation is highlighted with other key Black history stories online and using traditional marketing tools (i.e., a research report, historic markers, a history book, on trolley tours, websites, and podcasts).

Thanks for your consideration of Sarasota as a location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

Sincerely,

Trevor D. Harvey
President, NAACP, Sarasota Branch



March 7, 2024

Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Office
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Attn: Alissa Satde Lorane, Director

Re: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

Please allow this letter to serve in support and advocacy for Sarasota, FL to be the location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

Gamma Xi Boulé is a member boulé (chapter) of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, the oldest Black Greek Letter Organization, founded in 1904 in Philadelphia, PA. Our Fraternity has over 5,000 members across 144 member boulés in the United States, the Bahamas and London, United Kingdom. On May 15, the Fraternity will be celebrating its 120th year of existence which is historical in itself. Additionally, Gamma Xi was chartered in Sarasota on March 4, 1995 and will be celebrating its 30th anniversary of existence.

The vision of Gamma Xi Boulé is to be known as the preeminent fraternal organization for Black men in the Sarasota and Bradenton communities committed to community service and recognized for its advocacy, programs, and initiatives that benefit the community and improve the quality of life for current and future generations. Our members are involved in countless community organizations bringing our vision to reality and several of our members are serving as board members for the Sarasota African American Coalition where Ms. Vicki Oldham presides as President.



There are 10 Reasons why Sarasota should be selected as the location for the Florida Museum of Black History:

1. Angola (parts of the settlement expanded into Sarasota) includes Native American history and is a national and international story.
 - a. Angola is listed on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (National Park Service).
 - b. Angola is on tap to be listed as a UNESCO Slave Route site of memory.
2. Sarasota activists' *beach wade-ins* are listed on the US Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites. The actions to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. The work of Sarasota activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and the non-violent protest strategy for beach integration was emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California and South Africa during apartheid.
3. Major League Baseball Hall of Famer, John "Buck" O'Neil, is a national treasure and Negro League player for the Kansas City Monarchs. He was reared in Sarasota's Black community of Overtown and was instrumental in the establishment of the Negro League Museum in Kansas City, MO.

Featured in a PBS documentary, *Baseball: A Film by Ken Burns*, O'Neil's decades of work and sacrifice finally received recognition. As a Negro League baseball player and the first Black coach of a Major League Baseball team, a giant 40 ft mural was created in his honor on the wall of a building in Sarasota's Rosemary district. Coincidentally, there are 5 giant murals in the Overtown/Rosemary district that depict Black history stories.

4. Sarasota is only one of three cities in Florida to pay homage to its victims of lynching through the installation of a historic marker.



5. The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition's fundraising efforts to open a Black arts center and history museum have been successful. Five major donors have given at the \$100,000+ level. Other donations under \$5,000 are flowing in. There are other major donors to cultivate for giving opportunities in Sarasota County which is amongst one of the wealthiest counties in the state in per capita income.
6. Sarasota attracts tourists. The city has amenities that visitors desire, including a rapidly growing international airport (SRQ). Recent statistics from FY2023 (October 2022-September 2023) indicate 3,065,800 visitors came to Sarasota County during this period, an increase of 2% (61,400 visitors) over the prior year.

Visitors to the region spent over \$2.6 billion on various goods and services during their stay in direct expenditures to include lodging, dining, shopping, entertainment, attractions, groceries, transportation and other costs.

7. Sarasota has a proven track record of highlighting African American history through the production and preservation of historic resources (a research report, 15 Black historical markers, a Newtown history book, trolley tours, a website, a podcast series, documentary shorts and downtown murals) that document and respect the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of Florida's Black pioneers.
8. Sarasota's original black settlement, Overtown/Rosemary, is a historic district and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
9. Sarasota's predominantly black neighborhood, Newtown, is also listed as a historic district after being approved by the State of Florida and is currently awaiting approval by the US Department of Interior to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



10. There are many other local attractions to see and things to do in Sarasota to include beaches, Selby Gardens, Mote Marine Aquarium, arts, sports (2 MLB spring training sites in Sarasota County, 28 golf courses within Sarasota city limits), entertainment, shopping, outdoor concerts, etc.

Sarasota also has a very active theater scene to include the award-winning Westcoast Black Theater Troupe, Asolo Repertory Theater and Florida Studio Theater all in downtown Sarasota.

With this extensive list of impressive qualities, the members Gamma Xi Boulé extends its wholehearted support for Sarasota being the home of the Florida Museum of Black History as it is in alignment with our vision which is to provide advocacy that benefits the community and improves the quality of life for current and future generations.

Warmest Regards,

Vincent P. Foderingham
Sire Archon
Gamma Xi Boulé of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity



THE BOXSER
DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

5 March 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Member,

We would like to add our support to the proposal that Sarasota be the location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

As is well known, Sarasota is a center for culture in this State and in the Southeast U.S. The one thing that we need to have here is a Museum celebrating Black History, Art and Culture.

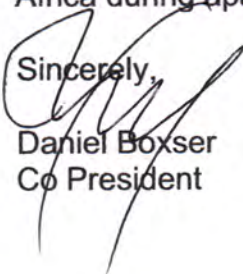
It is only one of three cities in Florida to pay homage to its victims of lynching through the installation of a historic marker as part of the Community Remembrance Project in conjunction with the Equal Justice Initiative.

The whole Sarasota community provided support with over 400 individuals and 80 organizations pledging their support for this memorial.

Angola is listed on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (Nat'l Park Service) Angola is expected to be listed as a UNESCO Slave Route site of memory.

Sarasota activists' beach wade-ins are listed on the US Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites. The actions to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. The work of Sarasota activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and the non-violent protest strategy for beach integration was emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California and South Africa during apartheid.

Sincerely,


Daniel Boxser
Co President

March 12, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Member, Alissa Slade Lotane,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse the task force selection of Sarasota for the Florida Museum of Black History. A local museum in Sarasota County that focuses on bringing history to life for our community, particularly in the realm of education is paramount.

As an educator with roots deeply embedded in Sarasota, I have witnessed the transformative impact of bridging textbook knowledge with real-life experiences. This museum promises to be a cornerstone in our community, aligning seamlessly with all state standards and providing a platform to represent diverse historical narratives.

The prospect of showcasing local black history, including pivotal events such as the beach sit-ins, Booker High School's significance, and the silent boycott, is genuinely exciting. By delving into the complexities of our past, the museum will contribute immensely to our students' understanding of our community's rich heritage.

I am confident that if Sarasota is selected for Florida Museum of Black History it will serve as a beacon for learning, fostering a dynamic environment where our students can connect with the profound historical significance of events like lynching, and appreciate the strides made by the first African-American school in the region.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse the selection of Sarasota for Florida Museum of Black History. It has the potential to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and tangible understanding, enriching the educational experience for our students.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rachel Shelley
Principal of Booker High School
Rachel.Shelley@Sarasotacountyschools.net
(941) 359-7884

AMARYLLIS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

President Mary Butler
Vice President OPEN
Parliamentarian Carlos Yancy



Treasurer Joseph Mack
Secretary James Burke
Chaplin Danny Preston

March 6, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task
Force member:

I am a longtime Newtown resident and community organizer. I serve as the Amaryllis Park neighborhood association president. For the last 19 years I have seen an increase in the number of residents and visitors interested in local African-American history. There is a marked difference in the way visitors engage with our Black history as well.

Change occurred after the completion of historic resources by the Newtown Conservation Historic District research team. There are historic markers in 15 locations throughout Newtown; there is a history book, a research report, a website, heritage trail brochures, murals depicting Black history on the walls of commercial buildings, a bronze bust of a beloved Black principal at the entrance of a school, history trolleys, exhibitions (ie MLB Baseball Hall of Fame recipient Buck O'Neil); and more programs that showcase African American artists and historians are planned.

I supported and participated in a project to ensure that Newtown was designated an historic district on the national register of historic places. That measure was approved by state historians and will be approved by US Department of Interior leaders.

Members of the Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association are proud of the sacrifices and contributions of Black pioneers. We want to be known for the actions we took to live free and enjoy all that Sarasota offers; and now we are.

Sincerely,

Mary Butler

Mary Butler, President
Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association

1340 32ND ST, SARASOTA, FL 34234 – 941-306-8444
AMARYLLISPARKNA@YAHOO.COM



March 10, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members:

I am the Founder and President of Greatness Beyond Measure, Inc., aka GBM, an empowerment and mentoring not-for-profit organization that provides an enriching environment that encourages academic and technology enhancement, self-expression, and entrepreneurial development for thousands of young people. GBM is a creative and artistic network of aspiring teen and young adult artists, musicians, poets, dancers, entrepreneurs, sports lovers, techies, hosts, social media influencers, that span across the country from Florida to California. Greatness Beyond Measure, Inc. was founded in 2008, as a bridge to underserved minority teens, ages 12 -19. Our mission is simply "Empowerment for Life, Believe it, Achieve it, Ignite the Genius."

GBM has partnered with the Sarasota AA Cultural Coalition and Newtown Alive to showcase young artists most recently at a holiday program to celebrate the opening of the historic Leonard Reid House and a Black History concert at the University Town Center Mall. Both events were well received and attended by hundreds.

It is essential that young people in the community have a venue to showcase their talents and where their voices can be heard, as well as a facility to learn about the accomplishments of African American icons in the arts, culture, and history.

The Florida Museum of Black History will be a source of pride for countless community young people who'll visit exhibitions, take classes, attend community showcases and listen to dynamic speakers.

Please consider Sarasota's proposal to locate the museum to a city that is the cultural hub of Florida. I can be reached at this email or (941) 735-5261.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie S. Thomas', written over a horizontal line.

Melanie S. Thomas,
Greatness Beyond Measure, Founder & President



Masala Giving Circle

P.O. Box 50002
Sarasota, FL 34232
Masalagivingcircle.org

March 6, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane,
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Buiding
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member Alissa Satde Lorane

I am writing to you on behalf of Masala Giving Circle. Established in 2013, MGC is a group of African American women dedicated to the mission of promoting economic and personal empowerment through financial support in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto counties.

This letter extends our ardent support for Sarasota as the location for the State's Black Museum. I cannot think of a safer, more appropriate location for the State Museum. Sarasota is known as Florida's Cultural Coast given the plethora of museums, art galleries and performing art venues. Sarasota attracts visitors near and far, year-round, who enjoy the abundance of activities, as well as our stunning beauty from our award-winning beaches, bayfront, parks and other attractions, including Golf, botanical gardens and shopping.

Importantly, Sarasota has a very active and diverse population who take full advantage of the plethora of activities. Moreover, given our desirable geographic location, Sarasota is a short driving distance from several major cities, including, Tampa, Fort Meyers, Naples and only hours away from Orlando and East Coast locations like Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and more.

Our organization fully supports Sarasota as the location.

With regards,

Dale Booker, President
Masala Giving Circle



SARASOTA ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

March 6, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members:

I am writing to enthusiastically support the submittal by the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition in hopes that Sarasota is chosen as the location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

The Sarasota community has a long-standing commitment to promoting all cultural interests. Support of African American culture can be demonstrated by successful local programs such as the popular Newtown Alive project, a comprehensive program that resulted in a series of deliverables that demonstrated the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of many of Sarasota and Florida's Black pioneers. These deliverables include a research report, 15 Black exhibit quality history markers placed throughout the neighborhood, a Newtown history book, trolley tours, a website, a podcast series, and documentary shorts.

Other activities supporting African American history and culture include involvement in identifying and researching the Angola settlement and promoting its importance, one of only three locations in Florida to install a historic marker that recognized lynching victims, and a current effort to raise funding to develop a local Black arts center and history museum.

Sarasota is a major center for tourism with significant cultural venues such as the Ringling Museum of Art, Selby Botanical Garden, Historic Spanish Point, and the Sarasota Art Museum. The inclusion of the Florida Black History Museum will be a substantial contributor to Sarasota's cultural landscape.

I encourage the State to name Sarasota as the location of the Florida Black History Museum.

Sincerely,

David Baber
President

ADVOCATE. PRESERVE. EDUCATE. CELEBRATE



**Friends of Betty J Johnson
North Sarasota Public
Library**

President:

Lois B Wilkins

Vice President:

Paul Ruffin

Correspondence Secretary:

Delores McFarland

Recording Secretary:

Martina Garris

Treasurer:

Francina Hollaway

Immediate Past President:

Dr. Celestine B. Campbell

Committee Chairs:

Strategic Planning:

V.P. Paul Ruffin

Programming:

Queen Mecca Zabriskie

Nominating:

George Bradt

Past Presidents Ad-Hoc

Advisory:

Dr. Celestine B. Campbell

Internal Audit:

Delores McFarland

AACRC Reading Room

Advisory:

Dave Harralson

Membership & Hospitality:

Shelia Atkins

Bookstore Manager &

Fundraising:

Ellia Manners

Marketing & PR:

Marion Black-Ruffin

Chair Emerita:

Lovette W. Harper

Site Librarian Emerita:

Betty J Johnson

FRIENDS OF BETTY J. JOHNSON NORTH SARASOTA PUBLIC LIBRARY

2801 Newtown Blvd., Sarasota, Fl. 34234

Phone: (941) 861-1360

www.bettyjohnsonfriends.org

culturalresourcecenter@gmail.com

March 8, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane

Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer

R.A. Gray Building

500 South Bronough Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History; Letter of support from The African American Cultural Resource Center (AACRC Sarasota)

Dear Alissa Slade Lotane,

This letter of support is sent to you on behalf of our organizations vision and mission regarding Black History in Manasota, Florida. I am President of the Friends of the Betty J Johnson North Sarasota Public Library and Chair of the AACRC in Sarasota.

Vision: The vision is for The African American Cultural Resource Center to be the premier venue for the study of African and African American Life, history, and culture in the Sarasota/Manatee communities and beyond.

Mission: The African American Cultural Resource Center at Betty J. Johnson North Sarasota Public Library, Inc. (BJJNSPL) houses a special collection of books, periodicals, media, art, and artifacts pertinent to the Global Black Experience. Created by the Friends of BJJNSPL, Inc, it is a reading room and research facility with materials not only about African Americans but also about African people living in Africa and in many other parts of the world. There is a special section with information about the history of Newtown and African Americans in Florida. The African American Cultural Resource Center is available for use by students, scholars, historians, researchers, and other interested individuals in the larger community.

Lovette W. Harper: The Founder (1924 - 2023) Written by Lois B Wilkins

A true expert in African American heritage, Lovette W. Harper spent years cultivating a collection of Black memorabilia from around the world. To ensure this information was available to all, she negotiated a space in the Betty J.

Johnson North Sarasota Public Library so people in the community could interact daily with this wealth of knowledge.

A master curator, Ms. Harper delivered pieces of her massive collection to The Family Heritage House Museum at State College of Florida in Bradenton. It is one of few displays of its kind on a college campus in the state.

Greater among other inhabited locations is Lovette W. Harper's deposited diasporic collection to her alma mater, the former Tuskegee Institute. Now known as Tuskegee University, there two legends of African American history are laid to rest: Booker T. Washington and Dr. George Washington Carver. Tuskegee was built in 1881 under a charter from the Alabama legislature for the purpose of training teachers in Alabama. Its programs provided students with both academic and vocational training.

When Lovette W. Harper moved from New York City and settled here in Florida, she had an educational plan in mind. Ms. Harper felt the only real tools to combat racism were hidden in the books and special collections she had made available to everyone, adults, and children. She knew many of us had hidden treasures of history, often tucked away in taped boxes that we pass by every day.

Ms. Harper would have been pleased to see the location of a Black History Museum here in Sarasota. Ms. Harper passed away on December 8, 2023, at the age of 99 1/2.

On behalf of Ms. Harper and in recognition of her contributions, the legacy she left to the library systems in Manatee, Sarasota counties and Tuskegee University, I support the idea of having Sarasota, Florida as a site for its Black History Museum.

Sincerely,



Lois B. Wilkins, Chair of the AACRC

2635 Bay St
Sarasota, FL 34237
March 11, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough St
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lorane:

I am writing in regards to the Florida Museum of Black History and to recommend to the Florida Museum of History Task Force that Sarasota County is the ideal location for this facility.

Although recently retired, I have spent the majority of my career in Florida's tourism industry with a specific interest in cultural tourism. I served as Chair of the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors and Chair of Destinations Florida Board of Directors. I was President of Visit Sarasota County for 26 years.

Choosing Sarasota ensures the ongoing operational and financial success of the Florida Museum of Black History. Sarasota is known as Florida's Cultural Coast™ and our community has a reputation for strong philanthropic support for our many cultural organizations. In addition, we have a robust cultural tourism program throughout Tourist Development Tax that annually provides millions of dollars in support for our cultural organizations. Sarasota is also home to the State's official art museum, the John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

The Sarasota region already has significant ties to Black history and Black cultural attractions. The story of the Angola settlement is significant in both Black and Native American history and is listed on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom with the National Park Service and is soon to be listed as a UNESCO Slave Route site. Sarasota was one of the first five Florida sites to be included on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail in recognition of the Sarasota activists' beach wade-ins to desegregate our shorelines in the 1950's. And we can't forget Sarasota's ties to the Negro Baseball Leagues with the many tributes to be found in Sarasota to national treasure John Buck O'Neil who grew up in our community.

Sarasota is well-established as one of the nation's top tourism destinations with a demonstrated commitment to the arts and history. Sarasota, Florida's Cultural Coast™ is the superior choice for this exciting Museum. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance. My email is virginiajoycehaley@gmail.com and my cellphone is 941 720 6464.

Regards,
Virginia J. Haley



March 8, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lotane,

Re: Letter of Support for Sarasota Being Location for the Florida Museum of Black History from the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) Board of Directors

I am Washington Hill, MD, and I am Board Chair of the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC). SAACC is leading the way in exhibiting, showcasing and educating the Sarasota community about Black history through Sarasota's first free-standing arts, cultural and history center at the historic Leonard Reid House. Our mission is to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical heritage of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond.

There is much good work on Black History happening in Sarasota making it an ideal choice for the Florida Museum of Black History:

-SAACC moved and now leases the Historic Leonard Reid House and the land from the City of Sarasota for \$1 annually for 50 years. Inside the house are the works, culture, and art of local Black artists. SAACC's fundraising efforts to open a Black arts and history center netted close to \$1 million in less than a year.

-SAACC hosted an exhibition about a Hall of Fame player in Major League Baseball, John Buck O'Neil in 2020. Reared in Sarasota's Black community of Overtown, Buck is a national treasure. He played in the Negro Baseball League and was the first Black coach of a major league team in Kansas City.

-Other major events in Civil Rights history happened in Sarasota. The beach wade-ins to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. The work of activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and their actions were emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California and South Africa during apartheid.

-Sarasota destination should also be considered the location for the state museum because for over 20 years, our area's humanity's scholars have worked diligently to research, document and preserve early Black presence in Florida.

-Sarasota has a proven track record that shows respect for the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of Florida's Black pioneers. In a proud Sarasota is one of only three cities in Florida with a marker that pays homage to six named lynching victims and unknown victims who died at the hands of mobs.

-It will take collaborative partnerships to make the facility a thriving institution. SAACC has signed agreements with 44 arts, cultural, civic and social organizations e.g. the African American Cultural Resource Center a Sarasota venue for the study of African and African American Life, history, and culture.

It is for these reasons and more that Sarasota should be chosen the destination for the Florida Museum of Black History. Please strongly consider selecting Sarasota as the location for the Florida Museum of Black History. A state museum here will showcase major themes in Florida's African American history as well as Sarasota's Black history.

The SAACC Board of Directors and Sarasota are ready.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Washington Clark Hill', with a stylized, cursive script.

Washington Clark Hill, M.D.
Board Chair
Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition
941-356-9099
dr.washingtonhill@gmail.com
thesaacc.com