

A City of Tampa Parks Dept Treasure



Gateway Sculptures

History Walk LIFETILES

Leaders' Row



Timeline Pavers



Clay Tile Murals at The Trio



Perry Harvey Sr. Park

The artwork at Perry Harvey Park is unique and contextual. Four major artwork groupings by four artists which work to weave the full and complex story of the abundant contributions of the African American community in Tampa and particularly the Historic Central Avenue.

The Gateway Sculptures



“My work is the belief that art is a celebratory experience that can create joy despite adverse conditions of social injustice, poverty, war.” James Simon, creator of the gateway sculptures.

History Walk LIFETILES by Rufus Butler Seder

The Early Years - Though Tampa's African and American history is centuries old, the history of The Scrub and Central Ave. traces its origins to the end of the Civil War. The community that took root on this site and in the surrounding area was founded by recently freed slaves, some from the immediate area and others from the greater Tampa Bay region.

The Scrub - In the shadow of downtown Tampa, nestled between the growing business center and the cigar-making enclave of Ybor City, stood The Scrub. Named for the scrub palmetto that once dominated the landscape here, by the late 1800s The Scrub was home to the majority of Tampa's African American population





Central Avenue Business Leaders - The restricted access under the laws and customs of segregation prompted the growth of a business district along The Scrub's western edge. Leaders soon emerged to help guide and foster generations of residents. From Clara Alston's Helping Hands Day Nursery to Moses White's and Watts Sanderson's restaurants (Palmetto Dinette and Blue Room respectively) and other businesses to C. Blythe Andrews' newspaper (The Florida Sentinel), Tampa's African American community could obtain whatever it needed on and around Central Avenue. -

Central Ave. Timeline - A feeling of time travel is created as one walks by this mural. Images tell a timeline story from the early days of palmetto fields and The Scrub through the era of a booming business district and Civil Rights strife to the present day. Viewers will see the image of a vehicle as it rolls alongside them, morphing before their eyes from a horse drawn wagon carrying African American settlers, before transforming into an early model truck, then a 50's style luxury auto, etc., ending with a graceful Bro Bowl skateboarder sweeping through the bowl.



CENTRAL AVENUE HEYDAY



Central Ave. Heyday - At its peak between the early 1920s and late 1950s, Central Avenue was home to businesses large and small, including restaurants, professional offices, hotels, movie theatres, and night clubs. The music and entertainment scene on Central fostered local musicians and hosted national acts. Cab Calloway and Ella Fitzgerald came through on the “Chitlin Circuit”, while Ray Charles and Cannonball Adderley started their careers on Central -

Social and Religious Life - The Central Ave. area was also the social and religious center for Tampa’s African American residents. That support system helped to ease the burden of the dominant Jim Crow Laws and helped to facilitate the removal of those same laws. Several historic church buildings remain today as reminders of that important legacy.





Civil Rights - By the 1950s, separate but equal was no longer acceptable to many African Americans, both across the city and around the country. In Tampa, the Civil Rights movement's leadership included Reverend A. Leon Lowry and Helen Saunders, who worked with others in the community to bring Martin Luther King, Jr. to Tampa in 1961. Downtown lunch counter sit-ins, a hallmark of the movement, were planned in the churches and the NAACP office near Central Avenue -

Health and Education - An educated and healthy population is vital for the survival and success of any community, and many people played a role in insuring both for the residents of The Scrub. Blanche Armwood and Christina Meacham were unparalleled leaders in education. St. Peter Claver provided the spiritual inspiration for the school that shared his name, and Clara Frye helped to bring medical care to those barred from the city's facilities





Perry Harvey, Sr. Bronze Statue by Joel Randell

Perry Harvey, Sr. had a large impact on the lives of Tampa's African American community. He was a founding member of the Longshoreman's Union Local #1402, and served as its President from 1937 until just prior to his death in 1972.

His focus on children is widely credited with contributing to the creation of Project Headstart

Among his many accomplishments, he brought better wages, benefits, and improved working conditions to Tampa's predominantly black dock workers. He helped create a black middle class in Tampa by providing jobs for those who sought employment, encouraged workers to save their money for family matters. Mr. Harvey helped create the first black-owned apartment building and plaza, which included a bank, supermarket, restaurant and other businesses. He was a leader by example, and was influential in Tampa's Civil Rights movement. When appointed by Florida Governor LeRoy Collins to serve on the state's bi-racial committee, he helped to desegregate the county's school system.



Leaders' Row by Mike Parker



Leadership takes on many forms. Some are forceful and dominant, while others work behind the scenes and offer quiet support and encouragement. Regardless of style, the substance is the same. Motivating, prodding, assisting, nurturing, and even financing the dreams and aspirations of single individuals and whole communities, the men and women featured here provided both a bedrock foundation to build upon and boundless success to strive toward. Each one left their mark on the city and on the lives of those they inspired. Earth walls, sandblasted and stained concrete, hand plasma cut aluminum tell the story of the most influential individuals in the community through images and a Sanborn map. Representations on the wall include: Georgette Gardner, Henry Joyner, Christina Meacham, Moses White, Robert Saunders, Lee Davis, and Garfield Rogers

Timeline Pavers



A ribbon of colorful concrete connects fourteen large, inset pavers that tell the chronological story of The Scrub and Central Avenue. Starting with the creation of The Scrub immediately following the Civil War and moving through its growth and the growth of Central Avenue, stories of culture, commerce, religion, and recreation guide visitors through the park and the neighborhood's history.

Clay Tile Murals by Natalie Blake



Natalie Blake's three large ceramic tile murals tell the story of Tampa's African American community from the city's early pioneering days to the rise and decline of The Scrub and the Central Avenue days to the construction of the ENCORE.

The first panel depicts early African American life in and around Tampa. Starting with the pre-Civil War days, when the vast majority of the black population was enslaved, the panel moves on to Emancipation, the beginning of self-sufficient African American communities in the late 19th century, and concludes with the establishment of the Central Avenue business district in the early 20th century.



This second panel has as its focal point the sun at center left of the mural. Radiating outwards are many of the accomplishments and inspirations of Tampa's African American community, as well as, , people in service of that community. Highlights include a vibrant Central Avenue, depicted in its mid- 20th century heyday with imagery of its rich music scene, stylized depiction of the Central Avenue businesses, as well as an African American man casting a ballot.



To view a PDF which explains the indicate elements of Natalie Blake's large ceramic tile murals go online to

http://www.tampagov.net/sites/default/files/art_programs/files/natalie_blake_ceramic_mural_updated_2016-march-17.pdf

In the final, or southernmost panel, the rays of the sun are represented by banners emanating from and powered by the sun's energy. The banners symbolize the weaving together of new life into the future. Each banner supports an aspect of the community that has held together some semblance of the dissipated energies of Central Avenue. The unique and incredibly important components of this disjointed place are important to preserve and document.