

Take a tour of Florida's Black History

Black Heritage Trail Guide is a roadmap for Black History Month

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

Celebrate Florida's rich Black History throughout February and let VISIT FLORIDA's Black Heritage Trail guide show you the way. The full color guide comprises African-American landmarks and legacies from across the state and is available free to consumers at www.VISIT-FLORIDA.com/guides. Numerous special engagements, exhibitions and events will take place during Black History Month. Take a trip down Florida's Black Heritage Trail and be sure to stop off along the way for these exciting sights, sounds, and celebrations.

Pensacola – Stop by the Kate Coulson House to see the P.H. Polk Photography Exhibit, displaying prints that depict African-American rural farm workers and studio portraits of affluent black families and individuals. On Feb. 19, join in for art, music, food, and historic presentations at the Sankofa Festival hosted at the Pensacola Junior College Warrington Campus. (800) 874-1234. www.visitpensacola.com.

Defuniak Springs (near Fort Walton Beach) – Throughout the month of February, the Walton County Heritage Museum presents "Celebrating Walton County's Black Heritage." The exhibit displays photographs from the Museum's collection and private collections with interpretive narratives from the Museum's written and oral history collections. (800) 822-6877. www.beachesofsouthwalton.com.

Tallahassee – On loan at the Riley House Museum is an exhibit chronicling the 56th anniversary of the Tallahassee

Bus Boycott. Travel through time as the Civil Rights era unfolds, consuming the lives of ordinary people. (850) 681-7881. www.rileymuseum.org.

Amelia Island – Explore the role of African-Americans during the course of eight different flags of occupation at the Amelia Island Museum of History. Researcher and experienced presenter, James Longacre, will give his presentation at 2 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday during the month of February. (904) 261-7378. www.ameliamuseum.org.

Jacksonville – The Ritz Theatre & La Villa Museum celebrates African-American heritage with a permanent exhibit featuring scenes from everyday life, photographs and artifacts. On Feb. 12, the Florida Theatre welcomes the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, which promotes the uniqueness of the African-American cultural experience. Every Saturday in February, the Kingsley Plantation hosts its annual presentation of the lives of historic enslaved families and their lifestyles. (800) 733-2668. www.visitjacksonville.com.

St. Augustine – Get a taste for freedom during Black History Month celebrations in St. Augustine. On Feb. 9, experience Flight to Freedom at Fort Mose Historic Park where re-enactors bring the south-bound 18th century "underground railroad" to life. On Feb. 16, embark on a narrated tour of St. Augustine's Civil Rights Landmarks Freedom Trail Tours. Tours will depart from Excelsior African-American Cultural Museum. (904) 829-1711. www.Getaway4Florida.com.

Eustis (near Orlando) – Thousands of

people are expected to attend the 15th Annual Eustis African-American Heritage Festival on Saturday, Feb. 16, at the Eustis High Curtright Campus. The festival features soul food, cultural exhibits, African art, crafts, and a variety of musical entertainment including gospel, rap, R&B, jazz, and blues. Leading up to the festival is the Nubian Pageant on Feb. 10 and the Black Achievers' Award Banquet on Feb. 15. (352) 589-6448. www.lakecountyfl.com.

Kissimmee – Head to Kissimmee Lakefront Park on Feb. 23 for the Kissimmee Festival of Rhythm & Blues, a Black History Month celebration featuring top name entertainment, ethnic food, African-American arts and crafts, and activities for children. Be sure to check out the headlining band, "The Black Honkeys," with its own unique blend of Soul, R&B, and Funk. (407) 847-3174.

Sarasota – Celebrate one of the world's most recognized African-American artists in The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art's exhibition, Jacob Lawrence: Three Series of Prints, in the Ulla R. and Arthur F. Searing Wing. Theater



COURTESY PHOTO

Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000) "To Preserve Their Freedom," 1988, is now at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art's in Sarasota.

programs in the Historic Asolo Theater and educational programs for children, adults and families will be presented in conjunction with the exhibition. (941) 359-5700. www.ringling.org.

Miami – Virginia Key Beach Park will hold its re-augural celebrations and official reopening dedication ceremonies on the weekend of February 22-24. The park opened in 1945 for the "exclusive use of Negroes" but was closed in 1982, citing the high cost of maintenance and operations. The three-day celebration will host a variety of activities including a parade, ribbon-cutting ceremony, and a festival with food, craft vendors, music and entertainment. (305) 960-4618. www.VirginiaKeyBeachPark.net ■

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