

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### *Background*

In the late 1950s and early 1960s a group of young African Americans painted their way out of a bleak existence working in Florida's citrus groves and packinghouses by creating quickly realized landscapes that captured the essence of the paradisiacal Sunshine State. Working with inexpensive, sometimes borrowed materials, the painters produced thousands of subtropical scenes then they traveled along Florida's east coast highways and city streets to sell them. The romanticized visions of wind-swept palms, billowy clouds, Evergladian wetscapes, and setting or rising suns became souvenirs for tourists and decorative pieces for offices, motels, restaurants, bank lobbies, and courthouses. Although the paintings were inexpensive at the time—\$10 to \$25—the artists turned out so many (estimates range from 50,000 to 200,000) that they never again had little choice in ways to provide for their families.

By the mid-1970s, boom-time for selling the idyllic landscapes was waning. New highway systems cut into the typical way of distributing the art; the interstates took people away from the local streets where the artists may have set up a roadside exhibit. The artists themselves were losing their connectedness with each other as conflicting ideas arose about how and where to sell the paintings. The landscape of Florida itself was changing as developers scraped away the palm hammocks and replaced them with

concrete boxes. The paintings appeared in garage sales or were packed off to dusty attics. Several of the artists continued to paint, refining their skills, and others headed in different directions to become schoolteachers, politicians, telephone installers, or construction workers.

The term “Highwaymen” became attached to 26 of these African-American artists in the mid-1990s when Jim Fitch, director of the Florida Community College Museum of Art and Culture, wrote about the group and identified them in *Antiques & Art Around Florida*. Fitch believes that the artists had not received credit for their work, which he says is true folk art, “honest, not influenced by critics, academia, or any other outside influence.” Fitch writes,

Their paintings met with a growing demand for regional Florida art and served to encourage what has now become the Indian River school of painting, perhaps the only school or movement within the state that is recognizable as such. (Fitch, 1995, p. 1)

### *The 21st Century*

The Highwaymen and the times in which they produced their landscapes are part of Florida’s history. Today, several are continuing to paint their compelling landscapes in Cocoa, Ft. Pierce, and other east coast cities; four are deceased. A definitive book, *The Highwaymen, Florida’s Landscape Painters*, written in 2001 by Gary Monroe, a professor of visual art at Daytona Community College, contains the stories of 26 (see Appendix D for a listing) of the painters identified according these loose criteria:

1. Lived in or near Ft. Pierce in the 1950s and 1960s;

2. Was influenced or learned to paint from either A. E. (Beanie) Backus or Alfred Hair;

3. Painted landscapes or seascapes reminiscent of Florida or Bahamian topography; and

4. Sold their works out of their cars and trucks to tourists and local businesses by peddling them principally along east coast highways.

Monroe details what kinds of driving forces pushed this artist group together and what eventually pulled it apart and touches on why a few of the painters do not even wish to be associated with the term “Highwaymen.”

Monroe says that the group itself was “amorphous” because its artistic goals were never really defined and more than a decade separated the younger and older painters. Yet, the art, identified so closely to a time and place, is an integral part of modern Florida’s identity (Monroe, 2001).

The still living and painting artists exhibit their paintings around the state, mentor art students including their own children, tell their stories, and continue to reap the benefits of the resurgence of interest in their work. Monroe’s book served as the catalyst for bringing attention to these almost forgotten artists. Whether they want to be identified with a label or not, their imaginative visions of a fast-disappearing Florida continue to inspire a 21st century audience.

The late Alfred Hair, the entrepreneur of the group, and the other 25 recognized painters were inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame in March of 2004; they were nominated for that distinction by author Gary Monroe. “Their artistic visions have greatly contributed to our state’s cultural heritage,” said Secretary of State Glenda Hood (press

release, December 2003). For Black History month in 2005, an exhibition entitled, “The Art of Florida’s Highwaymen,” was on display in the state capitol in Tallahassee (press release, January 2005). Recognition has come to the group officially, as Fitch projected in 1995. He gave the group of artists a romantic, intriguing label in an effort to package their contribution to regional folk art.

### *The Legacy*

Most of the Highwaymen had families to provide for and this need compelled them to paint fast and sell faster. Several of their children sometimes helped in building frames or became painters themselves. When children are exposed to music or art they sometimes experiment with that instrument or brush and build on perhaps inherited talent. To find out whether that might have been true, this researcher developed a set of questions aimed at the children of the Highwaymen. The objectives of this thesis are the following:

1. Discover which of the children of the Highwaymen are painting and what influences the parents may have had.
2. Discover how new technology—the Internet, software applications that produce artistic images instantly, better canvasses and paints—has or has not contributed to the skills of the new artists.
3. Compare the progeny’s styles to those of their parents’. Can any of the children’s paintings be identified as Highwayman-style?
4. Compare the political climates of the 1950s and the early 2000s. What inspired and drove their parents in the 1950s will be quite different from what motivates the children today.

The significance of this research will be to determine the similarities and differences in the painting styles of the two generations. Of particular interest will be any radical departures. Whatever the research discovers, the legacy of the Highwaymen will be realized through interviews and observations of the offspring and their artistic endeavors.

## Chapter 2

### The Interviews

To begin the research, a letter and list of possible questions were sent to four children: Kelvin Hair, son of the late Alfred Hair, Ft. Pierce; Roy McLendon, Jr., son of Roy McLendon, Sr., Vero Beach; Tracy Newton, son of Sam Newton, Cocoa; and Sherry Newton Lumpkins, Coral Springs, daughter of the late Harold Newton (Appendixes B and C). The first two consented to be interviewed.

The latter two are cousins, both painting successfully, but have not agreed to be interviewed, partly because this thesis draws on the Highwaymen label as it is affixed to their relative. Tracy Newton, his father Sam, and Sherry Newton Lumpkins do not wish to be associated with the term nor the group. However, because the two offspring are painting, partial research can be conducted through public viewing of their work. Tracy Newton's work hangs in art galleries in Cocoa and Lake Worth. Sherry Newton Lumpkins, a graphic designer for the city of Coral Springs, sells her works, billed as tributes to her father, through a website.

Interviewing Highwaymen children who embraced the label proved to be informative, stimulating, and inspiring. Through the taped conversations, details about their early life and how their parents influenced them were revealed. Hair and McLendon today are propagating their fathers' legacies through painting in similar yet personally distinctive styles and welcoming the aura of the "Highwaymen."

## *Kelvin Hair*

Kelvin's father, Alfred Hair, the entrepreneur of the artist group, began painting as a young teen around 1955. According to his sister, Gladys Hair Bennett, Hair used to skip school to watch Harold Newton paint on Avenue D in downtown Ft. Pierce:

You didn't skip school in my family. And you didn't hang around Avenue D.

When my mother found out, she went to the school to find out what could be done. His high school teacher, Zanobia Jefferson, knew that he was interested in painting so she asked Mr. Backus to teach Alfred. We had no money to pay, so Alfred helped with Mr. Backus's frames at first. (D'Amico, 2000)

Hair eventually began taking painting lessons from the established Ft. Pierce painter, A.E. "Beanie" Backus. Backus was largely self-taught, but as a young man had studied at the Parson's School of Design in New York. Although Backus made his living painting sky-heavy Florida scenes—he believed in the close observation of the obvious, but evasive beauty of visible existence—(Peterson, 2003), he was not too busy to open his studios to anyone who wanted to learn to paint. Even in such racially tense times as the mid-1950s, Backus, a white Southerner, was as generous with his advice as he was with art supplies.

Hair, eager to be on his way to being financially independent, left Backus's studio in 1957 ready to fulfill his dreams. He saw a way to make money fast. Instead of taking a week to do a detailed painting like his mentor, Hair decided that a quick, fast method would bring in less money perhaps per painting, but he would be able to sell more of them. "He mass-produced crude replicas (of Backus's work) in one-tenth the time it took Backus, sold them for one-tenth the price, and aimed to make the same money. Hair

didn't want to be the best artist, just the fastest and the richest" (Mastony, 2001). In effect he could make just as much money, if not more, and have his art works spread far and wide.

Just as the painting came easily to Hair, a charismatic, likable fellow, rounding up his friends to paint with him was easy too. Before long James Gibson, Roy McLendon, and Livingston Roberts were working alongside Hair in his mother's backyard producing simple, almost raw landscapes of subtropical Florida replete with rivers, ponds, birds, and wind-bent palms. The paintings were done on easily obtained Upson board and framed with crown molding that might have seen a few quick brush strokes of gold paint. The molding kept the boards from touching each other since the works were still wet. They were then piled into cars to be sold for at most \$25, a workingman's average day's pay at the time. A tradition was beginning.

Backus urged Hair and friends to slow down. Monroe (2001) writes,

But by ignoring Backus's advice, the Highwaymen became original artists. By unintentionally bastardizing the canonical pictorial strategies to which Backus confined himself, they created a new form of fantasy landscape painting. (p. 7)

R. L. Davenport, owner of the BrushStrokes Gallery in Ft. Pierce, said, "These guys got it down to a formula—a palm tree here, a sunset there. They would make it up as they went" (Mastony, 2001). Clearly these original Highwaymen were on to something. Their "fast" paintings were selling as fast as they could produce them. The glistening wet oils, the sweeping strokes with a palette knife or brush, the dreamy quality of the scenes appealed to Northerners looking for paradise in the Sunshine State and to doctors, attorneys, and bankers who had blank walls to fill.



The heyday of the Highwaymen was from the mid-1950s through the early 1970s. By the latter decade the art market slowed down and the Interstates had been built taking tourists away from the coastal highways. In 1971, Alfred Hair was killed in a barroom brawl in Ft. Pierce. With that significant event, the heart seemed to go out of the movement. “There was nothing to shoot for after Alfred died,” said Hezekiah Baker, who joined the artist group in the late 1960s (Monroe, 2001). Hair’s painting assemblage dissipated, some to go their own way, some to get “real” jobs. As a charismatic leader with the ability to transmit his zeal to his colleagues, Hair’s absence was deeply felt. Although the movement continued—several continued to paint in the Highwayman fashion—it was a vastly different group from the light-hearted band that gathered to paint pictures in each other’s backyards.

When his father was killed, Kelvin Hair was only six years old. He consented to be interviewed in February 2005 in a Ft. Pierce gallery that he and Johnny Stovall, a “new generation” Highwayman, own and operate.

*When did you realize your father was a painter?*

“I can remember vague stuff about him painting. As far as my memory goes back, yes, I remember him painting.”

*When did you hear the term “Highwayman”?*

“I didn’t hear that term about dad until the mid-late ‘90s.”

Throughout the research conducted for this project, there were intimations from potential interviewees that they would not agree to be contacted because they did not want to be associated with the name Highwayman, nor with any discussion relating to the story.

*Are there any negative vibes with that label?*

“No, but there are a couple people who have bad feelings about the label and the story. What I heard is secondhand, so it’s not appropriate to say here. I don’t have any negative feelings about the label myself.”

*How has the publication of Gary Monroe’s book influenced you?*

“The book talks about Harold Newton and my father and how they each contributed to the idea of painting pictures to sell, to make a living. Giving credit where credit is due, the majority of the Highwaymen, I won’t say every one, were influenced, in some form or fashion, through my father or someone he taught. But the Newtons weren’t.

“They were—Harold was painting over here (gestures across the room) and my dad was painting over here (gestures in the opposite direction). It’s just like if you have a town and you have two wrestlers in that town—someday they’re going to meet because they have common interests. But they were totally independent of each other when they finally met. Other Highwaymen have told me, Harold and my dad painted together in the same room. They were friends. But my dad did not teach Harold. You know, Harold was painting independently.

“My dad didn’t teach Harold and Harold didn’t teach my dad. But they did become friends. Some of the family members (Newton family members) want to make sure that everyone knows this—I know it. Some people think my dad taught everyone, but he didn’t. There were a few artists that my dad didn’t teach, but very few, like Harold, one or two others that my dad maybe didn’t actually influence. That’s what the Newton family members want to protect.”

*Your father would not have been able to teach you anything about painting, so where or how did you begin painting? Any formal training?*

“I have been taught by other artists, no formal training. Johnny Daniels taught me a lot. Also, Jimmy Stovall, I learned a lot from him. I spent some time around Livingston Roberts—I watched him. We all painted together for maybe two years. We painted in the garage—me, Jimmy (Stovall), Johnny (Daniels).”

*Is that when you developed your style?*

“I have a mixture of styles. I don’t go strictly by the Highwaymen style. I paint what I want.”

*Do you see your parent’s style in your style?*

“Only when I’m doing it on purpose, when I want to paint old-style. Sometimes I do adopt the quick style, but only when I’m doing like a tribute-type painting.”

*How do you decide on the subject matter in your painting? Are they real places, or imaginary?*

“The landscapes I paint I’ve seen, they’re real.”

*How has the resurgence of interest in the Highwaymen affected you and your work? Were you painting before this book (Monroe, 2001) came out?*

“No, not on a regular basis. I’m a full-time fireman right here in Ft. Pierce. Me and Johnny Stovall (Jimmy’s twin brother) own this gallery now. When I retire in about five years, I hope to be running this gallery and painting more than I do now.”

*How does your work differ from that of your parent?*

“Well, I can get more money now (for a painting) because I’m not painting in the ‘50s. You weren’t allowed (then) to display your work in a gallery or go to shows where

you could get more money. That's the reason why they had to sell it on the highway or door-to-door, and that's why they had to paint fast and use cheap materials—to keep the prices down. You know, I couldn't sell one of my paintings on the side of the street for \$1,000—I'd have to sell for \$40.

“Now, you can have a show and get good money. Your style changes. All the artists' styles changed. If you look at every single one of their styles back then and now, they all changed. Now they can paint and get paid for their time. Every one of the styles changed, there's no need to paint fast now.”

*How have your materials changed—do you ever use the old materials, Upsen board and such?*

“When I first started out—well, you can't get the old Upsen board, you can get the new board—yes, I started out painting on Upsen board. But once I tried painting on canvas, I didn't go back to board. No comparison.

“Yes, that's crown molding on that painting (in response to a question about an older-looking work in the gallery with what seemed to be crown molding, a typical Highwayman framing material), but it's on canvas, not board. I made that frame myself, bought the molding at Home Depot, cut it myself.

“If I'm doing a tribute painting, I'll use the crown molding to give it a more authentic look. I've only done maybe three.”

*How do you advertise, get the word out about your painting, besides the gallery here?*

“We will have a website, not totally developed yet. Then we do have this gallery. We've been here a year and doing pretty well.

“Jimmy and Johnny Stovall make arrangements for shows in Florida. I have not been to a show outside of Florida yet.”

*Do your children paint?*

“No, my one boy has done two paintings—I have two boys—you know, they pick up the brush to just try it. But they’re not actively painting, not yet anyway.”

The gallery showcases not just Kelvin’s paintings, both the tribute or so-called old-style and his own particular style, but also the Stovalls’ and Alfred Hair’s. He keeps the best of the elder Hair’s paintings at his house and sells the others through the gallery or exhibits.

Johnny Stovall, co-owner of the Highwayman Art Gallery along with Kelvin, was present in the gallery on the same day Kelvin was interviewed. Although he was not on the original list of potential interviewees, he represents the “new” generation of Highwaymen artists: related to an original Highwayman, learned his painting techniques from the group, and has a style that resembles the old style. Stovall’s artistic contribution is valuable to the life of the legacy. He consented to an interview, which appears later in this thesis.

*Roy McLendon, Jr.*

Roy McLendon, Sr. was one of Alfred Hair’s friends who eventually became part of the painting assemblage in Hair’s backyard. Monroe writes in his book that the neighborhood-painting factory idea was not the correct view. Although the group painted together, they did not produce their landscapes in an assembly-line fashion. They may have helped one another complete a painting, pressured for time and attempting to meet

demand, but the landscapes were the original work of an individual artist. “We painted our own pictures,” Roy McLendon says (Monroe, 2001).

A remarkable commonality distinguishes the early Highwaymen paintings regardless of which artist painted a scene. The artists painted only the essentials and in an essential manner. Nonetheless, each artist’s style is discernible.

McLendon’s brushwork often adds an agitated texture to his subjects. (Monroe, 2001, p. 13)

As with the others, McLendon’s artistic direction took on a more somber note when Hair was killed. McLendon set aside painting for a few years, except for one particular task. Each year, in memory of his friend Al Hair, McLendon touched up the bluebird and the cardinal that Hair painted on the outside of his mother’s house, at the beginning of his career (Monroe, 2001).

Roy McLendon, Jr., consented to be interviewed at his gallery and studio in Vero Beach, Florida in August 2004. He had one painting blocked on his easel and another nearly finished on another easel. The studio is cluttered with tubes of paint, mat cutting apparatus, brushes, paint rags—a typical artist’s studio. Clearly, although it was a Saturday, Roy was at work.

*What age were you when you first realized your father (Roy McLendon, Sr., first generation, 1950s-early 1960s) was a painter?*

“I think I always knew. He would allow me to finish a painting as soon as I could hold a brush and produce decent strokes. I was a natural artist. My father’s family is all artists, my uncles could all draw.”

McLendon's memory of his father always painting echoes a line from Monroe's book: "(McLendon, Sr.) explains that his artistic roots go back to drawing in the dirt with a stick as a youngster" (Monroe, 2001).

"But my father did not want what I did to look like his work, so I didn't do much on finishing his paintings. Now I have my own style. Our poincianas are different, our skies are different. I want people to say, 'That's Roy, Sr., or that's Roy, Jr.' I love my father's sweeping brush strokes, but I am my own painter."

Roy Jr.'s brush strokes are finely detailed. The painting he was completing as he was interviewed showed small brush strokes beautifully executed. Roy Jr. does not use the palette knife to lay on the oil paint as his father does or as the original Highwaymen did.

*When did you hear the term "highwaymen" and what did it mean to you?*

"I never heard it till recently. My father never sold his paintings on the highway, like the others. He went into offices and sold to friends and neighbors. But I met Mr. Backus and I knew some of the others—Livingston Roberts, Al Hair, and Harold Newton—but not as highwaymen. I used to paint with them in 1963 when I was eight years old."

The mid-1960s were a time when the artists who would become known as the Highwaymen were producing hundreds of paintings and selling them as fast as they could produce them. It was boom-time, a charmed time for the group. This is the time when 8-year-old Roy Jr. first became associated with the group.

“Once I went to Backus’s studio with my father. He was trying to finish a painting and the store was closed. Mr. Backus gave my father the paints he needed to finish. Mr. Backus had an art education, dad didn’t, but he was just as good a painter.”

*Did your father set out to teach you to paint, perhaps by allowing you to finish some works?*

“Not really. I learned more by watching and picking up the brush myself. As I said, I am a natural artist, could always draw.”

*What training have you had?*

“No real art training. I stopped painting for a long time after I had a family because I had to earn a living. Then because my dad kept after me, I joined the Vero Beach Art Club in 1985 and had my first show in ’92 or ’93. Without my father’s encouragement I might not have gotten back into painting. I was and still am pastor of our church and for a while worked in the Florida School System.

“Although my mother was not an artist, she had a big influence reminding me that to ignore God’s gift was a sin. With this natural skill, this God-given talent, I had to go back to painting. She used to buy materials for me, the Upson board that I did my first paintings on. By the time I was 10 or 12, I was painting regularly. I switched to canvas when I came back to painting. Dad used both kinds of material.”

*Do you see your father’s style in your works?*

“Yes, somewhat, but as I’ve said, I am my own painter. I love the detail in painting. Many of the artists of my father’s time did not spend hours on a picture. They did it fast and sold it fast. I like to take time and let the images emerge slowly.”

*What are your influences?*



“It’s in my head. I paint from the sky down. Many artists begin with the subject—a person or a building or the landscape—I see a pink sky, a red sunset, and begin there.

“I wish I had had formal training and learned the tricks and tips. But I learned the hard way. Still, the pictures don’t stop, I don’t have to work hard to develop a story in my head.”

*Has the resurgence of interest in the Highwaymen impacted you in any way?*

“My father’s name and association with the group has certainly brought attention my way. But when people admire or purchase my work, they are buying Roy, Jr., they want Roy, Jr. There has always been a market for me and the extra attention since the book has been good.”

*How do you advertise your works?*

“There’s the gallery here and a website. I have sold paintings internationally, that’s the influence of the Internet.”

Roy tells a story about an early painting of his that he sold in the early 1970s for \$45 when he was about 18. A couple years ago he heard that there was a so-called “Highwayman” painting in a local consignment shop. Apparently the owner did not believe it was a true Highwayman painting and wanted to sell it, but would take no less than \$500 for it. The shop owner called Roy’s father several times asking him to look at the painting and give his opinion. Roy, Sr. never seemed to find the time. Finally, Roy Jr. went to the shop himself to view the painting. The work was done on Upson board and depicted a scene of a little house under the trees with washing on the line in front. It was the same painting he had done at age 18. Roy Jr. purchased the painting for \$500 and it now graces a wall in his own gallery. It reminds him of how far he has come.

### *The Newtons*

As intimated earlier, the current Newton artists who were contacted—Sam Newton (brother of Harold), Tracy Newton (son of Sam), and Sherry Newton Lumpkins (daughter of Harold)—did not wish to be associated with this project. Their reasons for not participating seem to fall into three categories: a) Their brother, uncle, father was not a “Highwayman” because he was painting long before the others gathered together; b) Harold was a better artist; and c) They have not been happy with what has been written about Harold and therefore do not want to be part any other interviews for whatever reason.

Harold Newton, who died in 1994 at 59, met Beanie Backus in 1954, shortly before Alfred Hair appeared on the scene. Newton was already painting religious images on velvet and was persuaded by Backus to give that up and try landscapes. He became good at it, but because he was African American, without easy entry to the art world, he had to sell his paintings any way he could. Just like Hair’s artist assemblage that followed, Newton sold his paintings on the street. According to a book written by his sister, Rosetta Newton Humphries, “He sold many of his paintings from his van while traveling up and down the Florida coast” (Humphries, 2004, p. 83). Harold Newton set the precedent and became the role model for the young artists (Monroe, 2001).

In this respect, not only was Harold Newton a Highwayman, but also he set the machine in motion. As Hair’s son Kelvin expressed, two wrestlers in town eventually meet each other and because of their common interests, they become friends. Newton painted in Hair’s backyard as Kelvin said he did.

As to who was the better artist, the comparison can be made that Newton was a traditionalist, painting more like Backus, while Hair and his friends produced less structured, more dynamic landscapes.

(Newton) could paint masterfully. To a degree, his art is more aligned with the Hudson River school and luminist paintings than with Highwayman imagery. He could imitate Van Gogh's brushwork and effect photographic realism. His versatile abilities awed the others. (Monroe, 2001, p. 24)

While impressive, Newton's works seem to put a distance between the artist and the viewer. The elements—palm hammocks, billowing clouds, reflections on water—are there, and beautifully depicted, but they do not pull at the viewer. The images are not viscerally moving. Hair's paintings, on the other hand, brought viewers into his images, stimulating the senses with color, movement, and exuberant emotion. Yet the two artists created landscapes that compel the viewer to take note of Florida's fast-disappearing riverscapes, hardwood hammocks, Evergladian sunsets. In those ways, both Newton and Hair have contributed immensely to Florida's regional art world.

Most of what has been written about Harold Newton extols his talent, yet the man himself and his motives are difficult to categorize. Memories fade, words become misheard, and good stories become more embellished than they deserve perhaps. To tell the "real" story, Rosetta Newton Humphries wrote and self-published a small book called *Harold Newton: The Man Behind the Art*. "This is a memoir," she writes,

of a renowned African-American artist who sold his paintings up and down the Florida coastline long before the others started doing the same! (sic) He is the King of the Highwaymen. He conceived the concept of the highwaymen and

conquered not only for himself, but for his brothers and others, he painted consistently for forty years, before his death. He was unique. (from the Ebay ad for the book)

Family members have insights that outsiders do not have, but also a more subjective view of their relative. Humphries's portrait of her brother extols his creative abilities, but does not in essence widen the gulf between him and Alfred Hair's group. In fact, the book generates more interest in the black artists who followed Hair.

### *Tracy Newton*

Tracy Newton, along with his father, Sam Newton, brother of Harold, did not want to participate in this project. Yet he is painting and his style is reminiscent of the Highwayman style—unpretentious, colorful, composed of typical Florida or Bahamian images, such as an orange grove or a house with laundry blowing in the breeze. He is not an artist of the Backus-Harold Newton school. His work recalls the lyrical, dynamic visions of Hair's group rather than of his uncle's group.

Tracy's work hangs in his own gallery in Ft. Pierce and in the ArtLink International Gallery in Lake Worth. Gallery owner and collector of Highwaymen art, Howard Brassner, was interviewed for this project and had comments about Tracy and other Newton children who are painting. Brassner's interview appears later in this thesis.

### *Sam Newton*

Tracy's father Sam owns a small gallery in Cocoa and is poised to move into larger quarters soon. At 14 years younger than Harold, Sam is almost of a different generation; his landscapes alongside those of his brother's are similar in subject but lack subtlety. Sam's purple-orange sunsets reflected on water seem too bright, too unearthly to

be real. Anyone who has seen sunsets in Florida, however, has been awed by a purple-orange one or maybe a greeny-yellow one. Sam has attempted to capture them all on canvas.

Samurai, Sam's 11-year-old daughter, attends an art school and has sold three oil paintings already. In the Samuel Newton family, the legacy of the Highwaymen is an unbroken chain whether they themselves accept the label or not. "Tracy is carrying on in the Newton painting tradition in the next generation as is daughter Samurai" ([www.samnewtongallery.com](http://www.samnewtongallery.com)).

*Sherry Newton Lumpkins*

On her website, Lumpkins, who declined to participate personally in this project, offers "tribute art" for sale (<http://newtonlegacyart.com>).

This is my quest, inspired by my father Harold Newton, to keep his namesake (sic) alive using his method of cascading oil paint to board by confident palette knife strokes capturing the beauty of Florida. As he kept 'Old Florida' alive in the art world by feeling nature and translating what the eye beholds. I . . . will carry the legacy of his genius. I remember thinking, 'a splash of water may jump from the water in the landscape scene into my lap' before he took it out to be sold. . . . Strong winds flowed through my hair by the gusts of wind that went through the windswept palm tress on the beach of the slate gray stormy sky scene, painted by my father. (<http://newtonlegacyart.com>)

The legacy continues, the website proclaims, with art in the style of Harold Newton. Lumpkins, a graphic designer for the city of Coral Springs, renders bright-turquoise-yellow skies, whipped palms, crashing ocean wave Masonite board paintings for sale in

the \$450 to \$1,500 dollar range. In one seascape her father's image appears out of the clouds on the right and hers on the left.

### *The Newton Legacy*

Even with some disagreement over the Highwayman label, the daughter, brother, niece and nephew of Harold Newton do continue the painting tradition. What served their relative well is also serving them well. While the art that is being produced currently may not endure for four or five decades, it does show that the Highwayman type of painting is transcending the generations, devolving from its original roots and reflecting 21st century ideas and technology.

### *Renee Mills*

Mary Ann Carroll, Renee's mother and the lone Highwaywoman, came into the fold of the group in the early 1960s after she saw Harold Newton "make color come to life" (Monroe, 2001). "I raised seven children as a single parent. I did more from art (financially) than any other job I had" (Lewis, 2005).

In the beginning Carroll was the only one with a car. The men would have paintings to sell but no way to get them to the public. They would ask Carroll to drive them around; she gave in only when they would let her carry her paintings along also. She remembers, "Yes, the first one sold that day was mine and it was the one they were teasing me about. I made about \$70 that day. That was the beginning" (D'Amico, 2001).

Carroll is known for her brilliant orange Poinciana trees and her fine-tuned color sensibilities. Jim Fitch of the Florida Community College Museum of Art and Culture in Avon Park quoted in a local newspaper on the occasion of a Carroll exhibition,

We have 64 Highwaymen paintings at the museum but my favorite in the collection is Mary Ann's painting of the Indian River with palm trees but the sky is fiery orange. Smack dab in the center is a yellow sun ball and the heat generates out of that painting. That's Florida, brother. (Lewis, 2005, p. 12A)

Renee is the second to last of Carroll's seven children. She consented to be interviewed on February 19, 2005, in her art gallery, "Anything You Want: Finders of Fine Art," that she had just opened three weeks before in Sanford. Before the gallery Renee spent many years in the corporate world of communications. She was graduated from the School of Visual Arts in Savannah, Georgia, and has an M.B.A. from the University of Florida.

The list of questions (Appendix C) was used to generate responses. Other questions and answers arose out of the conversation.

*What age were you when you realized your parent was a painter?*

"It was second grade, back in the old days, you had career day. You had a little book that you colored that showed the policeman, the fireman, the doctor, the teacher. 'Artist' was one of the pictures, and I realized my mom did have a career. She was an artist. She also ran a record shop in Ft. Pierce and had a gallery and we were well off, I guess. But I didn't realize it was from my mother's art career, I just thought she was a businesswoman.

"Now in fourth grade, there's something I'd like to share. I was too ignorant, didn't realize, she had this sign in our front yard, 'Mary Ann Carroll, Artist,' with our phone number and all, and by that time things were getting tough. Artist meant starving

artist to many people. I used to get so embarrassed when the school bus went by because artists don't make money.

“Later I realized that while the other artists (other Highwaymen) started painting then stopped and may have started again, my mother was always an artist. She never stopped. The others may have had help or support, but my mother raised seven children strictly being an artist.

“Her record shop was a happening place, everyone came by eventually, have a Coca-Cola, buy a record, a poster, and during the 70s, the Afro picks were really in. My mother stocked those too. There was a pool table in back so people could play a game of pool. Meanwhile my mother would work on her art. It wasn't displayed in the record store though. I don't recall that it was. Usually her paintings were in the car ready to be sold.”

*When did you first hear the term “Highwayman” and what did it mean to you? Is there a negative connotation?*

“When Jim Fitch wrote a magazine article (1994) is when I first heard the word. And to me it didn't seem negative, because I know what they did. To a lot of people, highwayman meant stagecoach robbers, but if you know the Highwaymen that I knew before these (artist) Highwaymen, which were Kris Kristofferson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, you heard the song, only one of them was a really bad guy. He was a stagecoach robber. It's what people take out of it.

“I know my mom doesn't associate anything negative with the term. And most of those guys, they were and are, not anything like stagecoach robbers. I don't think any of them sing either.”



*When did you start doing artistic things?*

“I started drawing when I was in the fourth grade. I drew a picture of an Indian, very detailed. But I didn’t think I was capable, really, not phenomenal certainly. It was for a Florida history project. And I like dabbling in all types of art. I think of all the Highwaymen relatives (who are painting or creating), I am probably the one who is most off-scale. I don’t do landscapes, for instance.

“I’ve always been the writer in the family, the writer and the dancer, not necessarily the artist. My brother’s a phenomenal artist, but does not paint like my mother. But her grandchildren now, I think the talent may have skipped a generation, at least four of them paint and draw all the time.”

None of Renee’s work hangs in her new gallery. Displayed in a shop case is jewelry created by a local designer, Cookie Lee, whom Renee is helping to promote. Sculptures (most interestingly, a nearly life-size Holstein cow—more later) inhabit floor space. Large modern art pieces and many Mary Ann Carroll paintings populate the gallery walls. When I asked where her work is, she said she hasn’t hung any as yet.

“(My work) is very contemporary, very color-oriented, visionary, illusionary. One of the things I’m working on is a Martini Night in April and what I’d like to have is many small pictures of the different types of martinis and the theme will be, ‘which martini are you’? Around here many women are into getting together, having a drink. It’s like, I don’t know, when I conjure up these crazy ideas, I just like to go with them. I’m the one who always deviates from the norm. Whatever the norm is, I will probably go to the far left or far right.”

*When we talked previously you said you wanted to leave the corporate world to do something different—is an art gallery what you had in mind?*

“Well, I had to, it seems. These guys (gestures around the gallery space) needed a place. I recognize talent. Whether I agree with your taste or your style or your choice, that’s different. But these artists see something in their minds, something truly commendable and respectful, get it on canvas or whatever, and then need to show it. That separates true artists from those, maybe even myself, who are experimenting.

“This guy for instance can really draw people (the painting is almost life size and shows a very sharply defined male face, so life-like you can almost see pores). People are the hardest thing to draw, yet look at his work. When I looked at it, I was amazed, I love his approach. He is phenomenal. He can draw ethnic people; he can draw the most detailed pictures in pencil, ink, acrylic, or marker.

“It’s not what I’d want in my living room, but I wanted to promote this artist because his work does appeal to some people. What I’ve learned is that when people see something they like, they buy it. It’s not for me to choose for you, what goes in your living room, I know nothing about you. That’s my thing, I promote them, get them out there to be seen and appreciated. I use what contacts I have in the business world to generate interest.”

A large seascape painted by her mother hangs prominently where visitors see it before anything else in Renee’s gallery. Since Mary Ann Carroll is mostly known for her brightly colored poincianas and glowing sunsets, this ocean illustration seems a departure, but not to Renee.

Renee says, “ I always credit or associate seascapes with my mother. When I would see one, I would always think they were copying my mother’s work. There are a lot of those types of paintings in the mass-produced stuff—notecards and such.”

*Did you know any of the other Highwaymen as you were growing up?*

“All of them came to my mom’s house to paint. Even Mr. Hair. I was very, very little, and I do remember Mr. Hair coming in our door once with paintings in his hand. But I do remember all the other artists—especially Mr. Black, Al Black. A lot of people think he did some wrong things, but I loved that man.”

(Al Black, also considered one of the original 26 Highwaymen, is incarcerated in the Tomoka Correctional Institution in Daytona Beach. He is due to be released in December 2006.)

Renee continues, “I know there were a lot of times when my mother was busy, on the go, trying to paint stuff, and she’d say, I’ve got to find Al and get these pictures sold. He could not pick up a brush, but he was still the best salesman. I can say that maybe because of him, my mother’s paintings sold, and we ate because of what he did.”

*Did you go along with your mother when she drove around selling her paintings?*

“Usually it was me who went. The others stayed at home. I also made frames out of molding for my mother.”

*How has the resurgence of interest in the Highwaymen affected you?*

“It has affected me, my world, I think. Mother’s work has always been there. One day I went to a show with her to help her out. Oh, my gosh, it was a madhouse; she couldn’t get up to go to the bathroom. People wanted autographs. After that I knew she needed help, so I ended up always going with her.

“Then because I was going with her, I really became her assistant, checking on details, doing research, matting the prints for a show, packing her bags. I’ve been doing this for years now. I got her first website going. Then after the website there was taking care of her email. I realized that I would be a bigger help to my family if I left the corporate world and focused on helping my mother.

“I worked for Sprint, managed their highest producing office, a \$500 million dollar budget, \$250 million in sales. Then I went into sales for Verizon Telecom. One day I just realized I could leave and be at peace. And I am at peace now. I can go upstairs to my loft and work, create and feel balanced.”

After the interview, Renee discussed the current art displayed in her gallery. The cow sculpture is a half-size statue of a black and white Holstein created out of a lightweight plastic material that Renee says will be used in another of her promotions. She will have her mother paint and sign it during a special event, then raffle it off with the proceeds going to her gallery. Cookie Lee’s jewelry is another example of how Renee is helping other artists obtain exhibit space for their creations. Clearly Renee recognizes what artists need and she herself is following a more peaceful direction as a gallery manager.

### *Children of the Highwaymen*

With the three preceding personal interviews and observations concerning the Newtons, this project reveals that while all of the artists mentioned are creative, innovative people, their directions are quite different from the Highwaymen themselves. They do not, for instance, paint in groups. McLendon, Hair, and Mills all have their own art galleries, and work alone, not with onlookers or partners. Tracy Newton has a gallery

separate from his father Sam's. Lumpkins has a cyber-gallery with her website. The small town feeling of everyone knowing everyone else among most of the Highwaymen is not apparent among the children. The children contacted for this project are widely scattered—from Coral Springs in south Florida to Sanford, north of Orlando. They may know of one another, but they do not connect to each other as their parents did.

In at least one major aspect the children do show evidence of their parents' tradition—they are all painting or performing some artistic endeavors. Or, perhaps they are reacting to the opportunities presented to them, opportunities that their parents did not have. McLendon, Hair, Mills, and the Newton children are carrying forward a bone-deep connection with Floridian landscapes that is surely inherited from their parents. That connection reveals itself in McLendon's photorealistic imagery, Hair's tribute works so like his father's, Tracy Newton's paintings of orange groves, and Lumpkins's attempts to immortalize her father.

#### *Other Relatives, Other Ways to Promote the Legacy*

While conducting research for this project, additional contacts led to other potential interviewees, not always directly related by blood to the Highwaymen. Children might be expected to carry on a tradition or to inherit the talents and skills that made their parents noteworthy. But there could be other ways to promote a legacy other than by blood relatives emulating a father or mother or uncle.

Interviews were conducted with Johnny Stovall, twin brother of Jimmy Stovall; Bonnie Butler, a student of Robert Lewis; and Howard Brassner, owner of ArtLink International in Lake Worth, probably the first fine art gallery to showcase the folk art Highwayman paintings.

Stovall represents not the “next” generation of Highwaymen, but a “new” generation. Although his brother Jimmy is not one of the official, named 26 Highwaymen, both brothers share same loose criteria of that artist group: Each lived in and around Ft. Pierce; were influenced by Beanie Backus, Harold Newton, or Alfred Hair; painted on Upson board; and sold their fast paintings out of their cars. Jimmy is not a named Highwayman probably because he opted to get a more financially secure job and quit painting until quite recently. Together the two brothers are enjoying success as painters, Jimmy resuming painting after 25 years, Johnny coming to it as an initiate. One look at their works shows that they are Highwaymen in the artistic sense, if not in the official sense.

Bonnie Butler’s enthusiasm for Robert Lewis, her teacher, knows no bounds. She is not only a modestly successful painter selling her work on Ebay, but also takes care of Lewis’s gallery in Vero Beach when the artist is exhibiting his work elsewhere. Her interview revealed more of the teaching aspect of many of the Highwaymen. The surviving members and associates are passing on their love of painting to students eager to learn.

ArtLink International is a Highwayman’s dream. Not only are the older works displayed there, but Howard Brassner mounts the children’s works too. His sense of what the public wants to see and purchase to display in their homes today is as keen as Renee Mills’s. Both want to promote artwork that could and should be widely appreciated.

### *Johnny Stovall*

The twin brother of Jimmy Stovall, Johnny Stovall represents not the “next” generation, but the “new” generation of Highwaymen. Although Johnny was not on the

original list of potential interviewees, his close association with the Highwaymen and the fact that he paints in its style imbue him with the characteristics of type of person to carry the artistic legacy forward to a new generation.

Johnny consented to an interview after Kelvin Hair's interview in their Highwayman gallery in Ft. Pierce.

*Where did you get your art training? From your brother?*

“Well, I quit school in the 10th grade and went in the service. During the times when I would come home on leave, my brother would be painting with Alfred Hair. I liked what I saw, but I had no interest at the time. Then my brother starting painting again (in 1999-2000) after 30 years of not painting. I saw how he picked it right up again. So I decided I would try it. In 2001 I started painting, primitive, like painting by numbers. My brother was teaching me, then Johnny Daniels came along and joined our group. He wanted to paint around, like they did in the old days (in a group). He started teaching me too. And now you see where I am now (gestures to the paintings on one wall, which are all signed ‘Johnny Stovall’). The scenes are typical Highwayman: palm trees, glints of sunlight on water, white egrets, and no people.

*When you frame your paintings, you don't frame them in the old style (crown molding)?*

“When you do a painting, it takes some time. If you have to make a frame, that takes time away from painting, so we buy the frames.”

*Did you know any of the other Highwaymen, other than Johnny Daniels and your brother?*

“Yes, I knew Alfred Hair, of course. Alfred would have been about 64. I’m 53, so yes, I knew them. Alfred held everything together. Most of the guys who painted with him were very upset when he died. It was like losing your leader. They didn’t know what to do.”

*What did you do before you started to paint?*

“After the service in 1970, my brother and I moved to Tampa, then came back. I had a job at Publix bagging groceries, then I went into the phone company. That was 32 years ago and I’m still there. This summer or next summer I can retire. Then I can paint more or be in the gallery.”

*How do you feel about the label “Highwaymen”?*

“I don’t have a feeling about it, it’s a name someone gave to us. Jim Fitch conferred with Robert Butler (another Highwayman) and they came up with that name. Simply because these guys went along the highway to sell their paintings out of their cars. It really doesn’t matter what they call me.

“There is something you might want to add to your paper. Anyone who is considered or called a Highwayman (aside from the original 26) is a family member of a Highwayman. Take Willie and Johnny Daniels (Johnny is one of the 26). Robert Lewis and Robert Lewis III (the elder Lewis is one of the 26). The younger Lewis is painting. Everyone in the second generation or next generation is related to an original.

“There’s only one exception that I know of. There’s a white woman artist who lives in here Ft. Pierce who learned from George Buckner. She paints in the Highwayman style. Look at her paintings and you’ll see George’s influence. But we can’t call her a Highwayman.”



Joan Arnold's landscapes are in a neighboring gallery, the Bamboo Beach Art Gallery. They do indeed reflect the late George Buckner's (1942-2001) influence. Her images are of the Everglades (with alligators, an animal never found in a Highwayman painting), palm trees, and familiar billowing clouds and do recall Highwayman influence. Arnold took lessons from Buckner and has become successful in her depictions of Florida landscapes.

The clouds in the Arnold's paintings are so much like Buckner's that it is obvious that she learned her pictorial technique from him. Buckner's son Reuben remembers his father's fascination with clouds, "At any stop sign, he's gazing up at the clouds He loved the clouds. It wasn't nothing for him to grab a camera and walk to the bridge and just take pictures of different clouds" (Mastony, 2001). Buckner's reverence for clouds lives on in Joan Arnold's work.

*What would you say is the difference in the older paintings and the newer ones from the surviving original artists?*

"The new ones are just as good, but are more detailed nowadays. And that's because we can take more time. There's no rush today like back in the 1960s."

*Do you use some of the older materials, Masonite board, for instance?*

"I do both, I have done both. I used to like to use board because I wanted to stick to tradition. I'm finding my way. But the canvas now is different. With the board you can see the brushstrokes. See? (Shows a painting where the brushstrokes are apparent.) Some artists can paint on both and you won't see a difference.

"Board or canvas, what you are really going for is the color. I've always tried to make my paintings look more realistic, more natural. Look at Mary Ann Carroll's (the

lone Highwaywoman) work, very colorful. Gibson, too, very colorful. McLendon uses a lot of purple, in my opinion, kind of dark, but I like them. Each artist has his own style.”

### *The Art Student*

A student of Robert Lewis's, Bonnie was managing the Lewis gallery in Cocoa when she consented to be interviewed. She had been taking lessons for about a year and believed that she would not have even picked up a brush were it not for Lewis. Although Bonnie is not related to the original Highwaymen, the tradition lives on in her work because it is unpretentious, appealing, and affordable to a large audience. Instead of carrying her paintings in her car and traveling the highways to sell them, Bonnie takes digital photos of them and displays them on Ebay, the cyber-highway. She is originally from a small farming community near Chicago and came to Florida five years ago.

R.L. Lewis came into the Highwayman fold in the late 1960s. Born in Cocoa, Florida, on the Indian River Lagoon, he was encouraged by his mother to pursue his desire to draw what he saw. In junior high school he was assigned to an art class after a sports injury kept him off the playing fields. His artistic sketches drew praise from both his art teacher and fellow classmates. An article about Harold Newton, given to him by his art teacher, also inspired Lewis ([www.rllewisartist.com](http://www.rllewisartist.com)).

Lewis then went on to Edward Water College, Syracuse University, and Florida A & M University where he was graduated in 1966 with a degree in art education. He taught art in the Brevard County school system until he retired recently.

In 1969, Lewis met the Newtons as they worked on a row of paintings tacked alongside a shack (Monroe, 2001). He showed them how he could paint and they were surprised. From that point on, hearing encouragement in the Newtons' comments, Lewis

began selling his Florida landscapes, coastal and interior scenes in what other Highwaymen artists called the “Golden Triangle,” Ft. Pierce north to the Cape and west to Okeechobee ([www.rllewisartist.com](http://www.rllewisartist.com)).

### *The Interview*

*When did you first hear the term Highwayman and what did it mean to you?*

“How I became acquainted with the Highwaymen artists was that my sister and I were in an antique shop and this Florida landscape painting caught my eye, about a year and a half ago. Previous to that I had never heard of the Highwaymen. It was a misty river scene, with a haunting, glowing effect that was very ‘Old Florida.’ The colors and the subject matter just seemed to jump out as if you were looking at it, or you were right there at the scene. I asked the woman in the antique store about it and she said it was a Highwayman painting, a Harold Newton. My sister has lived here a longer time than I and was familiar with the expression, but really didn’t know much about the artists. The feeling of being touched by a painting stayed with me, so I began researching, reading biographies, whatever I could find, anything related to the Highwaymen.

“I researched Backus too who gave those young Black artists their start. And he was a white man. In the ‘50s that had to be unusual—a white man inviting Black people to his studio. It’s my understanding that Alfred Hair was the only original student of Mr. Backus, Beanie Backus. He got Alfred Hair started and he had several friends and decided to do the assembly line painting. They would all paint together. It kind of spiraled from there.”

*When did you realize you wanted to try to paint yourself?*

“Well, I found out through doing all this reading that Robert Lewis had a gallery in Cocoa—I’m from Merritt Island. On the spur of the moment, I decided to stop in and look at his work. I caught in him a very rare time. I almost think it was like fate. He was actually in the gallery painting, very unusual because he usually paints in his home studio. He gets a lot more privacy there than he does here. We got to talking—he’s a very personable man—and we talked about the Highwayman legacy, which just fascinated me that much more. Never thought of painting. My mother dabbled in it before she became ill. And my grandmother did too. I never even thought about it. Mr. Lewis said to me, why don’t you give it a try. Then he told me about the workshops. He had a three-year federal grant (a \$10,000 National Endowment for the Arts grant to Brevard Community College, which added \$10,000 of in-kind services, such as videotaping biographical interviews of five of the Highwaymen) to do these workshops—the last class was last month, in January (2005).

“So he encouraged me to take the workshop and I came out four hours later with a painting that I never in my wildest dreams expected to have. It was funny because my sister had come in with me after she’d bought a Lewis landscape for her living room. When I took my painting to show my sister, she said, you didn’t make that. She never imagined, there’s no way she thought I did it. Did Mr. Lewis paint that, she said.

“I continued to take the workshops and continued going to Highwaymen exhibits, dragging my boyfriend. Then Mr. Lewis approached me and asked me if I would like to come in the gallery and paint some and help him. In exchange for me being here when Mr. Lewis is gone to exhibits, he would continue to instruct me. I thought, what an opportunity.”

Bonnie did not have any of her own work in the gallery that day. Lewis's paintings were there along with several of Gibson's, Sam Newton's, and even one done by Robert Lewis III, the elder Lewis's son and manager.

*Do you sell your work, and how do you do it?*

"I sell my paintings on Ebay. You go to Ebay and put in 'BLButlerPainting' and you'll see my work (Appendix D). I don't get a lot of money for them, but selling them keeps me in art supplies. In my advertising on Ebay I mention Mr. Lewis and that I am a student of his—I asked his permission, of course. He's such a gracious man. He said it was OK.

"He does want this type of art to continue on—that's one of the reasons he was doing the workshops. Mr. Lewis has two sons, the younger one dabbles, and the other is his agent who's busy all the time setting up shows and such. The older Robert III has one painting here. (She shows me. It's about 8 x 10 and clearly from a beginner.)

"Mr. Lewis continues to be a mentor for me, encouraging me in all ways, very inspirational to me. He'll come in here and sit with me, even if he doesn't actually paint himself, he loves it that much. With no formal training at all I feel like I've really found a way to express myself that's like no other. Up until a year ago all I ever painted was a bedroom or a house, just walls, you know.

"Through my art I've met other artists who also paint in the Highwayman style. One on Ebay—Pat Roland. She's had no formal training, but Backus was her inspiration and also Robert Butler. Pat's from the Okeechobee area (as is Robert Butler, no relation to Bonnie). We exchange paintings!

“Even though the grant Mr. Lewis was working under has ended, I think he wants to somehow continue teaching. I think he will form more classes to go on teaching and helping people realize hidden talents. I do think it was fate that day when I came in here and found Mr. Lewis painting here.”

*The Art Dealer*

With the highways where they used to sell their paintings less traveled and with more restrictions in place to discourage solicitation, the current group of artists—originals, second generation and new generation—need a different kind of exposure. No more piling painted boards in cars or carrying them into law offices. Now exhibits and galleries perform the services necessary to get the Highwaymen’s work in front of the public’s eye.

*Howard Brassner*

Owner of ArtLink International, Mr. Brassner is a relative newcomer to the Highwayman fan club. Three years ago, his gallery organized a very well attended exhibit of both the older Highwayman paintings and the new works, several of which were done by the sons of the those mid-20th century artists. The idea of having a few of the original Highwaymen in attendance with their offspring was intriguing. Many works older and newer were sold that day and a drawing awarded a small Johnny Daniels painting to a lucky attendee.

The list of questions originally sent to potential interviewees was used with Mr. Brassner to elicit responses that seemed to fit the thrust of this paper. Other questions and conversations that took us off on tangents provided even more fascinating information. As a gallery owner, he has a unique perspective to see and experience not only the

resurgence in popularity of the art, but also to watch how that art is being propagated through the children and students of the Highwaymen artists.

*Is it true that your gallery is one of the few fine art galleries to carry Highwaymen paintings?*

It may not be so true today, but I can tell you that we were the first in the fine art world as opposed to the antique and collectible world that got involved with the Highwaymen.

*What was it about the genre that you picked up on?*

“It was the story. Some of the paintings are absolutely beautiful, and some are less than that, but it’s the story. It’s part of not just Florida history but American history. A bunch of young kids who had everything against them in the 1950s turned those obstacles around and made the American dream happen. Proof that the American dream still exists. You set your mind to something and go out and prove it true against all odds.”

*When did you first learn about the Highwaymen and their paintings?*

“About four years ago someone came in here with a painting for sale. We handled all sorts of merchandise at that point, so that was not unusual. We have had a lot of pop art, surrealist images, impressionists, and the like. Anyway, this person showed me a painting and I really looked at it, and thought, what am I going to do with this?”

*Which artist painted it, do you remember?*

“It was a Sam Newton. But I didn’t want to buy it at first, but the guy needed money. Apparently his daughter’s orthodontist needed to be paid before he took her braces off. She wanted to go to her junior prom brace-less. So I guess I gave in to the story. I had heard the term ‘highwaymen’ and knew it was some form of outsider art. As

it sat on the floor in my office, I began to tolerate it. In two weeks I started to like it, and then by the time a month was up, I said to myself, this thing is gorgeous.

“I started to do some research. Once I read the stories, I was hooked. Still, I wasn’t thinking of displaying this kind of art in the gallery. I was determined to own one painting by each of the 26 Highwaymen, those men who accomplished this back in the ‘50s. I wasn’t thinking business at that point, just personal. So I spent a fair amount of time over the next year, year and a half, trying to acquire one of each. In my hunt to find them I ended up with about 126 paintings. So I figured I would have a show and see how many of the extras I could sell. I kept those I really connected with at home. I never had that many people come to the gallery (June 2002). It was a zoo! Between the old paintings and the new, about 75 sold between Friday night and Sunday afternoon. As you can see I still have quite a few Highwaymen paintings on my walls—they’ve never come down from that show, except to get sold.”

Since 2002, the gallery has installed a sort of hanging file of display space, where a “wall” hung with paintings can be pulled out and viewed on both sides then stowed away again. This method of display expands the gallery’s wall space a hundred-fold.

“There is nothing else that attracts all kinds of people, all ages, all economic backgrounds, all beliefs, everyone seems to find something in the Highwaymen that means something to them on a deep level.”

*Do you have many of the Highwaymen’s children’s paintings here?*

“Yes, we have had works by Kelvin Hair, Roy McLendon, Jr., Tracy Newton and Robert Butler, Jr. Aside from the children there was a whole group of artists that really were involved in the movement, but for whatever reason, are not part of the accepted list.



Jimmy Stovall, for instance, he painted with the group. Some of this group was not around when the initial research was done. And there's always the usual politics. As you know, Sam Newton says that he and his brothers (Harold and Lemuel) were not Highwaymen; they were not part of that. Where would he be without that name and the story that's connected to it?

“Harold was the best, most accomplished artist, and he was painting long before Hair. He didn't do the organized thing. But he did the Highwayman thing—stacked his paintings in his car and sold them up and down east coast highways, to offices, banks, and the like. He'd love to set up a little stool and easel and paint on the corner, then sell the painting later that day. Yes, he did the thing, but didn't know it yet.

“James Gibson was telling me that he and Hair and Newton used to get together and paint at night, then have a contest to see who could bring in the most dollars the next day with the freshly completed works, which Harold always lost. He was a much slower painter.”

*What do you think about the children and their painting?*

“I think most of them are very talented. Whether it's heredity or environment, I can't say. Better ask a biologist!

“Many of the Highwaymen themselves learned from Hair who learned from Beanie Backus, a classically trained artist. I have six Backus paintings here in the gallery. Backus was trained up north, sketched out his ideas, was looking for the proper balance of light and shadow and color, really planned all his paintings. That's what he was trying to teach Alfred Hair. You should see those early works when Hair had no choice but to

do what Backus told him to do. They are gorgeous and look nothing like Hair's subsequent Highwaymen paintings."

*What is the difference between those paintings done under Backus's watchful eye and the later fast paintings? What is lost and what is gained?*

"Actually, nothing is lost. Spontaneity is gained. The earlier works are wonderful, but the later works begin the Highwayman story. I guess that's the difference. You have to remember, these guys did not set out to create fine art; they wanted to put a few dollars in their pockets, not every now and then, but every day. And Alfred Hair thought he could turn out 50 paintings a day. He produced what they called 'fast grass,' where he'd load a brush with paint and quickly sketch the grass on several boards one after another. Then someone would draw the horizon line, someone else the sky or foreground. Hair would come by and do the clouds. Maybe he would sign it, maybe he wouldn't. Maybe someone else would sign it. The idea was to get the works then sold as quickly as possible."

This type of assembly-line painting seems to be a prevailing idea, but it is not true according to Gary Monroe and several of the other artists. "We painted our own pictures," Roy McLendon says. While the members of the backyard painting group may have helped each other by painting a bird here or there, it was not the rule, but the exception (Monroe, 2001, p. 9).

*How do you think the younger painters will fare in these times?*

"There is such a tremendous market now for Highwaymen paintings. That is what is helping the second generation, the market. Kelvin Hair did a painting that looked so much like his father's—he's perfected, almost, his dad's technique. He rarely does this

though. His own work is a little different style, which I think sells it. It's not just his name—that might get you in the door, but it's the art itself that keeps you there. I bought the first painting Kelvin ever sold. And my words to him were, drop everything else you're doing and paint.

“This second generation hasn't gotten off the ground yet as far as being known and dedicated themselves toward a goal. Of course, they didn't suffer either as their parents might have. The motivations are different today. I tried to get a show together called, 'The Highwaymen: Next Generation.' I couldn't get them together! Roy Jr. (McLendon) feels like he is an original Highwayman, not next generation because he was around when his father was painting with Al Hair. I think Roy was 12 years old at the time and he was painting.

“Everything changed after so-called 'recognition' in 1994 (with Jim Fitch's Highwayman label). Before that, what did you have—a group of African-American artists painting and selling their works cheap. They didn't know they were the Highwaymen. Suddenly, after 1994, we have group identity, a term so that the public could categorize them. I think it worked for them.

“I have Kelvin's works here, Robert Butler, Jr.'s, Roy McLendon, Jr.'s, Ray McLendon's and Tracy Newton's. Tracy paints a lot like his dad (Sam Newton), but his color palette is different, his form and subject are different. Tracy has a wonderful eye for color, not the traditional color palette of his father.

“Ray McLendon's work is more impressionistic and Roy's has more fine detail. Ray's is more spontaneous, more like his father's, more like the sweeping, raw efforts of those times rather than now.”

*How do you see your gallery five years from now as far as the Highwaymen paintings are concerned?*

“We’re opening a new gallery in Wellington. I have the strangest feeling that even though we’ll start out there with about 25 percent Highwayman works that the percentage will grow quickly. After one month it will be 50 percent, two months, 75, and eventually we’ll be almost totally Highwayman.”

## Chapter 3

### Reflections

Picture this: A bright Florida morning, a shady backyard filled with the sound of conversation interrupted by the tapping of a hammer on crown molding, aromas of turpentine and oil paint permeating the humid air. Someone signals an urgency to finish the framing and get the paintings, still wet, stacked against the trees. The morning's work is then stowed away in the only car they have, a 1962 Buick, and the driver takes to the highway. From this not totally imaginary scene, the Highwayman legacy draws its beginning.

As the story unfolds and is re-told in books and newspaper articles, the individual personalities emerge, several of which were touched on in this thesis. The artists' styles changed: There is no urgent need today to paint fast and sell faster. Opportunities are different in the 21st century. What was once done quickly to feed families and to keep the painters out of the orange groves and packinghouses, can now be done in a leisurely way. Artists can exhibit in their own galleries or fine art venues; they do not have to keep a low profile as they once did 40 years ago. They are invited to museums displaying their work and newspaper reporters seek them out for their stories. They are even "rediscovered." In 2003, employees of the City Hall of Oakland Park discovered 10 paintings stashed away in a dusty corner. The discovery generated a public showing and sale where the landscapes, all Alfred Hair's work, were finally on display again (Aird, 2003).

Florida folk art, especially the Highwayman style, has become eminently collectible and, as a result, more expensive. A \$25 wetscape on Upson board no longer exists. Whether the art is still “art” or has simply become opportunistic endeavors by the surviving artists themselves, the children, students, and other relatives is an intriguing question.

Throughout my research for this thesis and even before I knew I was going to write a thesis, I have been fortunate to view many examples of Highwayman art, both the old style and newer pieces. Although I am not a trained art critic, my viewing experiences and now my knowledge of several of the artists themselves and their children give me a unique perspective from which to discuss the questions proposed at the beginning of this endeavor.

#### *Younger Generation Painters*

What drove their parents to create a product that would result in increased economic energy is not what drives the younger generation today. Kelvin, Roy Jr., Renee, Tracy, and Sherry all create art, but, unless it is in a tribute style, the end products bear little resemblance to those of their parents. The elements may be similar, such as palm trees in Kelvin’s paintings or sunset colors in Sherry’s, but the techniques are studied, are planned, are calculated. From what I’ve read and seen in the older paintings, those landscapes were not mapped; they are straight from the imagination to the board. Backus’s classical approach, while sufficient and necessary for his work, just did not work for the Highwaymen.

This is not to say that the younger generation and people like Johnny Stovall and Bonnie Butler are not talented artists. Their success speaks of their skills. They learned

the Highwayman style and it is working for them. The handing down of techniques is reminiscent of Backus teaching Alfred Hair or of Hair, in turn, teaching Livingston Roberts, Hezekiah Baker, and Roy McLendon Sr. in the early days.

Yet the early art has the undeniable quality of raw energy driven by necessity, which is lacking in newer works, even newer works by the surviving artists. Viewing the life around them, using the simplest of elements to describe that life, the Highwaymen artists created not just two-dimensional pictures, but images that contained the spirit of the land and their hungry spirit as well.

This viewpoint of mine was recently reinforced when I gained an opportunity to handle five early Highwaymen works lent to me by a friend: two by James Gibson, one by Mary Ann Carroll, one by Johnny Daniels, and one unsigned painting. All five are painted on Upson board and framed with crown molding that is highlighted with gold paint. If I had any doubt about what I see as raw energy in Highwaymen works, seeing these five paintings up close, removed that doubt. In the unsigned work—a wind-swept palm bent over a white-capped ocean—there is evidence of speed, of spontaneity, and of a confident hand applying paint with a palette knife. These are qualities that just do not occur in newer works. James Gibson's sepia-toned image of a cypress was painted on a board with a hole in it. Speed was more important than perfection.

### *Newer Technology*

The Internet has expanded the audience for Highwaymen and Highwaymen-like paintings. Ebay is not only the venue for Robert Lewis's student Bonnie Butler, it is the venue for any artist who uses the phrases, "Highwayman-style" or "Inspired by the Highwaymen." Most of the wannabes are poor representations. Even so, a new artist like

Bonnie Butler said that whatever she produces she sells almost immediately. In fact, the painting I viewed on Ebay in February 2005 was sold by the beginning of March.

Obviously, there is a market for the style whether it is “inspired by” or a real Highwayman painting.

New materials such as canvas instead of board, more prestigious frames, paints, and paintbrushes help a good artist do a better job perhaps. But, there again, the spontaneity and necessity that produced the older Highwayman paintings is missing from newer creations. A second generation artist or student would never accept the hole in the board on which James Gibson painted. Nor would an area of the board lack the proper coverage as in Willie Daniels’ seascape.

### *Highwayman Style*

My five borrowed paintings perfectly depict the Highwayman style—the expected elements are there, the materials are the original materials, and the hands that produced the paintings were quick and confident. In some areas of the Johnny Daniels work the Upson board shows through, which is a mark of an original painting, what serious collectors may look for.

Those who are painting now, including the surviving Highwaymen, continue to paint the requisite elements—the palms, bodies of water, sunsets, sunrises, and birds—but there is no evidence of energetic speed. The children of the Highwaymen would be expected to continue in that style and Roy Jr., Tracy Newton, and Kelvin Hair have. Renee Mills took another direction with her abstract, more illusory art. Yet she is still firmly connected to both styles of Highwayman art through her mother, Mary Ann Carroll.



### *Then and Now*

Motivations 40 years ago and motivations today are vastly different. The original group of artists had a need to paint fast and sell their works fast, do the deals and leave town, stay low key and keep the families contented. Now African American artists have just as many opportunities to advance their careers as Caucasian or Asian artists. And the young artists have advanced: Roy Jr. paints in his own gallery, Kelvin owns a gallery and will probably retire to continue painting, and Renee is a new gallery owner. Sam Newton has his gallery and his son Tracy exhibits in a gallery where he is half-owner. Sherry Newton Lumpkins has her cyber gallery.

The group of friends who gathered to paint in Alfred Hair's mother's backyard never dreamed the dreams of these young artists, never planned beyond the next empty rectangle of Upson board. Their fathers and mother guided the children along a less needy path so that the young people would not have to sweat and strain and work hard to make a living. The children take their time creating their landscapes and command much more than \$25 for a painting. As Kelvin said, he couldn't sell one of his paintings for \$1,000 along the highway. He could certainly sell it out of his gallery with no problem.

### *About that Label*

The Newtons, both the older and younger generations, turn away from it. The three children interviewed for this thesis either have no negative vibes from it or actually welcome it. For Johnny Stovall, it brings potential buyers into his exhibit space because the gallery where his paintings hang is called the Original Highwayman Art Gallery. Bonnie Butler was captivated by the Highwayman style once she viewed it and now

advertises her works with the identifier, “student of Robert Lewis, an original Highwayman.”

Why is this label so abhorrent to the Newtons? Harold Newton’s sister Rosetta Humphries called him the “King of the Highwaymen.” A photo in her book shows a smiling Harold with paintings leaning up against the back of his van, ready to be stowed away for the road trip. An extremely accomplished and prolific artist, he still had little opportunity to sell his works any other way than the highway back in the 1950s and 1960s.

I believe that the relatives of Harold Newton view him as a more talented, skilled artisan than Alfred Hair and the group that gathered around this charismatic entrepreneur. It is not the “highway” part of the label that the family members dislike; it is the placing of Harold in the same category as Hair’s fast painters. To the family members perhaps, the spontaneous, energetic landscapes produced by Hair and his friends were unsophisticated child’s play, like finger-painting. Compared to Harold’s more traditional compositions, yes, those wetscapes are less studied, less calculated. But Harold’s and the more quickly created works are wonderful representations of Florida regional art, and the individual artists all have their particular identifying marks. From Hair’s bending palms to Mary Ann’s hot suns to Hezekiah Baker’s green and yellow skies each of the 26 named Highwaymen (including Harold) are easily recognizable in their landscapes. Having a group name seems to me to be a plus rather than a negative. Unfortunately we do not know whether Harold himself disliked the label because he died before Jim Fitch coined the “Highwayman” name. We can only guess what he might have thought.

### *A Personal Reflection*

What could be more essential to an art movement than its continuity? Labels aside, in the children of the Highwaymen, the students, the art dealers and agents, this uniquely Floridian art form has its recipe for permanence. No relative or student can quite duplicate the style nor the time period in which it prevailed, but certain elements in the art identify it with a time and place. That quickly realized, unpretentious, almost raw landscape speaks of the impermanence of nature, yet once captured and tamed on board or canvas, the wind-swept sea, towering palms, billowy clouds and purple sunsets lift the soul.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusions

The objectives of this thesis were as follows:

1. Discover which of the children of the Highwaymen are painting and what influences the parents may have had.
2. Discover how new technology—the Internet, software applications that produce artistic images instantly, better canvasses and paints—has contributed or not to the new artists' skills.
3. Compare the progeny's styles to that of their parents. Can any of the children's paintings be identified as Highwayman-style?
4. Compare the political climates of the 1950s and the early 2000s. What inspired and drove their parents in the 1950s will be quite different from what motivates the children today.

Through personal interviews and other observations, these questions were satisfied to some extent. The research went beyond these questions, however, when interviews were conducted with Johnny Stovall, who is not a Highwayman child, but a relative; Bonnie Butler, a student of a Highwayman; and Howard Brassner, art gallery owner and collector of Highwayman art. Their contribution to this research expanded the possibilities and enlarged the body of information regarding how the Highwayman legacy is being proliferated. Even through observations of the Newton children, although not

personally interviewed, it can be seen that the genre of outsider art originated by their ancestor continues on in their current creations.

### *The Children*

Many of the Highwaymen progeny are painting, from Sam Newton's young daughter to Roy McLendon's 50-year-old son, Roy Jr. Although only three children were personally interviewed for this project, the conversations with them and other observations revealed that as a group, the percentage of artists is high. Whether it is heredity or environment or a special combination that creates second-generation artists cannot be determined by anyone involved in this project, as Mr. Brassner pointed out.

That several of the parents greatly influenced their children to realize their talents must be answered in the affirmative. Roy, Jr.'s father encouraged him and Renee's mother not only involved her early on making frames, she is helping her daughter bring her dream of a working art gallery to fruition. Throughout the interviews and observations, there was not one note of discouragement from parent to child.

### *New Media*

The Highwaymen children have taken advantage of new technology, not using the old materials unless it was for a focused venture. Their parents used Upson board and other inexpensive materials to keep costs down. That motivation is not apparent today.

Kelvin says he would not paint on Upson board even if it were available; he prefers canvas. Yet when creating a tribute painting in his father's style he might use a similar kind of board. Through his new website and traveling around the state (not just Route 1 or the Golden Triangle), the marketing of Kelvin Hair takes on a 21st century flair.

Roy McLendon, Jr. and Renee Mills also use websites in promoting their creations and in Renee's case, the creations of others. The second-generation artists are no strangers to the possibilities of widespread notoriety, compliments of the Internet.

Sherry Lumpkins certainly uses the cyber highway just as her father Harold Newton used other highways, such as Route 1. She does not have a physical gallery location, nor did her father. Virtual galleries lend themselves to constant change without extra overhead, just as a moving car or van can hold ten paintings today and 20 tomorrow with no additional costs.

Similarly, in Bonnie Butler's case, her gallery is Ebay. She's become moderately successful while continuing to be one of Robert Lewis's most ardent fans.

#### *Personal Styles, Adopted Styles*

Comparing the styles of parents and children shows that some elements continue to appear—the landscapes done by several second-generation artists are still Floridian for instance. The styles, however, are distinct. Roy Jr. insists that his style is very separate from his father's. Kelvin sometimes emulates his father's style, but only purposefully.

On the other hand, Renee's style is vastly different, as she said, not landscapes but illusionary works. Her ambitions, however, are more toward encouraging other artists rather than becoming an artist in her own right.

#### *The Environment*

More than four decades ago, a group of African-American artists had nowhere to sell their works, no galleries, no shows or exhibitions, and few encouragements from those who might be astute enough to spot their talents. Beanie Backus stands out as one who recognized potential talents whatever their color. The political climate was such that

these artists knew or surmised that the best way to get ahead was to take their products directly to the buyers by the most direct means. And it worked. Appealing to the tourists' desire to have a souvenir of a vacation in paradise and to the business owners' desire for populated walls, the painters filled the orders as fast as they could produce the products.

For 21st-century artists, speed is not a necessary ingredient. They can take their time, because the need to produce is not as immediate as in their predecessors' times. While it is certainly soul satisfying to sell one's work to an appreciative buyer, today's artist is not concerned about satisfying his or his family's hunger too.

The line that separated blacks and whites in the mid-1950s is not as apparent today, and, in fact, where art is concerned, it seems to disappear altogether. Crossovers occur too as in the case of Joan Arnold, who studied under George Buckner. Talent and skill have no color lines.

### *The Label*

When Jim Fitch attached the term "highwaymen" to a group of African-American artists from the Ft. Pierce area who were selling their landscape paintings up and down Route 1, he was attempting to give credit to these mostly self-taught artists and recognize their ability to overcome certain negative circumstances. The term is of no consequence to some second-generation artists and an anathema to others.

Without the label, however, it seems that none of the current artists would enjoy certain advantages that being part of a group brings. Sam Newton is extremely successful in his work, but as part of the Highwayman group, his reputation is no doubt elevated. Protesting the label only draws attention to it. In a similar fashion, Sherry Lumpkins not only draws more attention to her father and her memorial paintings, she capitalizes on it.

### *Summary*

The current art echoes its predecessor but does not totally overshadow it. Instead, today's artists pay homage to their ancestors and teachers but add their own individual touches—Roy Jr.'s fine details, Tracy's orange groves, Sherry's pictures within a picture, Bonnie's vibrant palette—they, and others are doing their part to carry on the legacy of the Highwaymen.



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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval



# FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

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www.fau.edu/dsr/committee

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
Human Subjects Review Committee

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** August 20, 2004

**TO:** John Childrey,  
Elissa Rudolph,  
Department of English, College of Arts and Letters

**FROM:** Susan Love Brown, Chair *Susan Love Brown*

**RE:** H04-156 "Painting Across Generations: The Legacy of the Highwaymen"

04 SEP 2 PM 5 37  
FAU REGISTRAR

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed the above protocol. Under the provisions for expedited review, the proposed research has been found acceptable as meeting the applicable ethical and legal standards for the protection of the rights and welfare of the human subjects involved.

This approval is valid for **one year from the above memo date**. This research must be approved on an annual basis. It is now your responsibility to renew your approval annually and to keep the IRB informed of any substantive change in your procedures or of any problems of a human subjects' nature.

Please do not hesitate to contact either myself (7-2325) or Elisa Gaucher (7-2318) with any questions.

SLB:ccg

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A Member of the State University System of Florida  
*An Equal Opportunity/Access/Affirmative Action Institution*

CONSENT FORM

1) **Title of Research Study:** Painting Across Generations: The Legacy of the Highwaymen

2) **Investigator:** Dr. John Childrey, Associate Professor, and Elissa Rudolph, graduate student.

3) **Purpose:** The purpose of this research study is to interview the sons and daughters of the original Highwaymen in order to understand how certain art techniques transcend generations and appear again in modern times and in modified form.

4) **Procedures:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants will be interviewed using an audio recording device. They will be given a list of questions (included in this application on page 5) and their answers tape-recorded. Each interview will not take more than one hour. Interviews will be conducted wherever the interviewee feels most comfortable. Interviewees are free to answer or not answer any question.

5) **Risks:**

The risks involved with participation in this study are no more than one would experience in regular daily activities.

6) **Benefits:**

Participants may enjoy certain benefits from the interview process in simply discussing their careers and art and how their parents' either influenced them greatly or not. There may be some benefit to each participant in reading what other sons and daughters have to say about their experiences. A copy of the study will be available to each participant.

7) **Data Collection & Storage:**

Data will be collected with an audio tape recorder and cassettes. All of the results will be kept confidential and secure and no one but the interviewer will have access to the cassettes, unless required by law. Participants may choose to not have their names used in this research if they so desire. Cassettes will be stored until the research project is completed and for one year beyond the date of the study. Information on the cassettes will be erased in an environmentally sound manner, such as demagnetization.

8) **Contact Information:**

For related problems or questions regarding your rights as a subject, the Office of Sponsored Research of Florida Atlantic University can be contacted at (561) 297-2310. For other questions about the study, you should call the principal investigators, Dr. John Childrey, (954) 236-1127, or Elissa Rudolph at (561) 297-2308.

9) **Consent Statement:**

*I have read or had read to me the preceding information describing this study. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I am 18 years of age or older and freely consent to participate. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. I have received a copy of this consent form.*

I agree to be audiotaped.

I consent to have my name used in this research.

I do not agree to be audiotaped.

I do not consent to have my name used in this research.

Signature of Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

committee\applcon. Rev. 10/99

IRB  
Approval Date: 8/20/04  
Initials: [Signature]  
Expiration Date: 8/19/05

Appendix B  
Completion Certificate from the  
NIH Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams  
Online Course



## Human Participant Protections Education for Research Teams

### Completion Certificate

This is to certify that

**Elissa Rudolph**

has completed the **Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams** online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 03/14/2005.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research.
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.

National Institutes of Health  
<http://www.nih.gov>

Appendix C

Letter to Interviewees

July 2004

Hello

Let me introduce myself and my project. I am a graduate student at Florida Atlantic University and hope to graduate with a master's degree in Liberal Studies in December of this year. My last few credits will come as a result of the project I will now describe to you.

When I became a Florida resident seven years ago, I was an enthusiastic newcomer, surprised and awed by the some of the unique, yet fragile qualities of the state. One of the areas that fascinated me was the art form created by a group of African American painters in the 1950s. I have followed the resurgence of interest in these painters, dubbed "Highwaymen," and have attended many art gallery exhibits in the past three years. I am intrigued by the art form itself and how it was executed as well as the painters and their diverse opinions on their productions. It seems to me that there are as many opinions as to the importance of this group of painters as there are painters themselves.

Now that several of the children of this group of artists are painting currently, my interests move to these younger people. Are they painters because their parents were? Have they developed a vastly different style than their parents', or not? Do they look to their parents for advice? Or are these children uninterested in what their parents accomplished?

As you can see, many questions hang without real answers. My project would be to find these answers and write about how art transcends generations and evolves into a form that takes on the aspects of its current environment. The 1950s were a time certainly quite different from the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—just how different, relative to the art of painting, would be discussed in my paper, which will be titled, "Painting Across Generations: The Legacy of the Highwaymen."

I hope you will consent to help me find answers to some of the questions posed previously. Your opinions and insight will be invaluable to my research. I would need no more than an hour of your time to tape the interview and would travel to wherever you deem a comfortable place. I would interview you using the list of questions enclosed, although during our conversations, other points may be covered. Please respond by returning the enclosed form in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Thank you for your time and I hope to meet you soon! If you have any questions before you return the form, please call or email me (561-573-0859 or [elissa12@bellsouth.net](mailto:elissa12@bellsouth.net)).

Elissa Rudolph  
Florida Atlantic University graduate student



## Appendix D

### List of Potential Questions

To: Elissa Rudolph

From: \_\_\_\_\_ (your name, please)

I am willing to be interviewed. \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no (would you please give a reason interviewed if you are not willing to be interviewed)

---

Please give me an idea of when and where you might be willing to be interviewed within the next two months, August and September. I will come to you.

---

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or you can call or email me and we can discuss possible times and venues.

Cell – 561-573-0859

Home – 561-496-0124

Office – 561-297-2308

[elissa12@bellsouth.net](mailto:elissa12@bellsouth.net)

Send this form back to me as soon as you can so we can get started on this intriguing project! An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Keep the list of questions so you can think about your answers.

Thank you in advance for your assistance!

(Title of Thesis) **Painting Across Generations: The Legacy of the Highwaymen**

**List of Questions for Interviewees:**

Early Life:

1. When (what age were you) did you realize your parent was a painter?
2. When (what age were you) did you first hear the expression “Highwaymen” and what did it mean to you?
3. What did your parent teach you about painting, if anything?
4. Have you had any formal art training and, if so, describe that training.
5. What part of Florida do you call home?

Current Life:

1. Do you see your parent’s style in your style? If so, in what respect(s)?
2. If you do not see your parent’s style in your own painting what then were your influences?
3. Is the subject matter of your paintings real—have you viewed certain landscapes and then painted those scenes? Or is the subject matter visionary—taken mostly from your imagination?
4. How has the resurgence of interest in the Highwaymen and their works influenced your work?
5. How has your parent viewed your work? Helpful? Critical? No interest?
6. In what way(s) does your work differ from that of your parent?
7. How do your materials—paint, brushes, canvases, etc.— and that of your parent differ?
8. How do you advertise whatever paintings you have for sale? Exhibits? Web site?

Appendix E  
The Highwaymen

**First Generation\***  
*(mid 50s to early 60s)*

Mary Ann Carroll  
James Gibson  
Alfred Hair+  
Roy McLendon  
Harold Newton+  
Livingston Roberts+

**Second Generation\***  
*(late 60s and 70s)*

Curtis Arnett  
Hezekiah Baker  
Al Black  
Ellis Buckner+  
George Buckner+  
Robert Butler  
Johnny Daniels  
Willie Daniels  
Rodney Demps  
Isaac Knight  
Robert Lewis  
John Maynor  
Alfonso Moran  
Lemuel Newton  
Samuel Newton  
Willie Reagen  
Cornell Smith  
Charles Walker  
Sylvester Wells  
Charles Wheeler

**Children (artists themselves)**  
*(may be many more than  
what is shown here)*

Doreen Butler  
Robert Butler, Jr.  
Daniel Butler  
David Butler+  
Michael Butler+  
Kelvin Hair^  
Sherry Newton Lumpkins  
Ray McLendon  
Roy McLendon, Jr.^  
Renee Mills^  
Tracy Newton

\* The original 26 Highwaymen

+ Deceased

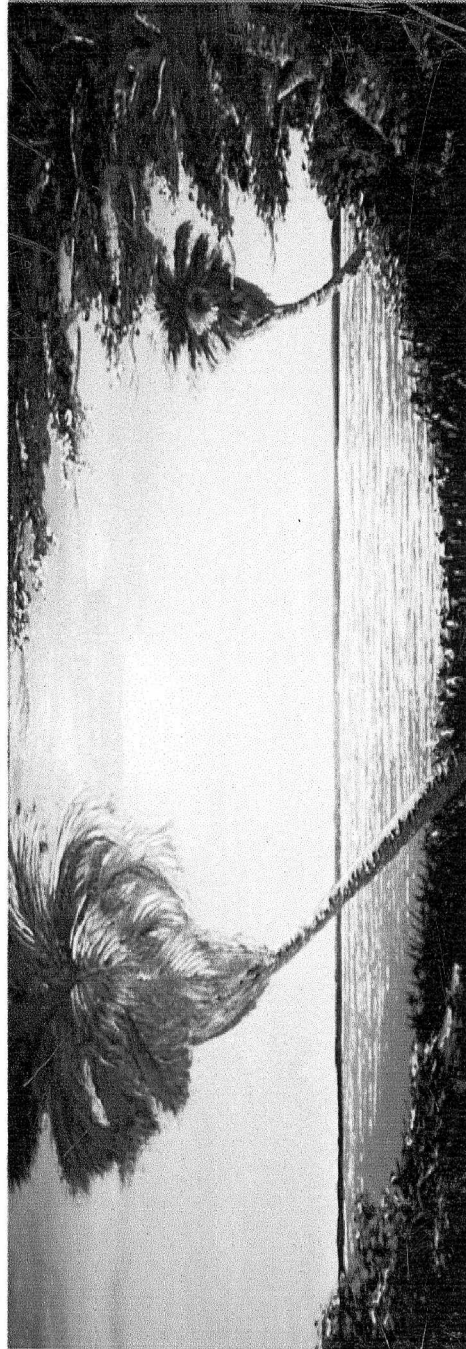
^ Interviewed for this project

Appendix F

Alfred Hair/Kelvin Hair



Tribute Collection



*Alfred Hair*

Kelvin Hair's tribute to his father is on the left, while the late Alfred Hair's work is on the right.

Appendix G  
Newton Legacy Art





**Newton Legacy Art**

© 2004 Newton Legacy Art

- Paintings For Sale
- About The Tribute
- Tribute Art
- Contact Us

## ABOUT THE TRIBUTE- To Harold Newton



*Painting above is 'Tribute Art'  
by S.NEWTON,L. (Sherry Newton Lumpkins) copyright 2004*

This is my quest, inspired by my father Harold Newton, to keep his namesake alive using his method of cascading oil paint to board by confident pallette knife strokes capturing the beauty of Florida.

As he kept 'Old Florida' alive in the art world by feeling nature and translating what the eye beholds. I have finally put aside my personal shyness of showing my art by gathering strength from- 'Pretty Pappa' and will carry the Legacy of his genius.

Sherry Newton Lumpkins's website offers Harold Newton "tribute art" for sale. Her father's style is much more immediate, less studied than Sherry's.

*All paintings below are created by Sherry Newton Lumpkins from  
Newton Legacy Art Inc.,  
"Tribute Art" 2004*



Tribute Art - Newton Legacy Continues

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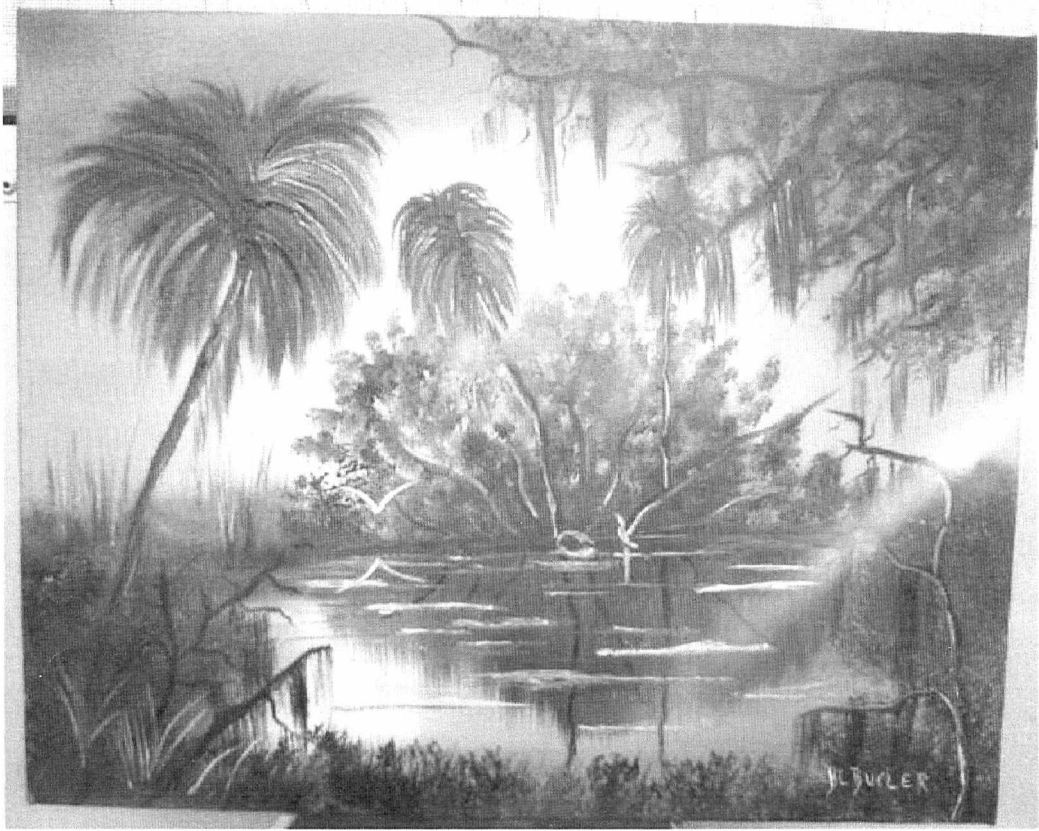
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Harold Newton

---

Another of Sherry's web pages shows a mirage of her image and her father's over a seascape.

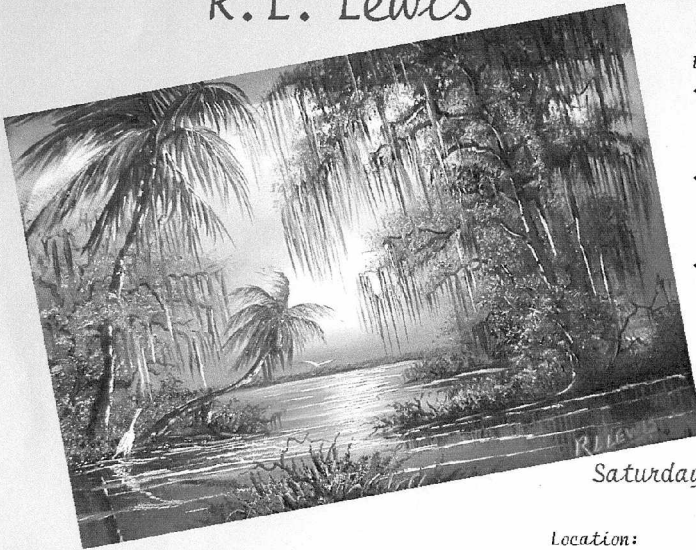
Appendix H  
The Artist and the Student



Bonnie Butler's work displays vibrant color in an illusory approach. Her images recall her teacher's style. Robert Lewis continues to offer advice from his wealth of experience.

featuring  
Original Highwaymen Artist & Florida Hall of Fame Artist

R. L. Lewis



Events

- ♦ A calendar signing of R. L. Lewis' 2005 13-month Calendar, entitled "Paintings of Nostalgic Florida & Parts of the South."
- ♦ Live Demonstration by R. L. Lewis and be able to bid on the painting via a "silent auction."
- ♦ Sale of R. L. Lewis originals and some select limited edition prints

Saturday, November 13, 2004 11am to 5pm

Location:

Hillsboro Antique Mall & Cafe  
1025 East Hillsboro Blvd Deerfield Beach, FL 33441  
(2 miles east of I-95, exit ~~37~~, just east of U.S. 1)  
42-A

Contact Owners:

Karen Silverman or Rene Scott (954) 571 - 9988  
[www.hillsboroantiquemall.com](http://www.hillsboroantiquemall.com)

A work by one of the Highwaymen, Robert Lewis.