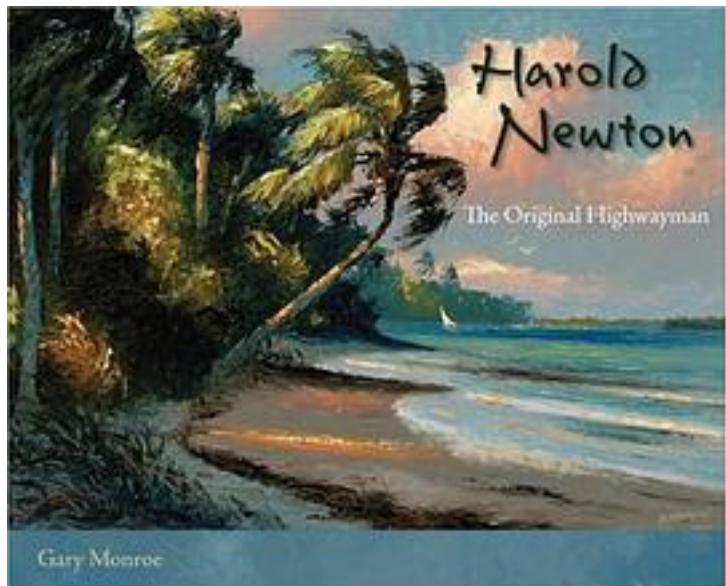


Harold Newton



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From the best-selling author of "The Highwaymen" comes the story of the group's most prolific and most sought after painter. Harold Newton was an unrecognized vagabond artist who not only captured the beauty of the Florida landscape but transformed it with an artistry that invoked its drama of light, color, and form while hinting at its dark, primordial forces. One of his fellow Highwaymen once observed of his work, "It don't have to be signed to know it's a Newton." Combining samples of his paintings with biographical details and reminiscences of family members, customers, and fellow Highwaymen, Gary Monroe creates an homage to the man whose work contributed perhaps more than anyone else's to shaping the romantic imagery and identity of modern Florida. An enigmatic figure, Newton lived an artist's life--aloof and prolific while painting, gregarious and expansive when socializing. Taking to the streets to sell his paintings in 1954, he sold untold numbers of works, showering the state with them. There are "Newtons" everywhere--especially along Florida's east central coast,

the Highwaymen's backyard. Their art is in Miami and the Palm Beaches, Tallahassee and across the Panhandle, Lake City and scattered throughout the interior, and along the west coast as well, in Naples, Sarasota, Tampa, and St. Petersburg--wherever there were homes and offices. More of Newton's paintings remain today than those of any of the other highwaymen. Monroe explains these images' enduring appeal while providing glimpses of the African American artist's life from which they emerged, from a childhood spent moving between Florida and south Georgia, to a pivotal encounter with Bean Backus, to his sojourns at Eddie's Place, to the repossession of his 1959 Ford sedan decorated with beach, ocean, palm trees, and nude girls, to the quiet accumulation of professional patrons eager to purchase another two or three "Newtons" at every available opportunity. Newton is central to understanding the style of landscape painting that emerged from the Indian River area at mid-century, and Monroe creates an attractive, engaging, and informative account of this pivotal artist and his impact on the popular image of Florida.

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