

BEYOND

THEBOOK

ALABAMA
AFRICAN
AMERICAN
HISTORY

Three years after publishing *The Future Emerges from the Past: Celebrating 200 Years of Alabama African American History and Culture*, alafricanamerican.com continues to honor and highlight past, present, and future Alabama African American history makers.

BEYOND THEBOOK

Because Alabama African American history can't be taught in a single month, we will continue to share short articles along with links to videos, photos, reference material, and additional information for all to enjoy on a monthly basis. The website's goal is the same as the book's: To inspire the young and young at heart to dream big and celebrate Alabama's rich African American history and culture.

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DORA FRANKLIN FINLEY AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL

History comes alive on the
**Dora Franklin Finley
African-American Heritage Trail Tour.**
The Trail reveals forgotten chapters of history,
telling the stories of courage and contributions
made by unsung heroes from
Mobile's ethnically diverse past.

—*Mobile.org*

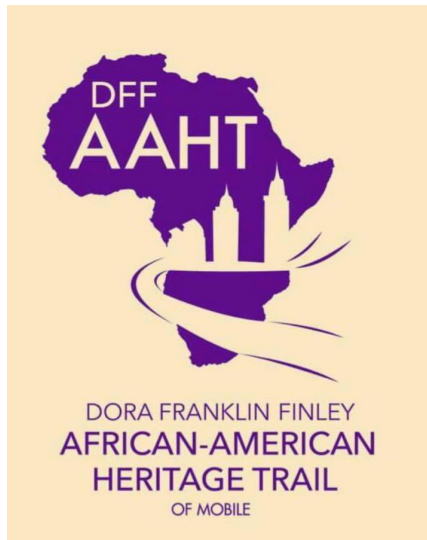


DORA FRANKLIN FINLEY AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL

Dora Franklin Finley was born on October 18, 1952, in Mobile, Alabama. From an early age community service was instilled in her heart. Finley was the eldest daughter of the late **James H. Finley, Sr.** and **Joycelyn Franklin Finley**. Her parents were civil rights advocates who taught that each person must contribute to the physical and spiritual health of the community.

As a young woman, Finley participated in **Neighborhood Organized Workers (NOW)** marches, standing up to intolerance and advocating for equality. She and her mother, the first to teach black history in Mobile public schools, were both arrested along with hundreds of other activists during NOW's demonstrations in 1969. As a high school junior, Finley formed and was president of the **United Student Action Movement**. The organization addressed issues regarding African American youth.

Having developed a strong leadership foundation, Finley went on to have a successful career in corporate America, teach mathematics at John L. Leflore High School in Mobile, Alabama, and eventually spearhead the creation of the **African American Heritage Trail** in Mobile, Alabama.



Above: Dora Franklin Finley African American Heritage Trail logomark.
Right: Route map of all the historic spots along the African American Heritage Trail.



After spending more than 30 years working in corporate America and raising a family, Finley’s focus on the welfare of her community became laser sharp. The skills and talents she developed in 25 years as a logistics manager would be put to good use as she volunteered through her church and various community associations. Finley became a magnet, attracting numerous requests for her support in various community-based projects. Her close friend of 50 years, Sheila Flanagan, stated: “She was an organizer, a diplomat and she just inspired people to work with her and for her. I would tell everyone that I worked for Dora Finley. She inspired people to do what she wanted and she could get folks from all walks of life. I call them ‘Dora converts.’”

In 2006, Finley was asked by the Mobile City Council to help establish the African American Heritage Trail. Councilor William Carroll knew that in order to make the trail a reality, it would require a special person to lead and coordinate the effort that had so many different pieces, and Finley was that person. He said, “Without Dora, the African American Heritage Trail would have never been.”



DORA FRANKLIN FINLEY AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL

Through Finley's leadership and efforts, forgotten and lost chapters of African American history in Mobile were discovered and preserved for all who visit the port city to enjoy. Today, there are more than 40 historic markers throughout Mobile County.



Above: On June 11, 2023, the 60th anniversary of the day Vivian Malone enrolled at the University of Alabama, members of the "Sistas Road Trip" came to Mobile (from all over the the U.S.) to take a trip on the Dora Franklin Finley African American Heritage Tour.

In 2011, Finley began working on the effort to restore the Cook's House, the detached kitchen and servants' quarters located on the **Oakleigh Historic Complex** and most likely one of the last remaining structures associated with Union Occupation and Emancipation in Mobile. Unfortunately, due to an illness, Finley passed away on June 8, 2012, before restoration had begun on the project. However, one of her last requests was that after her death, in lieu of flowers, her friends would donate to the Cook's House project.

Finley stated "I leave a legacy of an African American historic trail that is illuminated by stories of Courageous Contributors recognizing their determination and struggle for the inspiration and triumph of all generations to come." In her honor, the trail was renamed the Dora Franklin Finley African American Heritage Trail.



Residence of Dr. James A. Franklin (1886-1972), grandfather of Dora Franklin Finley.

Dora Finley, Mobile's African-American Heritage Trail founder, dies at 59

https://www.al.com/live/2012/06/dora_finley_mobiles_african-am.html

Your Word: The tireless Dora Finley leaves a lasting legacy

http://blog.al.com/press-register-commentary/2012/06/your_word_the_tireless_dora_fi.html

Dora Franklin Finley African American Heritage Trail

<https://www.dffaht.org/about>

POINTS OF INTEREST on the Dora Franklin Finley African American Heritage Trail

<https://www.dffaht.org/point-of-interest>

American Artifacts: Mobile, Alabama, African American Heritage Trail, Part 1

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?472007-1/mobile-alabama-african-american-heritage-trail-part-1>