



**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD AGENDA  
556 W. Maple  
Thursday, July 6, 2023  
5:00 PM**

***Mission Statement:*** *The Birmingham Museum will explore meaningful connections with our past, in order to enrich our community and enhance its character and sustainability. Our mission is to promote understanding of Birmingham's historical and cultural legacy through preservation and interpretation of its ongoing story.*

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call**
- 3. Approval of the Minutes**  
Minutes of June 1, 2023
- 4. New Business**
  - A. Interpretive Plan for Site-Basics
- 5. Communication and Reports**
  - A. Director Report
  - B. Member comments
  - C. Public comments
- 6. Next Meeting: July 3, 2023**
- 7. Adjournment**

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM  
MUSEUM BOARD MEETING  
556 W. Maple  
Thursday, June 1, 2023  
5:00 PM**

Members Present: Caroline Ashleigh (Alternate), Kristy Barrett, Bev Erickson, Alexandra Harris, Marty Logue, Jay Shell

Members Absent: Pat Hughes, Judith Keefer

Student Members Present: Alexander Motea, Alexandra Schaufler

Administration: Museum Director Leslie Pielack

Guests: None.

Chairperson Logue called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

**Approval of the Minutes  
Minutes of May 4, 2023**

**MOTION:** by Erickson, seconded by Barrett:

To approve the minutes of May 4, 2023.

**VOTE:** Yeas, 6  
Nays, 0

**New Business**

Museum Director Pielack provided an update on the response to the RFP for the **Phase 1 and 2 ADA Parking and Path, John West Hunter Park/Birmingham Museum** project. Two bids were received, both from qualified bidders. The bid from Grit Services was \$97,812 and from Dave's Contracting, Inc., was \$72,460. The cost difference appears to be accounted for in large part by the use of subcontractors by Grit Services. In addition, Dave's Contracting has a positive history at the museum, as the firm installed CDBG-funded ADA concrete ramps for the Allen House in two previous projects. Therefore, Dave's Contracting provided the lowest qualified bid and will be awarded the contract. It is expected that work will take only a few days and will be done some time in July or August. The board was also made aware that the museum's strategic plan is due for a review and renewal for 2024-2027, and that we will be taking that matter up in the next several months. Each of the goals will be reviewed one at a time for updates at the goal and objective levels. In addition, the site work near the pond (Phase 1 and 2 Parking/Path) will help in developing an interpretive plan for the landscape and site. Interpretive planning provides structure and guidance on programming, projects, and budget planning and associated activities, and helps in grant applications and funding as well.

## **Communication and Reports**

Director Pielack updated members as to the status of the window restoration project, which will take another 45-50 days to complete the actual window restoration before they are reinstalled. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade school tour program was very successful and met expectations of providing a better experience for students. Plans are underway for Director Pielack to work with school administration apply for a grant to expand curriculum resources within the schools, hopefully in the next year. The museum has launched a portable Juneteenth exhibit at City Hall for recognize our local Underground Railroad history. A discussion clarifying the role of the Greenwood Cemetery Advisory Board in developing planning for the cemetery was briefly revisited. Members with interest in the process can attend the GCAB meetings to learn more and share their views. Museum staff are beginning the deaccession process on the yearbooks that were recently approved by the City Commission for removal from the museum's permanent collection.

## **Member Comments**

Ms. Erickson inquired about other thematic and programmatic focus for the museum following the end of the current diversity exhibit in June of 2024. The Michigan Humanities grant funded activities will continue, and a second grant will be applied for to expand that multi-community project. Ms. Ashleigh inquired about whether our museum loans its exhibits; however, because our mission is specifically Birmingham-focused, it is unlikely we would ever get a request to loan an entire exhibit. The museum does make loans from time to time of individual objects to other institutions, but per our collection policy, not to individuals or private organizations.

There were no public comments.

**The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 6, at 5:00 PM, returning to the Allen House.** Ms. Logue adjourned the meeting at 5:52 PM.



## Interpretive Plan for Museum Site—Introduction Museum Board Meeting July 6, 2023

Developing an interpretive plan for the museum site is one of the important objectives to further our community engagement goals in our Strategic Plan.

Interpretive planning is designed to provide **overarching vision and cohesiveness**. In our setting, the wide variety of historic resources in our collection, in our history, our exhibits, educational programs, and in the physical features of our landscape and buildings are a challenge as well as a great opportunity. If they are brought under an umbrella of intent and coordination, they will complement one another and help everything work together.

The value of a written interpretive plan is that it helps guide long-term activities and planning. For example, we completed an interpretive plan for the Hunter House in 2019 (attached) that helped give direction to the need for a historic paint analysis and revision of our interior interpretation materials and layout. It also helped with identifying the themes we wanted to emphasize, goals for the collection objects stored there, and how we would be able to incorporate the changes into the school tour program. The **Hunter House Interpretive Plan** is still an active document that is due for a review later this year, but can serve as a model for the Museum Site Interpretive Plan. The Museum Site plan would address the landscape/park/plaza and the Allen House as an architectural resource, with some objectives relating to the use of the building as an exhibit space.

We will be integrating the plan with the **Parks and Recreation Trail Improvement Master Plan** objectives as much as possible at a later point, but we will begin with the foundational parts of the plan from the Birmingham Museum perspective.

Attached is a selection of materials that come from the **National Park Service Interpretive Planning Tools for Heritage Areas, Trails, and Gateways**. They represent best practices for developing interpretive plans for historic sites. They will help us get oriented toward the steps we will be taking over the next few months.

**For our July 6 meeting, please prepare a working list of what you would prioritize as our “main stories.” We will be examining them at some length, but it would be helpful if each Museum Board member had some ideas ready to discuss.**

# HUNTER HOUSE

## INTERPRETIVE PLAN

### 2020-2023



APPROVED BY THE MUSEUM BOARD: 11/21/2019

MUSEUM BOARD—Tina Krizanac (Chair), Russell Dixon, Dan Haugen, Patrick Hughes, Judith Keefer, Marty Logue & Caitlin Rosso

MUSEUM STAFF—Leslie Pielack (Director), Donna Casaceli, Caitlin Donnelly & Kyle Phillips

BIRMINGHAM  
*The* MUSEUM



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An interpretative plan is a foundational document that helps museums and historical institutions tell their stories, interpret their resources and achieve their overall missions. It functions as a guide for planning and targeting programming and community engagement activities by setting out specific objectives and desirable outcomes. By its nature, it is a flexible document that changes as conditions change.

The John West Hunter House has the remarkable status of being the oldest house in Oakland County, and one of only a handful of the oldest dwellings in the entire State of Michigan. It has been part of the Birmingham Museum site, which includes the 1926 Allen House, owned and operated by the City of Birmingham, since 2001. The property was purchased by the city in 1969. Formerly, it was operated as a historic house museum by the Birmingham Historical Society, now known as the Friends of the Birmingham Museum.

New opportunities have arisen in recent years as technology and the museum field has evolved. In a recent report, the American Association of State and Local History found that visitation to small history museums has increased since 2013 by nearly 13%, with small organizations experiencing greater growth than large ones.<sup>1</sup> At the Birmingham Museum, we have seen an even greater increase during the period, with our visitation increasing from 2013 to 2018 by 59%, with exponential growth in virtual visitation and engagement during the period. This is attributable to our efforts to understand our audiences and adapting to changes in interest and communication preferences, and suggests that incorporating our experience into a specific interpretive plan is timely.

Dynamic and engaging methods of presenting Birmingham's history at the Hunter House are increasingly available. Updated approaches based on best practices are needed to effectively interpret the building and our story while creatively enhancing utilization of the collection. Thoughtful focus on interpretive objectives will help develop more meaningful events, programs, and exhibits that further the Birmingham Museum mission through its 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, making the Hunter House and its story more accessible to everyone. Specifically, our strategic plan calls for the Birmingham Museum to (Goal I, C):

***Develop an interpretive plan for both buildings. Enhance utilization of the collection by engaging in impactful events, activities, programs and exhibits.***

An effective interpretive plan for the Hunter House will help achieve the following:

- 1) Identify and clarify some of our site's main stories
- 2) Tell our stories more engagingly by helping audiences form connections to the Hunter House and its past
- 3) Identify opportunities for programming
- 4) Seek potential new audiences and reinforce existing ones
- 5) Demonstrate preparedness and planning to potential partners and funding sources

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<sup>1</sup> AASLH, National Visitation Report, November, 2019, <https://learn.aaslh.org/national-visitation-report>.

## PROCESS

The Hunter House Interpretive Plan was developed collaboratively between museum staff and the Museum Board to apply strategic plan objectives with staff experience and museum practices in mind. Each of several components was proposed by staff and reviewed by the Museum Board over several months in 2019 to create this document. Concepts from the larger field of museum work were also incorporated as applicable to Hunter House and museum resources and objectives, but visitor experience provided the most important source.



It is a key priority for the museum to respond to our expanding audience's interests, both in physical and virtual contexts. To that end, we have been attending to visitor preferences and interactive engagement patterns to gain a sense of what works best for content and format. We have found that artifacts, images, documents, displays, the site, and the building itself create the greatest interest when connected with themes of everyday life, food ways,

women and children's activities, and family stories. The Hunter House Interpretive Plan incorporates these varied sources in addition to social media to create the most effective presentation of the site and Birmingham's history.

## PLAN COMPONENTS

Successful interpretive plans are composed of elements that identify audience needs, central themes, specific objectives and methods that will make the best use of available resources. These component parts of the Hunter House Interpretive Plan are clarified below.

### I. INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVES

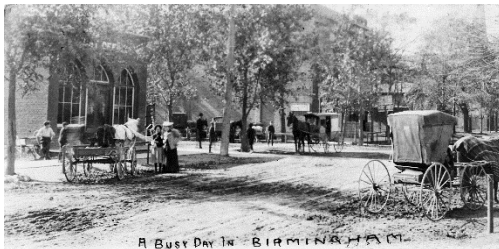
The Hunter House Interpretive Plan Objectives are designed to specify desired outcomes—what the museum wants to see as a result of effective interpretation. They integrate with the museum's overall strategic plan, are stated as general objectives to allow for adaptability, and are measurable. The plan objectives give direction and focus in interpretive activities.



1. Enhancement of visitor experience
  - a. Engagement opportunities
  - b. Educational experiences

2. Enhancement of collection and historical resources
  - a. Artifacts
  - b. Information
3. Increased community support
  - a. Manpower/volunteer resources
  - b. Financial donations
4. Civic engagement and partnerships

## II. THEMATIC FOCUS



Thematic emphasis provides historic and cultural context that imparts meaning and defines the relationship of Birmingham's stories to the larger picture of American history. Many themes can be applied to historic sites and objects, but visitor experience is enhanced when conceptual ideas are prioritized into key focus areas that organize interpretive content into easy to understand patterns. The themes and sub-themes with the greatest value for conveying Birmingham's place in the larger society are listed below in chronological, not preferential, order. They span the period before settlement up to recent history, affording numerous opportunities to tell stories from varying points of view.

1. Pioneer settlement of Oakland County
  - a. War of 1812
  - b. Early settlers and community
  - c. Early territorial environment
    - i. Saginaw Trail
    - ii. Rouge River/Landscape
    - iii. Native American occupation and relationships with settlers
  - d. Building technology of the period
  - e. Greenwood Cemetery and its founding
2. Civil War period in local life
3. Building of Birmingham
  - a. Agricultural
  - b. Commercial
  - c. Government/Civic
4. Early 19th to 20th century culture in everyday life
  - a. Foodways
  - b. Roles of men, women, and children
5. Preservation/conservation movement of the 1960s/1970s; how a community's needs change over time



### III. CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

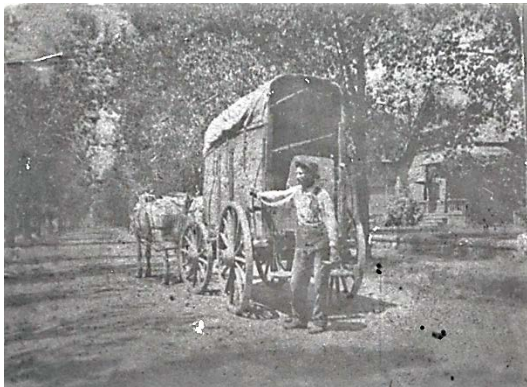
This component of the plan addresses the major physical objects and the primary stories associated with them to build a conceptual timeline for virtual and site visitors. It is the framework that will tie the physical space and museum artifacts to the themes that have been identified, bringing them down to earth and making them tangible for a better experience by visitors of all ages. The Hunter House Interpretive Plan primarily emphasize the historic and cultural resources in the Birmingham Museum collection, although borrowing objects from other institutions or utilizing public domain content may be used to support or strengthen items interpreted from the museum collection.



1. Building and Site
  - a. Interior
    - i. Heritage room for visual 'scrapbook timeline' and display case; other rooms interpreted functionally
    - ii. Wall exposure window
    - iii. Birmingham-related objects and artifacts whenever possible, with other furnishings as support for period interpretation
  - b. Exterior
    - i. Building/architectural history
    - ii. Site history, Allen Play House
2. Artifacts and Objects specific to historic people-displayed and directly interpreted by docents (minimal labels, use of literature and/or QR coding)
  - a. Hunter-sleigh bells, white pine slab
  - b. Hamilton-folding fork and knife
  - c. Swan desk (to replace existing secretary)
  - d. Raynale portrait
  - e. Randall portrait
  - f. Fouracre oil lamp
  - g. Clizbe Melodion
  - h. Period garments, household items, and furnishings from collection as needed to support thematic objectives
3. Collection photos/maps/architectural drawings/illustrations for virtual and physical literature and displays
  - a. Building
  - b. Site
  - c. People (see list below)

4. Other illustrations not in collection
  - a. First surveyor and original parcel maps and documents
  - b. Museum-generated illustrations and maps
  - c. Period illustrations
5. Priority stories/people
  - a. Hunter/Willits/Hamilton families (various)
  - b. Imri Fish, Ziba Swan and the Utter murders; the Fish family, Greenwood Cemetery
  - c. Ebenezer Raynale, early Birmingham, pioneer communities and roles
  - d. Henry Randall, the Civil War and post-war Birmingham, moving the Hunter House
  - e. The Fouracres-Alice, Albert, Edna; the Titanic, DUR, Spanish flu
  - f. Wallace Frost at Hunter House
  - g. Rosemary Barnhardt, Great Depression and rental period
  - h. Flacks and the preservation of the Hunter House

#### IV. STORY-BASED METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION



As the Birmingham Museum audience ranges widely in age, interest, and preferred experience format (e.g., virtual or physical experience), offering a variety of interpretive approaches will best meet their needs in telling our stories. These options can be adapted for availability of resources (such as personnel) as appropriate and as conditions allow. In some cases, interpretive content may be made available indirectly through literature or self-experiences, while in others it can be provided directly through personal interaction. Interpretive methods can also be utilized

on or off site, and presented virtually or in person. Story telling opportunities, technologies and resources are anticipated to change rapidly in the future, so methods of implementation need to remain flexible to be successful.

1. Direct Interpretation Opportunities
  - a. Exhibits and displays (on and off site)
    - i. Municipal Building, other city facilities
    - ii. other institutions or pop-ups (ex: YMCA, post office; Harry Allen Room/Idealab at Baldwin Library; storefronts with a 'traveling exhibit;' display during election; etc)
  - b. Guided and self-guided tours (on and off site)
    - i. Hunter House, Greenwood guided and self-guided tours
    - ii. Themed and ticketed specialty tours of the Hunter House

- c. Lectures and presentations, including conference/joint presentations as appropriate
  - d. Interactive programs and activities
  - e. Site events and participation at local community events as appropriate
  - f. Exterior signage (Hunter House porch) with site information such as QR code to online exhibits/maps/brochures (future apps) for afterhours visitors, to be coordinated with overall site
- 2. Print Publication Options
  - a. Handouts/brochures of details about Hunter House historic resources (ex: can be provided/recycled at end of tours)
  - b. Short booklets, printed/self-published
  - a. Print media (history magazines, etc.)
- 3. Virtual/Electronic Content Options
  - a. Brief video and/or audio presentations
  - b. Electronic articles and photos
  - c. Website
  - d. eNewsletters
  - e. Online local media/newspapers
  - f. Electronic exhibits (links, QR, apps, etc.)
- 4. Social Media/Interactive
  - g. Facebook
  - h. Instagram
  - i. Twitter and other social media platforms as appropriate

## PLAN REVIEW

As a flexible plan document, the Hunter House Interpretive Plan will ideally change with changing conditions, new approaches, enlargement of the collection and new knowledge that becomes available about Birmingham's story and the larger culture.

As interpretation is an integral part of museum planning and operations, regular discussion of interpretive activities will be addressed on a monthly basis at public Museum Board meetings, with a verbal report by the Museum Director to the Museum Board on an annual basis. A written report and review of the Hunter House Interpretive Plan document will take place on a three year cycle in accordance with the review of the Birmingham Museum Strategic Plan. Through these mechanisms, the public may participate in discussions of the plan on both an informal and formal basis. In addition, input and feedback from visitors is welcome as part of ongoing operations at the museum.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

American Alliance of Museums, "Interpretive Planning," <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/resource-library/education-and-interpretation-2/interpretive-planning/>

American Association for State and Local History, *National Visitation Report (November, 2019)*. <https://learn.aaslh.org/national-visitation-report>.

National Association for Interpretation, *Interpretation Standards: A Pathway Towards Excellence*, <https://interpretationstandards.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/standards-2018.pdf>

National Park Service, *Comprehensive Interpretive Planning*, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/upload/cip-guideline.pdf>





INTERPRETIVE PLANNING TOOLS FOR

*Heritage Areas,  
Historic Trails  
and Gateways*







### Before We Begin

#### What is Interpretation?

- Interpretation is communication that is specifically designed to reveal underlying meaning to the visitor through first-hand involvement with an object, a landscape, a natural feature, or a site.
- Interpretation helps people to connect intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually with the ideas, beliefs, and values embodied in our world.
- Interpretation is based on facts, but reveals what an object, place, feature or event means and why it matters – why it is relevant.

This example illustrates the difference between fact, meaning, and relevance:

**Fact:** This Remington Standard typewriter, Model 8, was manufactured by Wycoff, Seamans and Benedict. First introduced in October 1897, it features a 9.25" platen length, and 42 keys.



**What it means:** The invention of typewriters like this Remington Standard Model 8 advanced the cause of women's rights movement by creating positions for women in the workplace.

**Why it matters:** The typewriter demonstrates the far-reaching impacts that changing technology can have on society.

#### Tilden's principles of interpretation

– Freeman Tilden, a pioneer in interpretation, identified principles for interpretation in the 1950s that still resonate. Reduced to their essence, Tilden's principles state that interpretation should accomplish the following goals:

- Relate to the experience of the visitor
- Reveal as well as inform
- Provoke as well as instruct
- Address the whole, not just the part.



Tilden's *Interpreting Our Heritage* (1957) is a good reference for novice and veteran interpreters.  
[www.naimembers.com](http://www.naimembers.com)



#### What is an Interpretive Plan?

An interpretive plan is a management document that outlines and guides decisions about a site's or region's interpretive programming. It is created through a collaborative process involving **management**, **interpretive specialists**, **subject matter experts**, and **stakeholders** (community members who have a personal, economic or political stake in the project). The useful lifetime of an interpretive plan is about ten years, but it should be updated as necessary. There is no single template for an effective plan, but it typically includes two parts: a foundation and an action plan.

**Foundation** – The foundation provides the conceptual framework for the plan. It includes the following:

- **Significance statements** describing the national, state, and/or local significance of a region or site
- **Interpretive themes** that identify and organize the site's or region's most important stories
- An **audience analysis** identifying existing and targeted audiences, and specific needs associated with each group
- **Visitor experience objectives** outlining the ways various audiences may connect with the stories and resources of the site or region

**Action Plan** – The action plan describes how to implement the interpretive plan. It includes the following:

- **Necessary actions** listed in priority order
- **Decisions** regarding where and how interpretive themes can best be conveyed to visitors
- **Evaluation strategies** for assessing interpretive programming, and deciding whether adjustments are needed

## PART 2 *Preparing to Plan*

- While planning is often driven by a trail, heritage area, byway or corridor designation, implementation is often the responsibility of individual sites and organizations within the region. Partner sites and organizations need to be involved in every stage of development and they need to feel they will benefit from development of a regional plan.
- Each geographic area and site within the plan must be properly and fairly represented.

### Benefits of Interpretive Planning

Taking the time to plan pays off in the future. This first tool will help you determine if an interpretive plan is needed. If a plan is needed, this tool helps identify and organize the reasons you need a plan. Refer to **Tool #1, Do you need an interpretive plan?**



### Tool #1, Do you need an interpretive plan?

Check all boxes that describe current needs.

We need:

- ☐ To identify or clarify our main stories
- ☐ To tell our stories more effectively
- ☐ To identify gaps in existing programming and products
- ☐ To learn more about our existing audience(s)
- ☐ To seek new audiences
- ☐ To help our audiences form strong connections to the place and its stories
- ☐ To work more effectively with other sites, communities, partners or divisions
- ☐ To support marketing efforts
- ☐ To support resource management goals
- ☐ To identify common goals, outcomes and principles that apply across the region
- ☐ To establish priorities
- ☐ To demonstrate initiative and preparedness to potential funders
- ☐ To help sites work together to leverage resources and generate new audiences

If you checked three or more boxes, you need an interpretive plan.

### Overview of the Interpretive Planning Process

There are eight main steps to creating an interpretive plan. The steps occur in sequence and build upon each other. Although some steps may overlap in part, others, like Step 3, “Engage the public,” continue throughout the process. The steps are:

1. Create the team.
2. Lay the groundwork.
3. Engage the public.
4. Develop interpretive themes and messages.
5. Assess and target audiences.
6. Develop visitor experience objectives.
7. Create an implementation plan.
8. Implement, evaluate, adjust, and celebrate.

#### **Overview of the Interpretive Planning Process –**

The chart (*following page*) summarizes the planning steps, including who is involved and what is accomplished during each step. Each of the steps is discussed in greater detail in [Part 3](#) of the toolkit.





## Director Report

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**DATE:** July 6, 2023  
**TO:** Museum Board  
**FROM:** Leslie Pielack, Museum Director  
**SUBJECT:** Director Report

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Allen House Reopened—We've had steady visitors to our exhibit since we reopened in June. The average length of time people are staying is around 1 hour, as they are taking more time than usual to experience our content and ask questions.

Allen House Windows, Phase II—We are waiting for the actual windows to be cleaned and reassembled for reinstallation in the next month or so. The final phase of storm windows will be installed in September or October.

Podcast—"Birmingham, Uncovered" has now launched four episodes and continues to get regular downloads and attention on social media. Caitlin is finding her rhythm and we are happy to report growing interest in the episodes. So far, all episodes relate to the earlier settlement period in Birmingham, but Caitlin has plans to tell more stories from later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century soon.

Juneteenth—Our City Hall exhibit was well received and an article in Metromode about the UGRR in Greenwood (featuring George Getschman and Donna Casaceli) was also popular on their social media.

Greenwood Cemetery Preservation—Elijah Fish's headstone has been repaired and cleaned. Due to a high degree of deterioration, a section of the stone had to be removed to reattach and properly install the stone back in its original base. The Fish family has been apprised and has also agreed to our placing an interpretive sign on his gravesite in the future—TBD.

Yearbook Digitization—The museum has completed the sorting phase of the deaccession project and is preparing to digitize the available yearbooks for online access. This will take some time yet, but the goal is to share the digitized and searchable materials with the public. Updates to come.

UGRR in Oakland County: The museum-led project has begun to narrow down a selection of individuals who were freedom seekers as well as abolitionists or those who engaged in anti-slavery activities. Some eye-opening stories have emerged, and will be included in some of the second phase grant application.

Presentations at Baldwin Library to Continue in 23-24—We are coordinating our themes with the national heritage months as much as possible to continue to tell our local stories through the Baldwin Library lecture series. Because of Baldwin Library's construction, the programs will be remote/video/Zoom-based. (See attached schedule.)







## 2023-2024 Birmingham Museum Lecture Series at Baldwin Library

Six presentations that reflect a Birmingham/local history perspective on several national heritage month themes that are integral to our ongoing exhibit, A Tapestry of Birmingham. All will be presented remotely due to ongoing construction at the Baldwin Public Library.

### September 14, 2023 (*International Underground Railroad Month in Michigan*)

**Who Knew? The Underground Railroad in Our Back Yard**--The Birmingham Museum has been heading up a grant-funded effort to study the Underground Railroad in Oakland County. Join Leslie Pielack in a discussion of the recent findings about the anti-slavery movement and freedom seekers in Oakland County.

### October 12 (*Hispanic Heritage Month*)

**Carlos Lopez: The Painter Behind the Controversy**—Carlos Lopez was a gifted and well-known muralist whose work was highly esteemed when he was commissioned in 1942 to paint a federally funded mural in Birmingham's new Post Office, and encountered surprising criticism of the final work. Join Donna Casaceli in exploring the life and works of Carlos Lopez and the story of the Birmingham Post Office mural.

### November 9

**Birmingham's Washington Willits and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Mental Health Treatment**—In 1850, the son of one of the founding families of Birmingham was noted as "deranged" on the census, later dying tragically after discharge from a mental asylum in New York. Caitlin Donnelly will explore what Willits' story tells us about the understanding and treatment of mental illness at the time.

### January 11

**A Shifting Landscape: How Immigration Shaped Birmingham**—How was Birmingham affected by the waves of immigration to the U.S. over the last two hundred years? Who were the groups who gravitated toward Birmingham, and why? Justin Koch will give a closer look at how Birmingham was shaped within the larger national context of immigration.

### February 8 (*Black History Month*)

**The Civil Rights Movement in the 1970s and Birmingham's CREEM Magazine**—Prison uprisings, drug culture, "porn rock," moral panic, and "Boy, Howdy!"...The struggle for civil rights influenced the music of the times, and "America's only Rock'n'Roll Magazine," *CREEM*, was there to cover it. Learn more about how the magazine, published here from 1973-1986, examined the intersection of race, class, and music during the period.

### March 14 (*Women's History Month*)

**The Prindle Sisters: Birmingham's Pioneer Women**-- They came as brides to the unknown frontier of Oakland County wilderness after the War of 1812, bringing little else but each other. Join Donna Casaceli us to learn about how these pioneer women faced many hardships to build early Birmingham.