

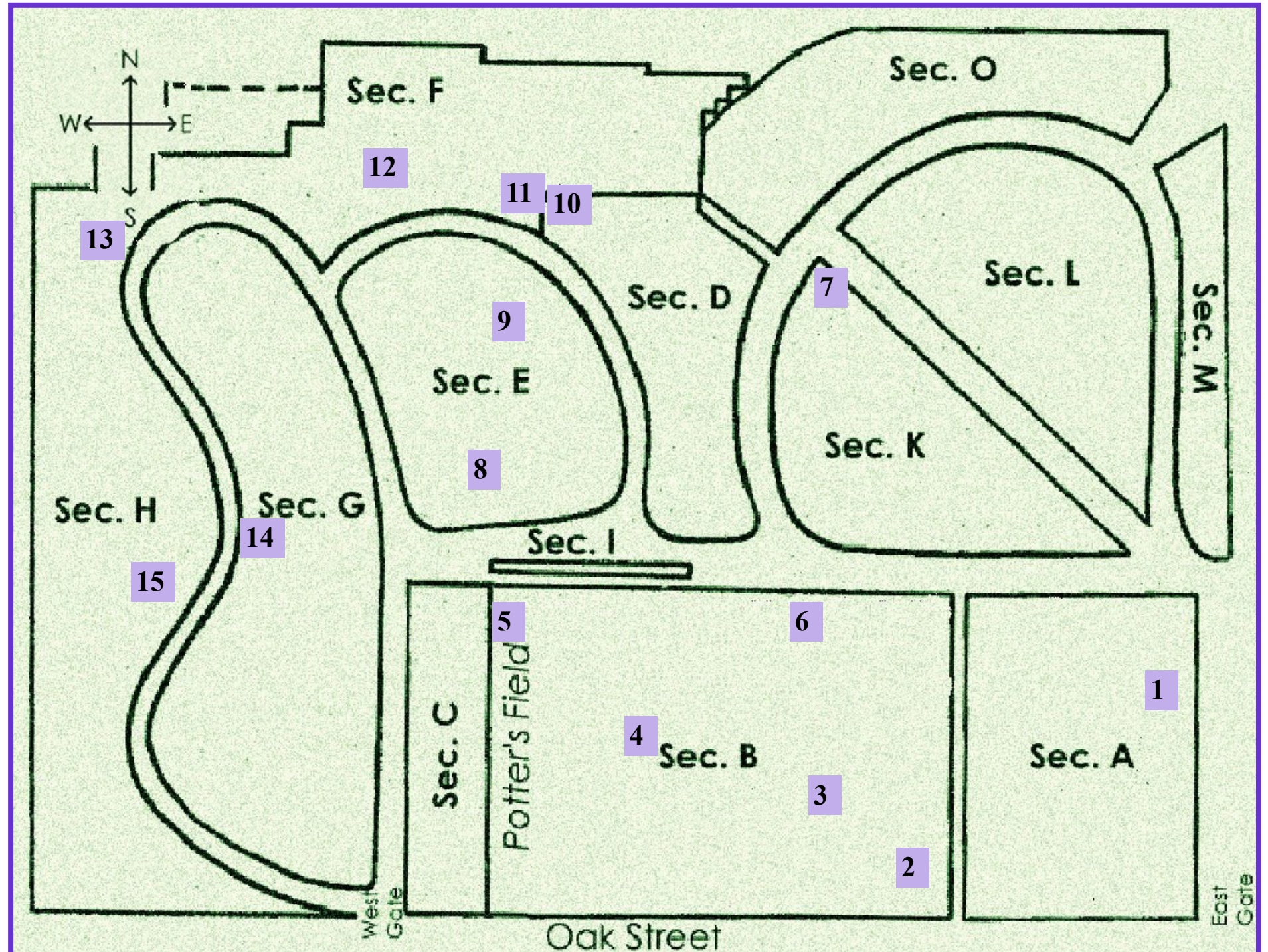
## GREENWOOD CEMETERY

is one of the oldest public cemeteries in Michigan, founded in the wake of the terrible Utter murders in 1825. Initially, the cemetery consisted of 1/2 acre donated by Dr. Ziba Swan (Section A). The cemetery was enlarged in 1846 by another 1 1/2 acres, and twice more before 1904, enlarging it to about eight acres. It was cared for by private citizens until Martha Baldwin organized a group in 1885 that became the Greenwood Cemetery Association. In 1946, the City of Birmingham took over its operation.

Many stories survive (and more are discovered every day) of the fascinating men and women who are buried here. Those mentioned in this self-guided tour brochure, "**19th Century Community Builders**" are but a few of many. Two other brochures, "**Birmingham's Pioneers,**" & "**20th Century Notables**" feature individuals from those periods.

The **Friends of the Birmingham Museum** conduct guided cemetery tours twice yearly, and also offer special private tours. For more information, contact the Birmingham Museum at **248-530-1928** or [museum@bhamgov.org](mailto:museum@bhamgov.org).

The cemetery is open dawn to dusk and is located on Oak Street west of N. Old Woodward.

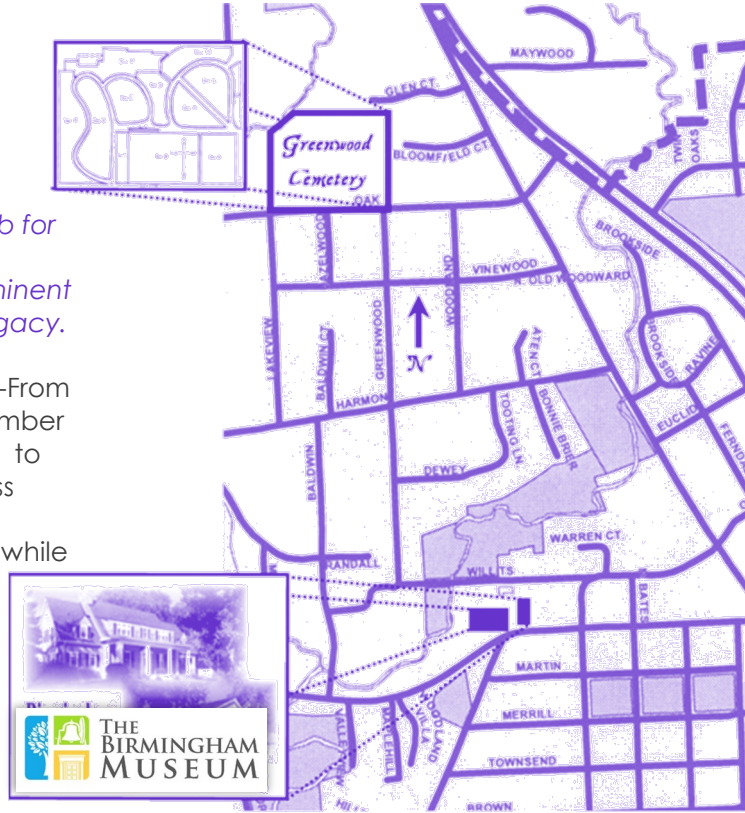




## 19th Century Community Builders

The 19th century was a time of steady growth in Oakland County, as early settlement gave way to established agricultural and industry enterprises. Birmingham became an economic hub for the surrounding area, leading to its commercial and cultural success. Prominent families intermarried, continuing the legacy.

1. **TROWBRIDGE, Rowland E.** [1822-1881]--From early Michigan's influential family; member of the new Republican party, elected to state senate (1857-1860); U.S. Congress (1861-63 and 65-67). Son **Stephen VR** (Younger) [1855-1891] died at age 36 while in office as state's Attorney General.
2. **BLAKESLEE, George** [1804-1881] & **Ann Benedict**--Self-made man; left family farm for Detroit as a boy; worked on steamship; became carpenter and joiner; supervised construction of first Birmingham waterworks; held village & township offices; state legislator; freemason; prominent family legacy here.
3. **BALDWIN, Martha** [1840-1913]--Educator, suffragist, and community activist; named to Michigan Women's Hall of Fame; founded first library in town, Oakland County Equal Suffrage Association, Village Improvement Society & Greenwood Cemetery Association; championed public health and village's waterworks; financially supported talented students from town to attend college; provided in will for first public high school; never married.
4. **MERRILL, Roswell T.** [1804-1892]--Settled here in 1832; Justice of the Peace; bought John West Hunter's foundry and established a machine shop and mill; mercantile interests; platted village and reportedly gave it its name; built first brick store; charter member of Masonic Lodge.



5. **IRVING, Hugh** [1815-1900]--Born in Ireland, married wife **Hannah** [1815-1885] in England, came to Birmingham in 1849 with son **William** [1843-1864] and 2 other children and had five more here; a metalsmith who became a hardware merchant; went to Spotsylvania PA for William's remains after the Civil War battle to bury him at Greenwood; organized the building of the Civil War memorial (in Shain Park); 2nd wife (Emily) Fanny Fish [1829-1905] daughter of Elijah Fish (buried Woodmere-Det).
6. **HANNA, Robert (Sr.)** [1815-1899] & **Isabelle McBride** [1816-1908]--Migrated from Ireland in 1858 with ten children; had two more here. Extended family had enterprises in Birmingham (farming and meat market) & Royal Oak. Children intermarried with local families, e.g., son John m. Blanche Peabody (family plot Section K), daughter of Lyman Peabody (#7).

7. **PEABODY, Lyman** [1836-1911] & **Sarah Foster** [1836-1917]--Came from New York with brother James {see # 12} about 1870; invested in/grew grocery/dry goods business; son **J. Bert** [1867-1953] m. **Alta Ford** [1871-1954]; lived in the Ford-Peabody House (gift of father Frank T. Ford).
8. **RANDALL, Henry** [1840-1903] & **Martha Brown** [1843-1914]--Freemason; Justice of the Peace; Civil War veteran (Iron Brigade, Mich 24th Inf); wounded at Gettysburg; moved/renovated John West Hunter House in 1893 (now at museum.)
9. **HARRIS, Abigail Farmer** [1869-1903] & **Abe** [1863-1950]--Joined two important local families of color; daughter Lulu Mae grew up/raised family in Birmingham; only Black family for decades; Abe never remarried; was well known in town.
10. **MITCHELL, George H.** [1854-1929]--Born in Birmingham; numerous roles in early village life & businesses with partner Almeron Whitehead (#11); U.S. postmaster; printer/publisher/editor of *Birmingham Eccentric* newspaper; village trustee.
11. **WHITEHEAD, Almeron H.** [1851-1926]--born on Waterford farm; sister Isabel m. John Bigelow (#15); worked as clerk in Bigelow's store & later part owner; partnered with George Mitchell (#10) in grocer/dry goods, real estate, first bank in Birmingham, early telephone service & *Birmingham Eccentric* newspaper.
12. **PEABODY, James** [1839-1893]--Came from New York with brother L. B. (#7); bought 1 sq. mile farm near Gilbert Lake in 1870; raised fruit/live-stock; family had fruit/meat market on Woodward, later Peabody's Restaurant (closed 2017).
13. **MCBRIDE, James** [1826-1909]--Born in Ireland; migrated here in 1850s; Henry Benedict (#15) crushed while digging McBride's grave.
14. **BIGELOW, John Allen** [1839-1925] & **Isabel Whitehead** [1844-1925]--Civil War hero; prison escapee; stole supply train, wounded five times & arm amputated; later successful merchant; mentored Whitehead, Mitchell, & others.
15. **BENEDICT, Henry** [1845-1909]--Civil War veteran; cemetery sexton; wrote poetry inspired by his job; died after being trapped between a newly dug grave & a cement vault (see #13).

## GREENWOOD CEMETERY

EST. 1825

*Birmingham, MI*

SELF-GUIDED TOUR #2

## Nineteenth Century Community Builders



[www.bhamgov.org/museum](http://www.bhamgov.org/museum)  
556 West Maple ~ Birmingham, MI 48009  
248.530.1928