



For Immediate Release

**Contact: Leslie Pielack
(248) 530-1682**

Community Invited to Underground Railroad Commemoration Ceremony in Birmingham

Saturday, September 17, 2022 at 11 a.m.

BIRMINGHAM, MI, August 17, 2022—The City of Birmingham is proud to invite the community to an Underground Railroad Commemoration Ceremony on Saturday, September 17, 2022 at 11 a.m. at **Quarton Lake Park**. This historic event will formally acknowledge the National Park Service's recognition of the Greenwood Cemetery gravesites of abolitionist Elijah S. Fish and freedom seeker George B. Taylor on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

A brief ceremony will take place at 11 a.m. at the north end of **Quarton Lake Park** (the corner of Oak and Lakeside), just one block from Greenwood Cemetery. A tour of the gravesites will take place immediately following the program. Ceremony attendees will include city officials and staff, local historians, state representatives and descendants of George Taylor who will travel from around the country to speak during the event.

"This event has become much bigger than we imagined and we hope the community will attend to show their appreciation and support for this designation and the lives of these extraordinary men," said Birmingham Museum Director Leslie Pielack.

Pielack applied for this national designation after the stories of Fish and Taylor were uncovered late last year. "It was a team approach. Museum staff members and local historians worked hard to uncover the incredible stories of Fish and Taylor," said Pielack. "We are excited to see them recognized nationally, and to shed light on their truly remarkable lives."

Pielack details how researchers discovered one clue at a time, working backward in time to put the pieces together. Birmingham settler Fish established the first local Presbyterian Church in his barn, and helped found the Oakland County Anti-Slavery Society in 1836, before the State of Michigan organized its society. He worked all his life to help freedom seekers escape enslavement, and provided money and supplies to help them reach freedom.

George Taylor's life was very different. Following a public whipping in Kentucky, he escaped enslavement with a grueling journey to Michigan by nightfall and on foot. During his flight, he was briefly captured and held prisoner, shot at, and nearly died from hunger and exposure. Taylor and his wife, Eliza, later became the first African Americans to own property in Birmingham in the late 19th century.

"The freedom seekers and allies highlighted in each Network to Freedom listing remind us of what can be accomplished when people take action against injustice," said National Program Manager of the Network to Freedom, Diane Miller. "Each listing holds a unique part of the Underground Railroad story."

Learn more about the Underground Railroad Commemoration Ceremony at www.bhamgov.org/undergroundrailroad.

*The Birmingham Museum is currently open to the public **Tuesday-Friday, 1 to 4 PM**, and by appointment. The museum also provides online content and educational materials about Birmingham's story. We also feature regular social media posts and videos on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/TheBirminghamMuseum/>) and Twitter (https://twitter.com/bham_museum). More video content on our current exhibit, lectures on historic Birmingham, and educational video shorts for adults and children can be found on our YouTube channel at https://www.bhamgov.org/history/museum/lecture_presentation_videos.php Want to know more about us? Check us out at www.bhamgov.org/museum. Or contact us by phone at **248-530-1928**.*