

Elizabeth Hamer (c.1824–1913) and Henry Hamer (c.1816–1899)

Life in Kentucky

Elizabeth and Henry Hamer were enslaved in Kentucky. They both worked in the house and businesses of Henry Bruce, Jr. They were trusted by their enslaver.

A Journey to Freedom

In August 1856, Elizabeth and Henry escaped from slavery. They crossed the Ohio River from Covington, Kentucky, to Cincinnati, Ohio. Cincinnati was known for helping people escape slavery. Even though the journey was dangerous, they made it safely to Windsor, Ontario, after a few weeks. In March 1857, Elizabeth had their son Charles in Canada. Their escape was motivated by wanting a better life for their family.

Life in Royal Oak Township

By 1860, Elizabeth and Henry were living in Royal Oak Township, which is now the City of Royal Oak. They worked hard and saved enough money to buy five acres of land. Henry worked on farms, and Elizabeth took care of the house and helped deliver babies as a midwife. They were loved by their community. Today, some of their descendants still live on part of the land they bought in Royal Oak.

Their Legacy

Elizabeth and Henry Hamer's journey from slavery to freedom shows their strength and determination to build a better life. Their story reminds us of the bravery it took for African Americans to escape slavery and start new lives.

Learn More!

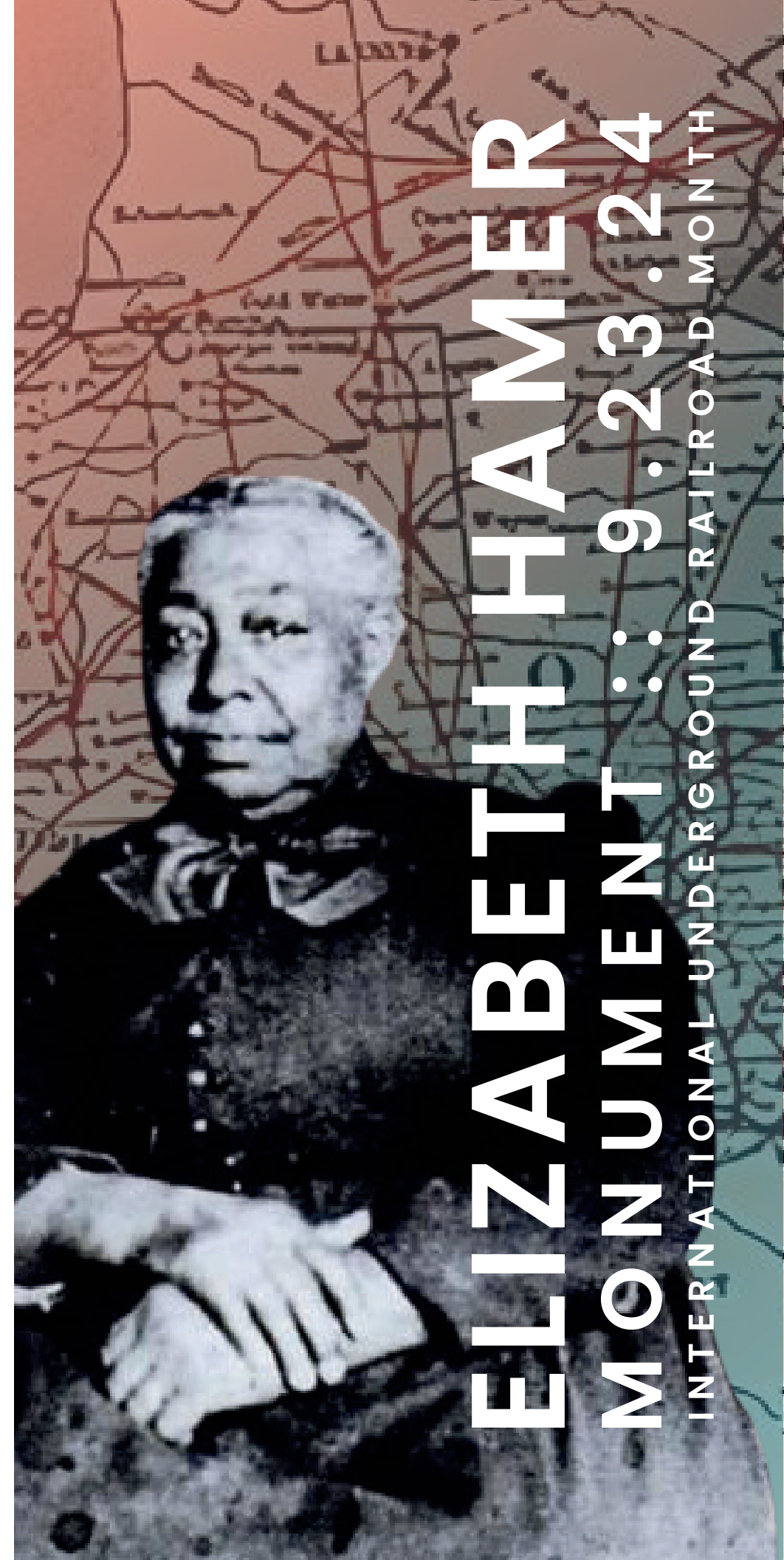
Learn more about Elizabeth and Henry Hamer at the Royal Oak Historical Society Museum.

1411 W. Webster Rd.
Royal Oak, MI 48073
248-439-1501
royaloakhistoricalsociety.org

The museum is open:
Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
1 - 4 p.m.



Today, some of the Hamer descendants, like activist Lakeesha Morrison (shown on left), still live on part of the land Henry and Elizabeth bought in Royal Oak more than 160 years ago!



1

FARM



Photo of Elizabeth Hamer with two of her children

WEBSTER



Museum



Listen to Hamer descendent Edna Finch talk about her grandparents.



Northwood Elementary



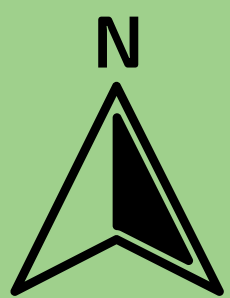
2

MAIN ST

12 MILE

3

ROYAL OAK CEMETERY



PLACES TO VISIT

1. Location of the Hamer Farm
2. Location of the Elizabeth Hamer Monument
3. Elizabeth, Henry, and their six children are buried in their family plot in Royal Oak Cemetery

Elizabeth and Henry Hamer have been nationally recognized, honored, and verified as freedom-seekers by the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. Their story illustrates that all humankind embraces the right to self-determination and freedom from oppression. They are buried along with their descendants in the Royal Oak Cemetery, located at 12 Mile and Main St..



NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NETWORK TO FREEDOM

CROOKS



Did you know?

September was picked for International Underground Railroad Month because two famous freedom seekers, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, escaped from slavery during this month..