



News Release

CITY CEMETERY TO UNVEIL MONUMENT FOR 500 UNMARKED GRAVESITES

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO THE PUBLIC CEREMONY ON MONDAY MORNING

Gallatin, Tenn. – The City of Gallatin will unveil a monument to honor more than 500 unmarked graves at the Gallatin City Cemetery that were identified by ground penetrating radar. Established in 1814, the Gallatin City Cemetery was segregated, and Black residents were buried in the back of the property. Most burials at that time were marked with a stone or wood object with no inscriptions.

On Monday, October 30 at 9:30 a.m., members of the community are invited to unveil the monument. Gallatin Mayor Paige Brown and local historians will briefly speak at the ceremony. “This speaks volumes about who we are as residents of Gallatin,” Gallatin Mayor Paige Brown said. “It’s so much more than a grave site, and we’re really just getting started in what can be done out there.”

The top of the monument is marked with a star from the Juneteenth flag, recognizing that many of the African Americans buried in the back section of the cemetery were slaves. “There were definitely ex-slaves buried back there, and I am just thrilled that we are recognizing them,” Local Historian Velma Brinkley said. “Though we don’t know their names, we do know they are known to their creator.”

The inscription on the monument reads as follows:

Resting in Peace

Known only to God.

We dedicate this monument with highest regard.

This monument is erected on behalf of more than 500 African Americans buried here.

May they find eternal peace.

Five years ago, Volunteer State Bank announced a \$15,000 gift to be used specifically to improve the African American section of the cemetery. Most of that funding was used for the ground-penetrating radar services that detected and GPS-marked more than 500 unmarked graves on the site. Leftover funds combined with funds from Sumner Funeral and Cremation and the City of Gallatin paid for the monument project.

“I think it’s a wonderful thing and long overdue to honor those sainted people,” said Ken Thomson, President of the Sumner County Historical Society. “The City Cemetery contains the history of Gallatin, and it’s up to us to preserve that history.”

The Friends of the Gallatin City Cemetery is a group of volunteers committed to maintaining and restoring the historic cemetery. The group frequently holds fundraisers and cleanup events. For more information on Gallatin City Cemetery initiatives, please contact Jeff Hentschel in the Office of the Mayor at 615-451-5961.

Photo – Monument before installation at Hunt Memorials

Video – Ground Penetrating Radar at City Cemetery

<https://youtu.be/x1S27FZT1tw?si=Kx71olfDWNOcNdKr>