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PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oberlin Hosts Free Performance and Discussion of Northeast Ohio's *Last Fugitive Slave*

On the eve of the Civil War, the eyes of the Nation were on Northeast Ohio. In 1860, Sara Lucy Bagby, a runaway slave, had escaped from her Southern 'owner' and made her way North on the Underground Railroad, finding work in Cleveland. In January of 1861, not long after arriving, she was arrested and tried under the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, amidst protests from antislavery activists, many from nearby Oberlin (a hotbed of abolitionism at the time). Hoping to avoid being the 'last straw' for Southern secessionists, the Cleveland courts were forced to return Lucy to her 'owner' in Wheeling, Virginia. Soon after her return, however, the first shots of the Civil War were fired. Sara Lucy Bagby was one of the last people to be tried under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

The Last Fugitive Slave, the incredible, true story from our nation's Underground Railroad past, will be presented by the Cleveland-area nonprofit *Kulture Kids* in a FREE, community performance and panel discussion on **Wednesday, November 30th at 7:00PM** at The Meeting House of First Church in Oberlin UCC. *Kulture Kids'* Artistic Director, Robin Pease, portrays Lucy, while community volunteers read the roles of the judge, Lucy's 'owner,' abolitionists and others involved in her story. The audience is invited to join in singing along to spirituals of the time and participating in the story through call and response.

The panel discussion will dig deeper into Lucy's story and her struggle for freedom, as well as our region's struggle to carry out justice, then and now.

In the weeks leading up to the community performance, inschool performances and workshops will be provided in the Oberlin and Midview schools to further engage students and their community in this critical, but littleknown, piece of our national and local history. Additionally, First Church in Oberlin UCC will provide a community meal prior to the community performance at 5:45PM on November 30th in their Fellowship Hall. Cost for the meal is \$3/adult and students are free. Meals can be paid for at the door.

The community performance and discussion are presented in partnership with the Oberlin Heritage Center and The First Church in Oberlin UCC, and the program is funded, in part, through a grant from the Ohio Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts.

For more about *Kulture Kids*, visit www.kulturekids.org.

For more about the Oberlin Heritage Center, visit www.oberlinheritagecenter.org.

For more about The First Church in Oberlin, UCC, visit www.firstchurchoberlin.org.

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