

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**PROCLAMATION**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: Arkansas played a key role in the rich history of the Underground Railroad, a network of individuals who worked together to hide, transport, and protect freedom seekers on their journey north; and

WHEREAS: The Underground Railroad played a significant role in the elimination of slavery in the United States and helped lay the foundation for future Civil Rights movements; and

WHEREAS: In appreciation of the courageous efforts of the people who traveled the Underground Railroad and looked to Arkansas as a gateway to freedom, as they have served as inspiration to many generations of American citizens; and

WHEREAS: The State of Arkansas seeks to recognize the inspiring efforts of Arkansans and people from around the world who have committed themselves to documenting and sharing the Underground Railroad story through the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom; and

WHEREAS: The story of one Arkansan, Nelson Hackett, exhibits the long and brutal reach of the institution of slavery and the bravery necessary to escape it; and

WHEREAS: In July 1841, Nelson Hackett fled from enslavement in Washington County and was pursued until he crossed the frontier border into Ontario, Canada, six weeks later; and

WHEREAS: Hackett's desperate bid for freedom was short lived. Hackett's pursuers petitioned Canadian authorities to return him to Arkansas. On the night of February 7, 1842, Hackett was bound and spirited back across the border; and

WHEREAS: Hackett's extradition provoked a furor in Canada, as many abolitionists feared that Hackett's case would set a devastating precedent; and

WHEREAS: Popular pressure from Canadian and American abolitionists resulted, in part, in the addition of Article 10 into the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, signed on August 9, 1842, which carefully limited extradition to criminals, thus protecting fugitive enslaved people from automatic surrender to their pursuers; and

WHEREAS: The story of Nelson Hackett and an untold multitude of lesser-known stories of freedom seekers, remind us of the daringness and bravery needed to seek freedom.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim September 2021, as

**INTERNATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD MONTH**

across the State, and I urge all citizens to study our state's history and learn from the examples of Nelson Hackett, all freedom seekers, and the unknown number of other common citizens who assisted and protected them on their way to a free life.

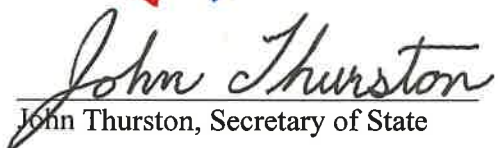
IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 20<sup>th</sup> day of August, in the year of our Lord 2021.



Asa Hutchinson, Governor



Att



John Thurston  
John Thurston, Secretary of State