



THE LEWIS

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**THE REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM PRESENTS BEAR ME INTO FREEDOM:
FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AMERICA'S PROMISE**

**Limited-engagement immersive film experience explores the life and legacy of
Maryland-born Frederick Douglass during America 250**

BALTIMORE, MD –July 1, 2026– This July, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture invites visitors to explore the extraordinary life and enduring legacy of Maryland-born abolitionist, author, orator, and statesman Frederick Douglass through **Bear Me Into Freedom: Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for America's Promise—a limited-engagement immersive film experience presented with multiple screenings from July 11 through July 20.** Developed by the Bear Me Into Freedom Collaborative in support of Maryland's America 250 observance, the production combines historical storytelling with innovative visual technology to create a unique museum experience. Screenings are held at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. The film is included with museum admission and reservations are not required.

As Maryland joins the nation in **commemorating America 250**, **Bear Me Into Freedom** chronicles Douglass' remarkable journey from enslavement in Talbot County on Maryland's Eastern Shore to becoming one of the most influential voices for abolition, emancipation, and equal rights in American history. With narration drawn primarily from Douglass' three autobiographies, the **hour-long multimedia experience** follows Douglass from his birth in Talbot County through his escape from enslavement, his rise as an internationally acclaimed writer and orator, and his lifelong advocacy for equality. The panoramic multi-screen film follows the fields, waterways, and towns that shaped his early years and places audiences alongside Douglass—not as spectators, but as companions—while inviting us to fulfill the promises of liberty and equality articulated in the Declaration of Independence.

"Frederick Douglass challenged America to live up to its highest ideals, and his words continue to resonate today," said Terri Lee Freeman, President of The Lewis Museum. "As we commemorate America 250, this immersive experience offers visitors an opportunity to reflect on Douglass' extraordinary journey and the enduring pursuit of freedom, equality, and justice that continues to shape our nation."

The project was initiated a decade ago by St. Michael's-based photographer Jeffrey C. McGuiness, who created hundreds of poetic black-and-white images to capture the specific places Douglass named in his autobiographies as well as others he described. This led to a book and exhibition at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michael's. Production on the film began five years ago with Harriette Lowery, co-founder of the Frederick Douglass Honor Society, and Lance Morris, communications coordinator with the Easton Economic Development Corporation, who provides the riveting voice of Frederick Douglass. Former Lewis Museum Board Chair W. Drew Hawkins participates by voicing the Declaration of Independence. The film also features Marshall Bailey IV, a descendant of Frederick Douglass who bears a striking resemblance to the young abolitionist. The companion book, *Bear Me Into Freedom: The Talbot County of Frederick Douglass*, published in 2022, reproduces most of the original black and white photography shown in the film. It is available for \$40 in The Lewis Museum Shop. The film trailer may be viewed on [Vimeo](#).

Bear Me Into Freedom Collaborative

The Bear Me Into Freedom Collaborative was formed by photographer Jeffrey C. McGuiness and Frederick Douglass Honor Society co-founder Harriette Lowery to explore the landscapes, lives, and ideas that shaped Frederick Douglass and invite the public into a discussion of America's promise and its unfinished work. Through storytelling, visual art, exhibitions, and education, they create experiences that connect local memory to national history, honor the voices of those who came before us, and inspire thoughtful consideration of the paths we should be treading. Learn more at www.bearmeintofreedom.com.

Special Conversation with the Creative Team

On **Saturday, July 18, following the 1 p.m. screening**, visitors are invited to stay for a special conversation exploring the creation of *Bear Me Into Freedom* and the inspiration behind the project. The conversation is included with regular museum admission.

Featured panelists include:

- Harriette Lowery, Co-Founder, Frederick Douglass Honor Society
- Jeff McGuiness, Writer and Photographer
- Lance Morris, Narrator

The conversation is included with regular museum admission.

Screening Schedule

July 11–13 and July 16–20

Screenings daily at:

- 11 a.m.
- 1 p.m.
- 3 p.m.

Admission: Included with regular museum admission.

For more information, visit www.lewismuseum.org, follow @lewismuseum on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn, or contact Crystal Turner, Director of Communications & External Relations, at crystal.turner@lewismuseum.org.

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About the Reginald F. Lewis Museum

The Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture documents, interprets, and preserves the complex experiences, contributions, and culture of Black people in Maryland. The Museum serves as a catalyst for sustained change by providing programs, exhibitions, and bold conversations that educate, challenge, and inspire.