

The Kennett UNDERGROUND RAILROAD Center



Harriet
Tubman



John &
Hannah Cox



Frederick
Douglass



Eusebius
Barnard

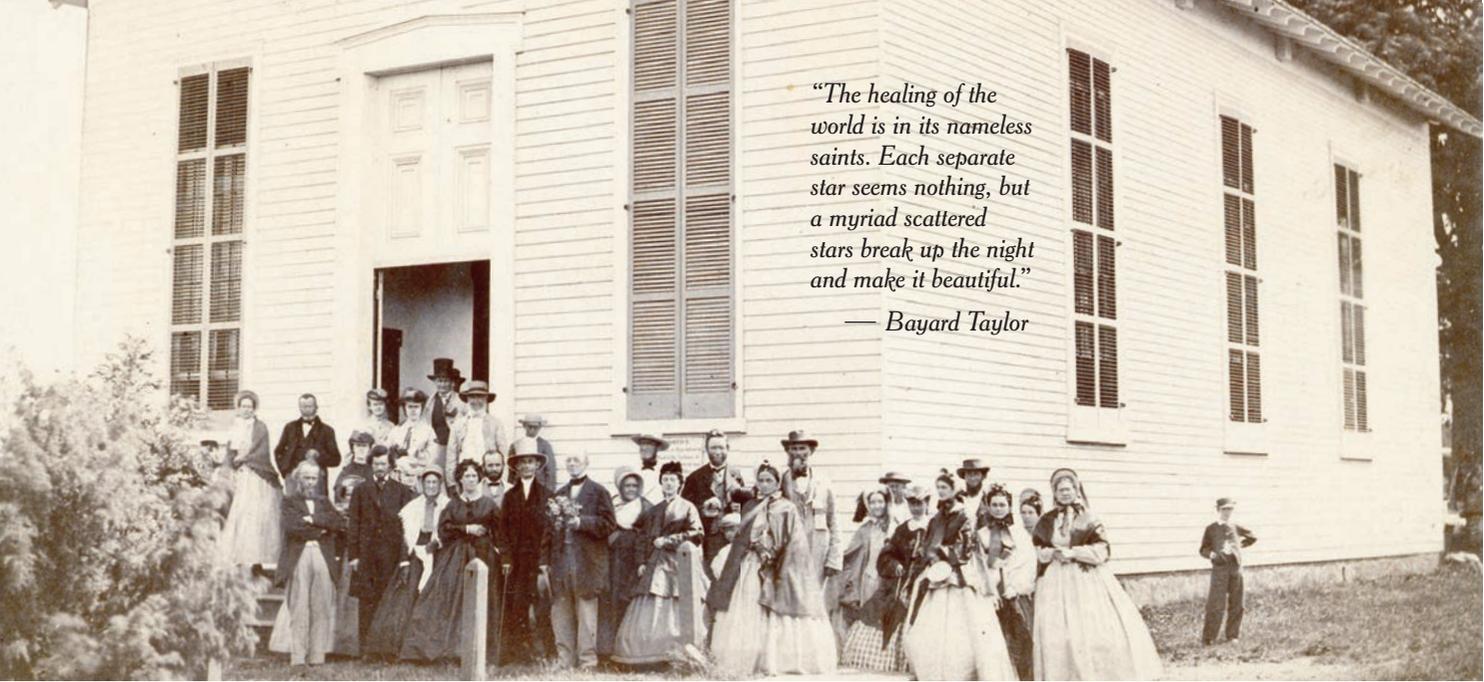


William
Still



Bartholomew
Fussell

*Explore the lives of those brave men
and women who forged a trackless trail
to freedom and, in so doing, changed the
face of this nation's history forever.*



“The healing of the world is in its nameless saints. Each separate star seems nothing, but a myriad scattered stars break up the night and make it beautiful.”

— Bayard Taylor

The Longwood Progressive Meetinghouse (above), built in 1855, is located across from the entrance gates of Longwood Gardens and currently houses the Brandywine Valley Tourism Information Center, which you are welcome to visit. Photo taken in 1865.

Welcome to the Kennett Region, a “Hotbed of Abolition”

Slavery existed in America from the earliest days of the colonies, but by the late 1600s and throughout the 1700s some colonists were protesting its cruelty. Into the 1800s the abolitionist movement was growing.

Free African Americans, Quakers, and others rallied to the cause to create networks of escape routes for increasing numbers of fugitive slaves seeking freedom. The Kennett area became one of the closest havens for those crossing the Mason-Dixon Line north into Pennsylvania.

The Underground Railroad in Chester County, Pennsylvania, maintained close relations with William Still, a conductor in Philadelphia, and Thomas Garrett, a station master in Wilmington, Delaware. Local and state anti-slavery organizations were founded in Pennsylvania, and abolitionist speakers including Frederick Douglass and Lucretia Mott campaigned tirelessly to bring an end to slavery.

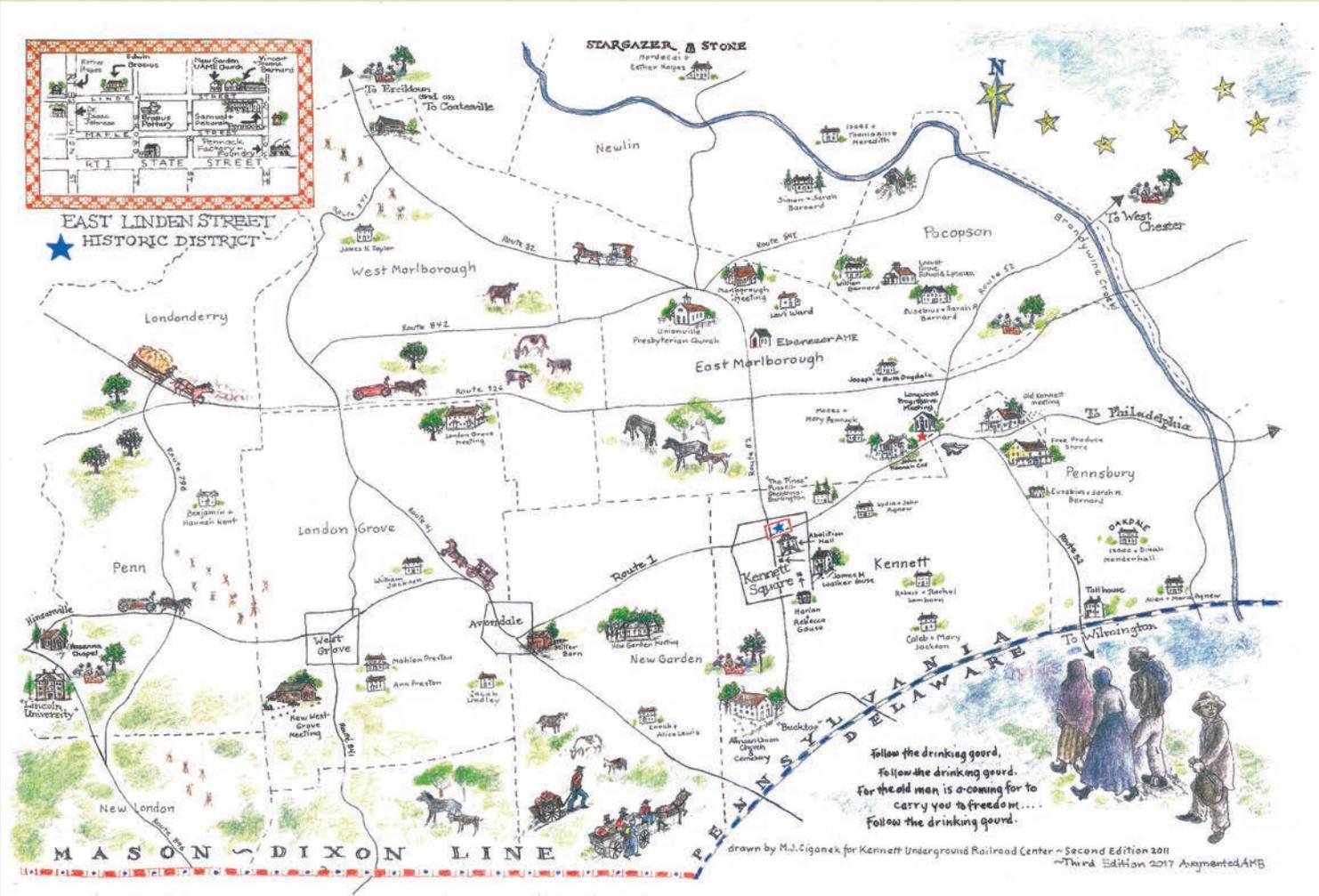
The most dangerous and heroic days began in 1850 with the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, which brought the full force of the federal government

against anyone aiding fugitives. While slave owners and slave catchers were encouraged by this new law, the abolitionists nicknamed it the “bloodhound law.” Fugitives had to travel to Canada to be secure in their liberty. Nonetheless, some remained in Chester County, trusting the support of their neighbors and local abolitionists.

All through our area there are houses still standing where “station masters” welcomed “passengers” and “conductors” along the secret, unmarked “railroad.” Near Longwood, Hannah and John Cox hosted many abolitionists of note, as well as many freedom seekers passing through. Harriet Beecher Stowe visited and is said to have based part of her book *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* on events and people in the area.

Some local people gained fame for their actions while others are scarcely known. There were hundreds more whose work went unrecorded. Sadly, we can never know the names of the thousands of desperate and courageous people who traveled through our area on this trackless trail to freedom. To all of those who sacrificed so much to “secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity,” we dedicate this effort to tell their story.

PROMINENT PEOPLE AND PLACES OF THE KENNETT REGION'S UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STORY



1. Longwood Progressive Friends Meetinghouse and Cemetery, c. 1855 | 300 Greenwood Road, Kennett Square

Local Quakers differed over how to respond to slavery. In 1853, a group of 58 men and women founded the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends. Their Meetinghouse became a beacon to reformers throughout the United States for movements such as the abolition of slavery, women's rights, and temperance. Renowned speakers and visitors included Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Susan B. Anthony, Sojourner Truth, Lucretia Mott, Ann Preston, William Lloyd Garrison, and Thomas Garrett. Many local abolitionists active in the Underground Railroad are buried in the cemetery. Today the building houses the Brandywine Valley Tourism Information Center.

A National Park Service Network to Freedom site, www.nps.gov/ugrr, and a stop on The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, www.harriettubmanbyway.org



President Abraham Lincoln met with a delegation of six from this Meeting on June 20, 1862. They presented a memorial (petition) urging widespread emancipation. Months later Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. William Lloyd Garrison hailed the proclamation as "a great historic event, sublime in its magnitude, momentous and beneficent in its far-reaching consequences."

2. John (1786–1880) and Hannah (née Peirce, 1797–1876) Cox residence, c. 1797 | Kennett Square

The Coxes were delegates to state and national anti-slavery conventions and John was president of the Kennett Anti-Slavery Society, which was established in 1837. A portion of their orchard was used for the building of the Longwood Progressive Friends Meetinghouse and cemetery. They often hosted social reformers visiting the area, including Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Greenleaf Whittier.

3. Bartholomew Fussell (1794–1871) residence, c. 1823
Kennett Square

This Quaker physician opened a Sabbath school for African American students in Maryland, helped organize the 1833 American Anti-Slavery Society, and aided over 2,000 fugitives. In 1846 he proposed the formation of The Female Medical College of Pennsylvania, the second medical institution in the world established to train women in medicine (in 2003 it became part of The Drexel University College of Medicine). This farmhouse continued to shelter fugitives when next owned by Sumner Stebbins and then Chandler and Hannah Darlington.

4. Edwin Brosius (1825–1885) residence, c. 1860
Kennett Square Borough

Abolitionists Edwin Brosius, with his pottery factory, and Samuel Pennock, with his agricultural machinery business, helped turn the village of Kennett Square into a borough in 1855.

5. East Linden Street and New Garden Memorial U.A.M.E. Church | Kennett Square Borough

This is one of the oldest streets in the borough and has been racially diverse since the late 1840s. Many early residents were employed by Edwin Brosius and Samuel Pennock. The New Garden Memorial U.A.M.E. Church had its beginnings in 1825 as the African Union Church on the border of New Garden Township; it moved to Kennett Square in 1910. The original church grounds and cemetery are now part of Bucktoe Creek Preserve.

African American Abolitionists

Many African Americans, including the Augustus brothers, the Robinsons, and the Walkers, assisted freedom seekers. Free communities, such as one in New Garden later named Bucktoe, and numerous African American churches were also involved.

6. Marlborough Quaker Meetinghouse, c. 1801, Cemetery, and Village | East Marlborough

Meetinghouses frequently became forums for anti-slavery. Elevated criticism amongst some of the members resulted in the 1852 "Marlborough Riot," which led to the establishment of the Progressive Friends.

7. Eusebius (1802–1865) and Sarah (née Painter, 1804–1849) Barnard residence, c. 1810 | Pocopson

Picnic area | Walking Trail | Pennsylvania Historical Marker
The Barnard farm was a station on the Underground Railroad, with the family providing shelter to freedom seekers and escorting them to their next safe haven. Eusebius was described as "a man of great force of character," who strove for an end to intolerance.

Locust Grove Schoolhouse and Lyceum, c. 1850–1870

A member of Locust Grove Lyceum, Eusebius Barnard was optimistic about the benefits of education and moral living.

8. Old Kennett Meeting, c. 1710, and Cemetery | Hamorton
Picnic area

This was the scene of many abolitionists meetings and, in 1853, the organizational meeting of the Pennsylvania Yearly Meeting of Progressive Friends. It is one of the area's oldest intact meetinghouses.

Free Produce Store, 1844–1858 | Hamorton

In response to those "conscientiously opposed to using the products of slave labor," Sarah Pearson opened a store in 1844 that sold products made by non-slave labor. Today the building is The Encore Shop.