The Lantern

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Early Quaker Abolitionists in Pennsylvania, Part II

by Michele Sullivan, KURC Board Member

In 1688 members of Germantown Friends Meeting, including German-born Daniel Pastorius, petitioned Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) for the total abolition of slavery. Shortly after, in 1693, Quaker George Keith (*see below*) and others published tracts denouncing slavery, citing, among other reasons, the Golden Rule. It took the Meeting many years of discussion to come to the position that, in order to call oneself a Quaker, one could not own another human being. In addition, when a slave was emancipated, the owner had an obligation to insure that the free person had a basic education and trade.

However, at around 1700, seventy percent of those attending PYM owned slaves, which certainly mitigated their support of abolition. When challenged at that time, PYM Quakers advised individual meetings to "be kind" and provide religious education to the slaves. However, not all slave holding Quakers ignored the call for manumission. In the 1730's 1/7 of the Quakers indicated in their wills that their slaves would be freed. And in the 1740's about 1/3 of the remaining Quaker slave owners manumitted their bondsmen. (Nash, 32)

Many Quakers felt that African Americans should be freed from slavery, but Quakers generally did not view African Americans as equal. At least another contributing factor was that many Quaker communities at the time wanted to be separate from the larger community in much the same way that some Amish prefer today. They would, of course, interact with non-Quakers to sell agricultural products, horses, or hand made goods. But they wanted little else.

In 1756, responding to the call for educating African Americans, PYM proposed instituting special quarterly meetings for "the Negroes in this city," which were held. The institution of special quarterly meetings for blacks reflected their ambivalence toward black Philadelphians. (Nash 28) When any African Americans showed interest in joining a Quaker meeting, they "…found themselves quietly but firmly discouraged." (Nash, 29)

That same year, 1756, Quaker Robert Pyle wrote PYM that Quakers should at least free their slaves after a time of service. No response from PYM.

Chester Monthly Meeting appealed to PYM on the subject of abolition in 1711, 1715 and 1716. In 1729 the same Monthly Meeting petitioned to ban slavery outright. A full year later PYM agreed that purchasing slaves was "disagreeable." They issued cautions with the hope that Quakers' consciences would prevail (Nash, 25.) PYM took no further action.

In 1754 individual Quakers raised the issue again, and PYM responded by saying such pressure on them was an "attack on Friends." Those complaining were faulted for creating "disunity" in their meetings. Not willing to give up, Quaker Ralph Sandiford wrote a tract supporting abolition. Because he had not sought permission from PYM to publish his tract, he was rebuked.

Confronted again, PYM was asked to prohibit Quakers from buying and selling slaves. PYM suggested that those who did should not have leadership in the monthly meeting.

A new generation of reformers including Benjamin Rush, John and James Pemberton, and Thomas Harrison had more influence largely because they believed there had been a weakening of Quaker values. They sought to "purify the Society" and encouraged Quaker separation from the corruption of the larger society.

See "Early Quaker Abilitionists," p 2

from "Early Quaker Abilitionists," p 1

By 1780, from North Carolina to New England, no Quaker claimed ownership of a slave. No other religious body had taken this step. Quakers were the first religious organization to come out as a body with a straight-forward belief that all humans should be free.

It took nearly 100 years for PYM to announce finally that those who still held slaves would be "read out" of Meeting. It took six or seven years after that for the Society to be totally free of slaveholders. And for the next five years, John Woolman and Benjamin Lay visited scores of Meetings to be sure that no members held slaves. In the meantime a number of members who resisted giving up slaves simply left Friends meetings.

I recommend the references used in this article:

Nash, Gary, *Forging Freedom*, 1988;
Nash, Gary & Jean R. Soderlund,
Freedom by Degrees, 1991.

I also thank Chris Densmore for his contributions.

Whispers and Voices Along the Road Side

On Monday, December 14, 2020, KURC Board member Crystal Crampton, lifelong member of New Garden Memorial Church and a preservationist and historian (not to mention Worker Bee) of Bucktoe cemetery; and KURC Board member Michele Sullivan, resident of Kendal at Longwood, spoke at a program offered by Kendal and Crosslands at Longwood to the residents and other interested people attended by Zoom. Kendal and Crosslands Community features different topics of interest each month, and they chose a topic just down the road: Bucktoe cemetery and New Garden Memorial Church, which resides today at 309 E. Linden St. in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania.

In the early 1800s on Bucktoe Road was a small church then called African Union Church (*shown right*) 3 miles south of Kennett Square. This area was an Underground Railroad station and was home to a number of African American abolitionists.

Crystal has worked for 30+ years uncovering the ruins of the church and the cemetery and preserving history. She described the Why, When, Who, What, How and Why is it important not only to her but anyone who visits. Michele described what she has found in her six years of research about black abolitionists in the local area, including the Bucktoe community.

Come for a Tour when COVID-19 is Over. You won't be disappointed!!!

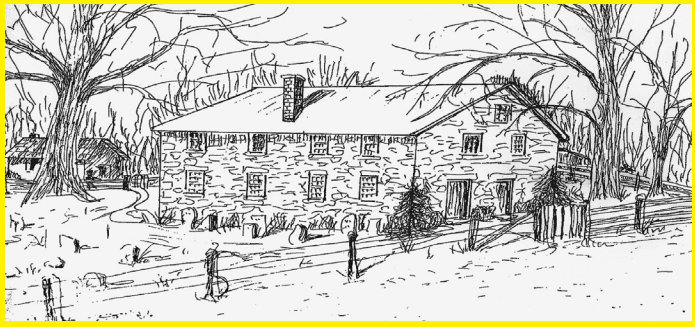
A QR Code/UGGR Scavenger Hunt? Perhaps.

by Debbie Burston, KURC Board Member

One year ago, before the Covid Pandemic, KURC had a conversation about the use of QR codes* to help educate people about the Underground Railroad. Many things changed in March of last year, when we were asked to stay at home, wash our hands and stay six feet away from everyone. These are still excellent standards to live by, but the QR idea faded away, just as it was about to blossom. I would like to bring it back into the foreground as it could be used to impart our stories of great men and women, both freedom seekers and abolitionists. If possible, we will be asking permission to leave a QR code at specific locations throughout the Kennett Square area. By doing this, we will create a scavenger hunt. Each code will give information about the area you find it and directions to the location of another code. We will not tell you where all of the codes are, because we will be teaching about the Underground Railroad and no one station keeper knew of all the stops in order to keep the other station keepers safe and operating as well as protecting their cargo. We hope to start in the spring. Anyone will be able to follow our directions and it can be done while observing all the Covid protocols. And those completing this hunt will be offered KURC prizes!

I would like to leave you with one example of a QR code. This is a lovely children's book called *Before She was Harriet* by Lesa Cline-Ransome and illustrated by her husband, James Ransome. It is read by the author for KidLitTV. I hope you enjoy it yourself and share it with all the young learners in your family. Enjoy!

*QR codes are "quick response" codes or messages.



Thoughts on Race and Racism in America--200 Years Ago and Today

an Editorial by Terence Maguire of KURC

The mission of the Kennett Underground Railroad Center is "to preserve the heritage and engage the public about the historic abolitionists and freedom seekers of this area and beyond."

What does that mean, exactly? We examine the stories of stationmasters and conductors who aided persons escaping enslavement. We celebrate the courage of those UGRR agents in exposing themselves to danger, fines, and imprisonment; and we also celebrate the bravery and determination of those seeking freedom, knowing the terrible consequences of being recaptured. We focus on the men and women who might not have been UGRR agents, but who spoke out loudly and often against the cruelty of slavery and against the horrendous lie that, because this man and that woman had brown skin and an African heritage, slavery was their "natural condition."

Many abolitionists, despite condemning slavery, did not believe that persons of African heritage were equal to those of European heritage. They believed in the superiority of the so-called "white race." Yet some abolitionists did believe that, given the right opportunities and education, blacks could achieve as much independence and success as white people. The Reverend William King, the subject of a weekly essay a month ago, was one. According to historian Eric Foner, Abraham Lincoln evolved from an anti-slavery white supremacist to a person who was ready to argue for full citizenship-- for black men at least. We will never know for sure--because Lincoln was assassinated by a Southern white supremacist.

The men and women and events that we of KURC write about and hold up for admiration --or for scorn-- are all of the 18th-19th C., 150-200 years ago. That is a "safe" distance to look back on. It doesn't involve us in contemporary politics.

But if we celebrate those who despised racism and believed in the potential equality of persons of all races, how can we ignore the fact that a belief in white supremacy is still a powerful voice in today's America? We decry the ways in which Southern (and Northern!) whites, after the Civil war, re-established the racial hierarchy of the antebellum period and wrested voting power away from newly enfranchised American blacks. How, then, can we ignore the efforts of many contemporary politicians today to disenfranchise black and brown people, to insist on their inequality? How can we deny that the systemic racism that has ruled this country from its founding is still a powerful force in the 21st C., as shown in this election cycle, and in the assault on the Capitol on January 6? We cannot deny that fact.

That Capitol Building, incidentally, invaded by some waving the Confederate flag, was in part built by enslaved persons.

Does this mean that the Kennett Underground Railroad Center is going to change its mission? That now we will focus equally or largely on contemporary injustice and racism?

No. Modern news media is consumed with that coverage, and we could add little of importance to that discussion. We will not pretend, however, that the half-century that elapsed since the Civil Rights Era has been a time of uninterrupted progress. Many of us who were young during the 1950-60s naively thought so for a while; some even believed that the 2008 election of the country's first African-American President signaled that the United States was entering a post-racial condition that would endure. We were wrong.

We have seen some progress, to be sure; but elements of American society that insist on white supremacy, once part of the political fringe, have been brought much more into the mainstream by the megaphone of the administration that has just been replaced.

We of KURC will continue to focus on those events and individual of the 18th-19th C. We want to share what we know about the heroes and events worth celebrating. We want to share what we know about the cruel and racist laws, institutions, and forces worth denouncing. Some of those same forces are, sadly, alive and strong in America today, and we must continue to struggle against their becoming even stronger. The events of January 20 have been something of an antidote to the toxicity so much on display two weeks earlier, but as the last five years demonstrated, that poison can rise again. Can it be eliminated? Probably not. It needs to be driven back to the political fringe--and kept there. Those elements have been part of our American heritage, but they are NOT a part of our American ideals.

The Kidnapping Club: Wall Street, Slavery, & Resistance on the Eve of the Civil War

Jonathan Daniel Wells

by Terence Maguire of the KURC Board

"Club" sounds pleasant, like a high school activity or some benevolent fellows' organization. The "club" of this book's title was committed to cruelty, avarice, and racial inhumanity. It was so-dubbed by David Ruggles, a free black abolitionist who lived in New York City from 1826 to 1842, and who was the "club's" most vociferous and tireless opponent.

In the fall edition of *The Lantern*, in reviewing *Tasting Freedom*, we examined early mid-19th C. Philadelphia, the supposed city of brotherly love. We found that it was, even more so, a cistern of racism, persecution of African Americans, and denial of the Constitutional rights that emerged after the Civil War.

The current book being reviewed does much the same for New York City. Professor Wells, from University of Michigan, whose work has examined the intersection of capitalism and social conflict, has portrayed a city in which two enterprises, the New York legal system and the massive power of Wall Street, combined to render nearly total support of slavery.

Even though New York had abolished slavery in 1827, Blacks in the New York City were persecuted by police. The "club" was composed of New York police officers led by Daniel Nash and Anthony Boudinot, who routinely arrested African Americans, claiming they were "fugitives from labor" in the South. These police were not simply enforcing the law, however. They were resident slave-catchers, who were given bounty by the enslavers of the South, sometimes hundreds of dollars. They and underlings cast a wide net, gathering in any possible suspect, even children. For decades the Black community of NYC, including those born free, lived in constant fear of arrest, hasty legal processing, and enslavement. Ruggles led the opposition to these efforts, often to no avail.

An important part of this system were NY judges and magistrates, connected to the growing power base of Democratic politics, Tammany Hall. One of the most important was Richard Riker, who, as City Recorder, heard cases determining whether or not an African American before him was a free man or fugitive. Rarely did Riker decide the former. Once he declared after rendering a verdict, "Tell your Southern

citizens that we Northern Judges damn the abolitionists" (p 36).

Why was this Northern city so determined to cater to Southern slavery? At this time the already legendary wealth of Wall Street was expanding enormously. One of their greatest sources of that wealth was the business of Southern slaveholders, who routinely borrowed from Northern bankers and owed tens of millions of dollars to them. Gerald Hallock, editor of the *Journal of Commerce*, declared in an 1850 editorial, "Blessed be cotton!" Southern agriculture and Northern prosperity were linked by this one product, and to it he attributed the nation's growing power and unity. Governors of New York and mayors of the city were equally subservient to Southern interests. Ruggles and his Black allies wrote fiery editorials against these leanings, especially in his own newspaper, *The Mirror of Liberty*, and he often faced persecution and arrest.

Strong links between finance capitalism and slavery? Not surprising. However, Wells's research articulates convincingly the depth and extent of this unholy alliance. For this reader, another focus of the book was a revelation. In 1808 the federal government banned the slave trade, the importation of enslaved Africans into the United States. That contraband slave ships evaded the laws is not surprising. That *many hundreds of slave ships* were outfitted in New York City's harbors and set out to ply their trade in the decades before the Civil War is truly shocking. Sometimes they even returned to New York with their cargo brutally confined to take on new supplies.

Occasionally, a slave ship would be apprehended in a NYC harbor, and charges brought against captain and crew. Again, officials of NYC proved eager to absolve such slave traders of any possible guilt. Customs officials routinely accepted bribes, and fines were limited to $6000 for violations, though the profits could be as much as $100,000 per voyage. In particular, Federal Judge Samuel Betts went to great lengths to make conviction impossible. In 1836 he

See "Kidnapping Club," p. 5

2020 Annual Appeal Results

The Kennett Underground Railroad Center is grateful to the following persons for supporting our organization during this challenging time. We wait, impatiently, for the time we can share our facility, our tours, and our in-person presentations with you folks and others.

ABOLITIONISTS $25-49
Brigitte Alexander
Betty & Alton Boyer
Laurel Lee Brabson
Marsha Corum
Maryanne Gallucci
Debby Kern
Sandy & Pete Lee
Eileen Mallouk
Susan March
John Meadows
Lynn Powell
Stephen Roberts
Lynn Sinclair
Marisa Thorpe
Virginia Turner
Midori Wakabayashi
Audrey Woods

AGENTS $50-$99
Mary E Clendenin
Matland Crosson
Paul Dittmer
Exelon Employees
Sally Flynn
Anna & Heinrich Heuer
Debra C. Martin
Rev. Maxine Mayo
Grace & Bill Pfeifer
Lisa Quiveors
Sandy Reber
Sally Talmadge
Gail & Bill Van Wie

STATION MASTERS $500-$999
Adrian & Debbie Burston

CONDUCTORS $100-$499
William Bickley
Betsy & Neil Cullen
Rex du Pont
Melody & Harry Hammond
Kathryn Head
Sharon & Dick Kittle
Carol Landefeld
Charles Lewis
Sharon Leyhow
Marilyn & Terence Maguire
Gerry McFarren
Kathy McMahon
William Neff
Patrick O'Donnell
John & Judy O'Neal
Dick Pennock
Tom & Marilyn Quinn
Joel & Judith Somerick
Debra Sparre

"Kidnapping Club," from p. 4

imprisoned several sailors who had whistle-blown against the captain of the *St. Nicholas*, but allowed the captain and rest of the crew out on bail--which they jumped! In the 1850s a group called Portuguese Company "ran a slave-trading business in the heart of Manhattan." (pp. 231-233) "Predictably the slave trade continued unabated..." (p 236). Worn down by years of largely futile opposition and failing eyesight, Ruggles retired to his native Massachusetts in 1849.

Dr. Wells explains that New York City continued its racist and pro-slavery inclinations even into the Civil War, twice giving Lincoln's Presidential opponents substantial margins. The Draft Riots of 1863, originally a protest against the draft, "quickly escalated into an all-out deadly assaults on the Black community." (p 294) Even as the city planned a grand ceremony to honor the slain Abraham Lincoln, Blacks were specifically excluded from the procession.

Wells argues that, despite real progress in race relations in the intervening 150 years, the line is straight and clear that connects the activities of the Kidnapping Club and its system of legal support and the attitudes of many contemporary New York City police toward Black Americans.

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O'Neal's History Notes: Gleanings from the Web

KURC President Emeritus John O'Neal spends much time looking for material relevant to the time --19th C--and the issues central to the Kennett Underground Railroad Center--the struggle to abolish slavery, the heroism of those who sought freedom and those who helped them, and the never-ending striving toward equality among the races in America. He shares those findings with the other Board members, and for the last several issues we have shared them with you our members and supporters. Others do the same, but John is our main source of a steady stream of education and insight. So we are giving him his own byline and photo. Enjoy.

https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/josephine-st-pierre-ruffin/

An African-American leader from New England, a suffragist, fought slavery, recruited African American soldiers to fight for the North in the Civil War, and founded and edited a magazine, Josephine Ruffin is best known for her central role in starting and sustaining the role of clubs for African American women.

https://www.nps.gov/shil/planyourvisit/contraband-camp.htm

As Federal forces occupied major portions of the South, enslaved people escaped from farms and plantations and fled to safety behind Union lines. Once President Abraham Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was issued in September 1862, the number of freedom seekers increased considerably in Union-occupied Corinth. The Corinth Contraband Camp was established by Union General Grenville M. Dodge to accommodate these refugees. The camp featured numerous homes, a church, school and hospital.

https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/freedmens-bureau-records

The United States Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, commonly known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was created by Congress in 1865 to assist in the political and social reconstruction of post-war Southern states and to help formerly enslaved people make the transition from slavery to freedom and citizenship. In the process, the Bureau created millions of records that contain the names of hundreds of thousands of formerly enslaved individuals and Southern white refugees.

https://www.ncpedia.org/freedmens-conventions

Freedmen's conventions in 1865 and 1866 voiced the aspirations of North Carolina blacks, both those previously classified as free and former slaves. The Civil War had been over only five months when more than 100 men, almost all from Piedmont and eastern counties, gathered at the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Raleigh and opened the "Convention of the Freedmen of North Carolina," the first such statewide assembly of black people. Many delegates were newcomers to North Carolina; most of the others were counted among the state's antebellum free blacks, who referred to themselves as "colored men."

https://nursing-theory.org/famous-nurses/Susie-King-Taylor.php

In 1848, Susie King Taylor was born as Susan Ann Baker, the first of nine children. Her parents were slaves on the Grest plantation in Liberty County, Georgia. The Grests were childless and treated the Baker children with great kindness. This had a great influence on how Susie later viewed relationships between the races. When she was seven, the Grests allowed Susie and her brother to go to Savannah, Georgia, to live with their grandmother, a freed slave. At that time, it was illegal to educate black children, but their grandmother was determined to educate her grandchildren and sent them to a neighbor who conducted a secret school in her home. They and other students had to hide their books and go in and out of the house one by one to avoid suspicion.

TinyURL.com/y5e7a596

Timothy Thomas Fortune (03 October 1856–02 June 1928), militant newspaper editor, was born in Marianna, Florida, the son of Emanuel Fortune, a literate slave artisan, and Sarah Jane Moore, a slave. Fortune was raised amid tumultuous times in Reconstruction

Florida. Despite less than three years of formal education, Fortune, an avid reader, enrolled at Howard University during the winter 1874 term. Inadequate finances forced him to leave after one year but not before he managed to complete a few law courses. His later writings would reflect an interest in constitutional law. He migrated to New York City in 1881 with vivid memories of slavery and the exploitation of the post-war freedmen. Fortune never forgot them and spent his journalistic career supporting their political and economic rights.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Willis_Menard

John Willis Menard (April 3, 1838 – October 8, 1893) was a federal government employee, poet, newspaper publisher and politician born in Illinois to parents who were Louisiana Creoles from New Orleans. After moving to New Orleans, on November 3, 1868, Menard was the first black man ever elected to the United States House of Representatives.[1] His opponent contested his election, and opposition to his election prevented him from being seated in Congress.

https://tinyurl.com/y52mxxwr

Harpers Ferry National Historic Park is known as the setting for the raid led by abolitionist John Brown in 1859. Today, it's a popular destination for local history and nature lovers alike.

While John Brown's name and legacy are linked to the site, far less is known about the men who fought with him, particularly the five black men who had far more at stake than their white counterparts during the time of slavery.

Story of the Underground Railroad to Mexico gains attention (yahoo.com)

Nathaniel Jackson, a white southerner, purchased the freedom of Matilda Hicks, a Black slave who was his childhood sweetheart, as well as Hicks's family. Jackson married Hicks and moved from Alabama to Texas before the U.S. Civil War. There, along the Rio Grande, they encountered another biracial couple, Vermont-born John Ferdinand Webber and Silvia Hector, who was Black and also a former slave.

The examination of the Underground Railroad to Mexico comes as the U.S. is undergoing a racial reckoning around policing and systemic racism. Also, in 2020 Mexico counted its Afro-Mexican population as its own category for the first time in its census.

https://www.historyofvaccines.org/content/blog/onesimus-smallpox-boston-cotton-mather

In the early 1700s, about a century before Edward Jenner conceived the idea of a smallpox vaccine based on the cowpox virus, smallpox was going through New England and other American Colonies. In Massachusetts, colonists there saw smallpox arrive with cargo ships to Boston over and over again. There was not much the authorities could do beyond imposing quarantines and treating the sick.

This changed in 1721 thanks to the wisdom passed on from Onesimus, an African slave sold to Cotton Mather, an influential minister in Boston. (You might remember Mather from learning about the Salem Witch Trials.) Mather had bought Onesimus in 1706 and came to converse with him and learn about his past. When Mather asked Onesimus if he had ever had smallpox back in Africa, Onesimus described the practice of *variolation* to prevent smallpox epidemics

https://www.whitehousehistory.org/slaverys-mark-on-lincolns-white-house

In 1942 an African-American dentist and amateur historian named John E. Washington wrote a groundbreaking book about the accomplished men and women of African descent who had led their community in Lincoln's day and anchored his domestic staff.

Having known some of them in his youth and interviewed their children, Dr. Washington believed, with ample good cause, that Lincoln saw in them "an example of what freedom would accomplish."

More than that, they may have eased his fear that slavery's bitter legacy would keep blacks and whites from living together in postwar harmony.

https://tinyurl.com/yxwcjcpx

Pat Cleburne: The Irish Confederate's "Emancipation Proclamation" On January 12, 1864 Major General W.H.T. Walker of the Confederate Army of Tennessee forwarded a confidential document to President Jefferson Davis. The words in it, written by the Irish-born general Patrick Cleburne, were so dangerous that Walker believed that they bordered on treason. He may have hoped that when Davis read them, Cleburne's rapid rise from immigrant lawyer to Confederate general might be halted.