



Talking points

Stories in the Quaker timeline

Freedom in North America

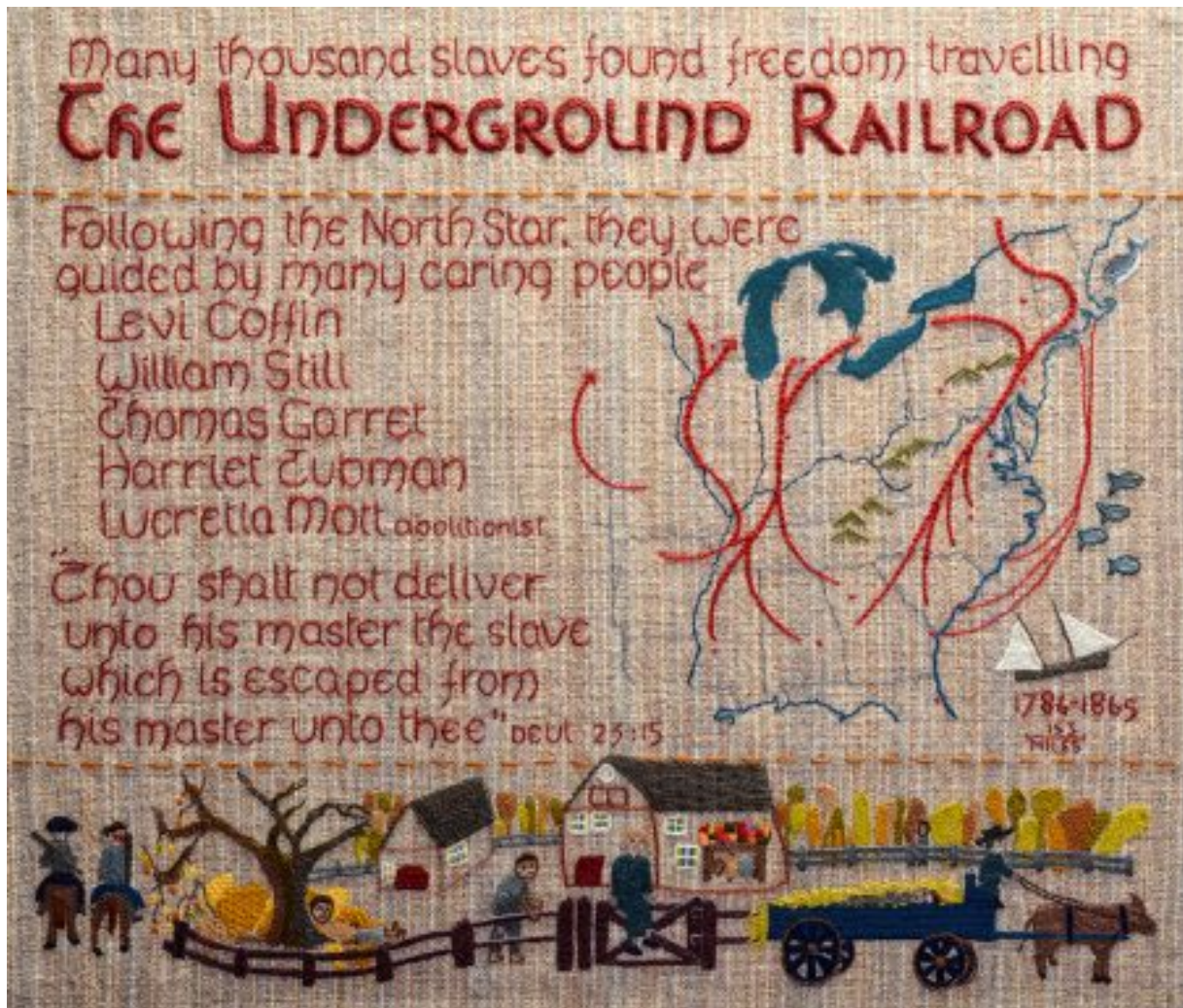
Because they were persecuted in England, many early Quakers went to live in North America where they could worship in freedom in the Quaker-founded state of Pennsylvania.

In the years that followed, Pennsylvania provided a welcome for other religious minorities which were also persecuted elsewhere, including Amish people.



The Underground Railroad

Many Quakers opposed slavery, and campaigned for change. During the time that slavery was legal in some places and not in others, many Quakers in North America helped people who had been enslaved to escape to places where they could be free.



World War I

World War One made thousands of people homeless. Friends Emergency & War Victims Relief Committee and the Friends Ambulance Unit assisted these refugees, both with short term aid, and in rebuilding housing and reconstructing industry and farming.

After the First World War many people were hungry. Quakers from Britain and the USA provided food for people in Germany and Austria.



People whose homes have been destroyed near the Front in World War I (Library reference: LSF FEWVRC France pics 8_3_6 refugee family depart Oise)

Spanish Civil War

The Spanish Civil War caused more refugees.

Quakers were able to assist people fleeing the war, both in areas of Spain and neighbouring France, and by assisting refugees who came to Britain.



Spanish children fleeing the war (Library reference: LSF FSC photos - Spain refugees crossing over to France c1939)

World War II

When Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, Quakers became aware of the danger for certain groups in society, including Jews. Quakers assisted people to leave Nazi Germany, including a mass evacuation of 10,000 children who would otherwise have been killed. This has become known as 'The Kindertransport'. They also helped people settle in to Britain.

Quakers were involved in various aspects of relief in Europe after the war had finished. For this Quakers were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1947.



Image from a pamphlet about caring for child refugees to Britain (Library reference: 066.34 FCRA 1_21 Caring for the child refugees)

The Sanctuary Movement



Nearly one million Central Americans were fleeing political repression and violence in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua and sought sanctuary in the US, but the US Government was refusing many of them.

Inspired by the Underground Railroad Movement, two Quakers and a Presbyterian minister started a movement to provide aid to these refugees, in open defiance of the law.

Over five hundred local congregations of which eventually declared themselves official “sanctuaries” for refugees.

In Britain a Quaker and Methodist co-founded the City of Sanctuary Movement – working with local councils to welcome people who have escaped to Britain.