

1. **BARNEY HOUSE**, 11 Mountain Spring Road. Now a conference center owned by the University of Connecticut, this once was the home of internationally known abolitionist John Treadwell Norton. Norton was regarded as a father figure by the Amistad Mendi, who were frequent guests in his home.

2. **ELIJAH LEWIS HOUSE**, 1 Mountain Spring Road. Formerly located at 738 Farmington Avenue, this house is distinguished by a "hidey-hole" in the basement chimney. In addition to hiding slaves there, Lewis, a prominent "stationmaster," often hid them in haywagons and transported them along the mountain ridge at night.

3. **HORACE COWLES (OR. SMITH-COWLES) HOUSE**, 27 Main Street. An early advocate of abolition, Underground Railroad stationmaster Horace Cowles housed one of the Mendi girls. Following his death in 1842, his son, Samuel Smith Cowles, publisher of a Hartford abolitionist newspaper, inherited this property and continued his father's work.

4. **FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL**, 75 Main Street. Farmington's abolitionists were prominent members of this congregation, and their minister, the Rev. Noah Porter, supported the abolitionist cause. Upon their arrival in town, the newly-freed Mendi were introduced in the church. They attended weekly services here. Just prior to their return to Africa, their leader, Sengbe Pieh, delivered a moving address in his native language.

Later, church members supported efforts by the Rev. J.C. Pennington, a freed slave who became a minister, to educate Hartford's African Americans. Pennington preached here on occasion, exchanging pulpits with Porter.

5. **THE ART GUILD**, Church Street. Originally called Union Hall, in 1841 this was located on the present site of the Porter Memorial. Church women met here to sew clothing for the ill-equipped Mendi immediately after their arrival in Farmington. For many years before and after the Amistad incident, this hall was the site of both abolitionist and anti-abolitionist meetings.

6. **SAMUEL DEMING'S HOUSE (THE THOMAS HART HOOKER HOUSE)**, 66 Main Street. Along with Austin Williams and John Treadwell Norton, Deming arranged to bring the Mendi to Farmington and supervised their stay here. A legislator, merchant and farmer, he was an outspoken abolitionist. His home was an Underground Railroad station.

7. **SAMUEL DEMING'S STORE**, 2 Mill Lane. Now called Your Village Store, this was originally located next to Deming's home. Half of the second floor served as the Mendi school where they attended classes six mornings a week during their 8-month stay. Men and boys also lived here during the first two months, until a dormitory was built for them. Attorney John Hooker, who befriended

Rev. James Pennington and was instrumental in obtaining his freedom, used the other half of the floor for an office.

8. **NOAH PORTER HOUSE**, 116 Main Street. As minister of First Church from 1806 to 1866, Porter supported abolition and brought Margru, one of three young Mendi girls, to live here with his family. He was the father of Sarah Porter, founder of Miss Porter's School. The American Board of Foreign Missions was founded here in 1810.

9. **AUSTIN WILLIAMS HOME & CARRIAGE HOUSE**, 127 Main Street. One of those responsible for bringing the Mendi to Farmington, Williams gave a piece of his land on which townspeople built a dormitory for the men and boys. Later remodeled as a carriage house, the building still shows dormitory space, Sengbe's private room, and back-to-back privies. An addition to the rear served the Underground Railroad; a trap door to a heavily-baffled basement still exists.

After Emancipation, Williams used this part of the building as his employment office for freed blacks. Williams kept meticulous records of his expenditures and activities, and wrote frequent letters about the Mendi to friends and business associates in New York.

10. **TIMOTHY WADSWORTH HOUSE**, 340 Main Street. This house is believed to have been an Underground Railroad station.

11. **RIVERSIDE CEMETERY** and view of the Meadows, Garden Street. The cemetery contains the graves of Deming, Norton, Williams and Foone, the Mendi boy who drowned. From the western edge is a good view of the Meadows, where the Mendi were given ten acres of farmland to raise crops for their food.

12. **CANAL HOUSE** (Canal ticket office) and Pitkin Basin, 128 Garden Street. The Mendi often traveled on the Farmington Canal to make appearances throughout the region to raise money for their voyage back to Sierra Leone. Foone, a 19-year old Mendi, drowned—apparently a suicide—while swimming in the Pitkin Basin in front of Canal House. A shallow turnaround and storage area for boats, the Basin was also the village swimming hole. It's now a paved parking lot.

**Private** Indicates private residence



The Farmington Historical Society  
offers guided tours of the Amistad sites  
by appointment. (860) 678-1645

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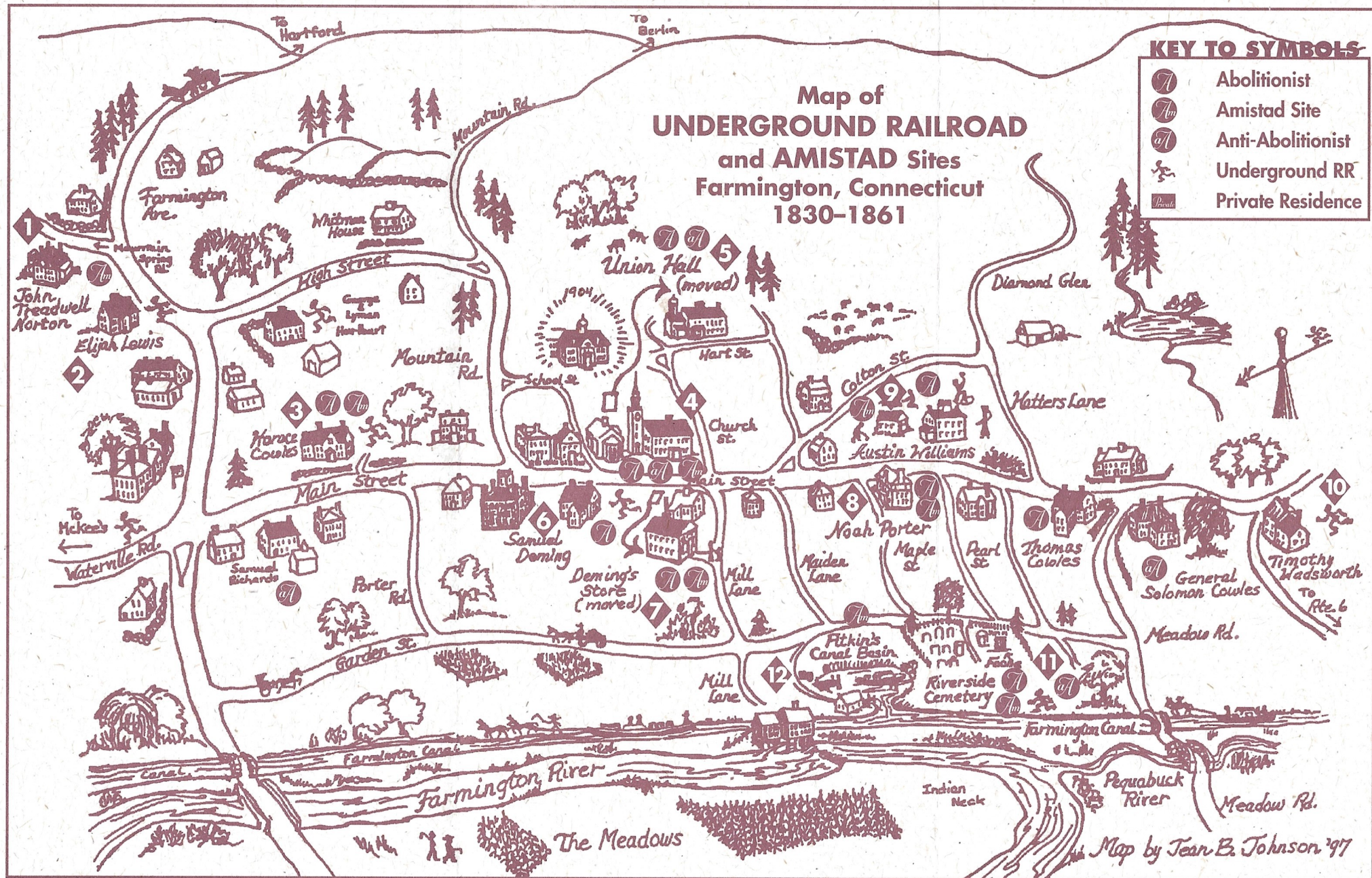
# FARMINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Freedom Trail in Farmington



THE FARMINGTON INN





The Freedom Trail was authorized in 1995 by the Connecticut General Assembly. In Farmington, the Trail consists of Underground Railroad safe houses where runaway slaves were hidden by abolitionists, as well as sites connected to the nation's first civil rights case, the Amistad Case of 1841. In that incident, 38 members of the African Mendi tribe, having been declared free men, came to Farmington to live while funds were raised to enable their return to their native Sierra Leone.