



Along Route 52: Delaware's Historic Kennett Pike (Images of America)

Andrew D. Engel

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Created through an act of the Delaware Legislature in 1811, the Wilmington and Kennett Turnpike would become one of the most important roads in New Castle County. Linking the city of Wilmington, Delaware, to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, it would become crucial in the transportation of goods from a growing industrial Wilmington to Philadelphia and the eastern counties of Pennsylvania. Kennett Pike, as it would come to be known, operated as a toll road until it was purchased in 1919 by industrialist Pierre S. du Pont (1870-1954). Du Pont would work over the next year and a half to widen and modernize the highway and eliminate its tolls. When work was completed, he sold the road back to the state for just \$1. Kennett Pike has continued to grow through the 20th century, with dozens of private estates gracing its borders. Villages such as Greenville and Centreville have been characterized by their country charm and local businesses, including Shields Lumber & Coal and Buckley's Tavern.

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