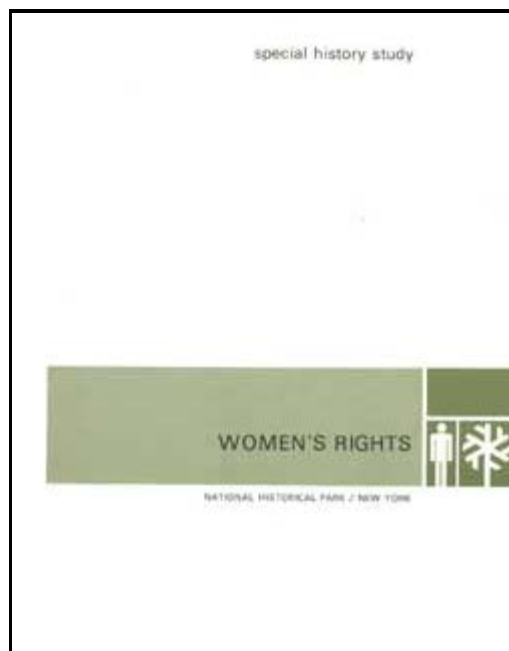


Women's Rights

Special History Study



Special History Study

Women's Rights National Historical Park

Seneca Falls, New York

Sandra S. Weber

September 1985

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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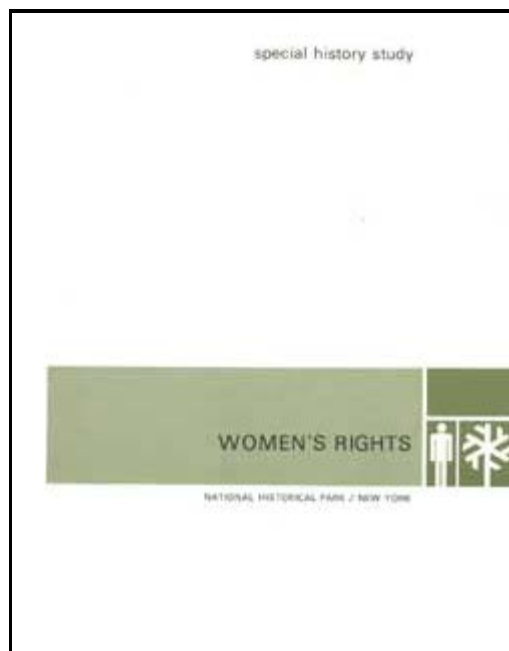
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Judy Hart, Superintendent of Women's Rights National Historical Park, and Regina Moriarity for all their kind assistance and patience during my three weeks in Seneca Falls. Lisa Johnson and the entire staff at the Seneca Falls Historical Society also deserve special thanks for allowing me to make their library my second home. I am particularly grateful to Judy Wellman who gave so freely of her time and expertise, and allowed me to use in this report information from her own unpublished research. Linda Romola, too, made my task immeasurably easier by graciously donating long hours at the xerox machine and many miles behind the wheel of her car. Supervisory Historian Ronald W. Johnson gave valuable counsel throughout this project and Sharon A. Brown edited the text.

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INTRODUCTION

This report was produced at the request of the Denver Service Center Northeast Team to provide basic historical background information on properties associated with Women's Rights National Historical Park. The scope of the study was determined by a series of questions compiled by the General Management Plan team. The buildings under consideration were the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, the Stanton House, and the Bloomer House in Seneca Falls, and the Hunt and McClintock Houses in Waterloo. The purpose of the study was to establish if possible, the historical significance of the people and events associated with these buildings as they relate to the Women's Rights Convention of 1848. Each building is examined in a separate chapter, with a general introductory chapter on the village of Seneca Falls. The study focuses on the people and events associated with the buildings, rather than the structures themselves. Architectural histories and details have been compiled by Barbara Pearson in a separate Architectural Survey.

Because the philosophies and public lives of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Amelia Bloomer are already well known, this study concentrates on examining their relationship with the community of Seneca Falls, and how their lives in the village affected their views on women's rights. Because there is comparatively little documentary material available on the Hunts, the McClintocks, and the congregation of the Wesleyan Chapel, these chapters necessarily employ a more general, ideological approach. By examining the philosophical tenets of the Progressive Quakers, we can gain some insights into the beliefs and concerns of the Hunts and McClintocks. By the same token, exploring the religious schism which produced the Wesleyan Methodist Church, enables us to draw some reasonable conclusions about the members of its congregation. Because each chapter is designed to stand as a separate unit, some minor repetition occurs throughout the report.

The introductory chapter is a general statement on conditions in Seneca Falls in 1848. It is by no means a complete or exhaustive study of this topic, and presents a few observations only. Time constraints did not allow for a similar chapter on Waterloo, but one should definitely be completed when possible. The information contained in this report indicates that the Waterloo Quakers, including the Hunts and McClintocks, probably played a more significant role in the initial conception and support of the Convention than was generally thought to be the case. Although Elizabeth Cady Stanton was most certainly the catalyst which produced the Convention, it is doubtful whether she could have successfully staged it without the energetic assistance of the Waterloo Quakers and the Seneca Falls Wesleyans.

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CHAPTER ONE:

HISTORIC SETTING — SENECA FALLS IN 1848

To comprehend the significance of the 1848 Women's Rights Convention, it is necessary to understand the milieu in which it occurred. The event was not an aberration, but the natural outgrowth of local conditions and concerns. In 1848, Seneca Falls was in the midst of a major social and economic change. From the small agricultural processing center it had once been, it was becoming a bustling manufacturing center, inundated with new ideas, new businesses, and new people. The old vision of slow moving canal boats loaded with barrels of locally produced flour was being rapidly replaced by the sight of pumps, tools, and machinery speeding from the area by train. Accompanying this economic acceleration had been the usual influx of new populations and novel ways of thinking. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's call for women's rights was as much a response to local conditions as it was a personal conviction.

A. Transportation Systems

Seneca Falls' fortuitous location at the hub of several important transportation arteries has played a major role in its growth and development. The first white settler in the area, Job Smith, stayed in the Flats because he saw a living for himself in the business of portaging settlers and their goods around the mile long series of rapids on the Seneca River. He arrived in the area in 1787, just in time to take advantage of the sizeable westward migration then passing through New York State. [1]

In 1782, the state legislature had designated some 1,680,000 acres of territory in western New York as bounty land for veterans of the Revolutionary War. The area, known as the Military Tract, was comprised of the present day counties of Cortland, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and parts of Oswego, Wayne and Tompkins. [2] For the next 50 years, thousands of settlers streamed through this territory along the natural pathways of the rivers and lakes. In the early years, most of these pioneers were from the New England states and followed the Mohawk Valley trail out to the western lands. Later, New Jersey and Pennsylvania natives entered the territory along the Hudson and Susquehanna Rivers. [3]

Wishing to encourage and facilitate this migration, the State of New York appointed a commission in 1794 to lay out a road "as straight as possible" to run from Fort Schuyler on the Mohawk River to Canawagas on the Genesee. [4] As surveyed, the Great Western Road crossed the Seneca River near the Seneca Falls rapids and continued westward on the northern side. As expected, settlements and way-stations began to appear everywhere along the highway's route, as people prepared to profit by selling goods and services to the many travellers who would soon be wending their way westward. The land agent in Geneva paid tribute to the enterprising spirit of the early New Yorkers by reporting that "The line of road having been established by law, not less than fifty families settled on it in the space of four months after it was opened. It now bides fair to be, in a few years, one continuous settlement from Ft. Schuyler to the Genesee River." [5]

Seneca Falls was no exception to this observation, and the earliest village properties sprang up along the turnpike's route, present day Seneca and Fall Streets. The south side of the river was virtually ignored as tavern and shop keepers concentrated on lining the highway on the northern side. Other settlers in the area made their living through the "carrying trade," transporting the still heavy river traffic around the rapids, or ferrying people across the upper end of Cayuga Lake so they could avoid the stretch of road which passed through the difficult Montezuma Swamp. Nearly all of the pre-1825 settlers in Seneca Falls earned their living by catering to the heavy volume of traffic which passed along the road.

As the migration continued without abatement through the early decades of the 19th century, further improvements were made along the highway. In 1800, the first of three bridges was constructed across Cayuga Lake, replacing the old ferry run. Built at the enormous cost of \$150,000, the bridge was more than a mile long and said to be the longest in the world. It was also said to have the highest toll in the world, at 25¢ for a man and horse, and proportionally higher fees for vehicles and freight. This first bridge lasted only seven years before its mud sills collapsed and the ferry service had to be resumed. A new pile bridge was constructed in 1813, but it too fell prey to the lake and the weather and had to be replaced. [6] The third and last bridge was abandoned in the 1850s and was never rebuilt as the railroad and new highways had by then superseded the old turnpike as the primary means of travel across the state. [7]

Another improvement on the highway was the establishment of the Seneca Road Company in 1800 whose purpose was to improve and maintain the state road from Utica to Canandaigua in return for the right to collect fees. Tollhouses were established every 10 miles along the route, and the portion of the road which passed through Seneca Falls came to be known as the Seneca Turnpike. It served as the main east-west artery across the state and the gateway to the northwest territories for well over a hundred years. People, ideas, and products flowed through Seneca Falls in a nearly constant stream. A regular coach service was soon instituted, and later, early residents remembered how the twice weekly mail coach would sound its horn at the corner of Seneca and Washington Streets just below the Stanton House before crossing the bridge into town.

As farmers and businessmen began to settle in the area, they began searching for an easy, economical way to transport their surplus products to eastern markets. The heavy tolls on the turnpike made that option unreasonable, but the many rapids on the Seneca River made water transport equally difficult. Hoping quite literally to get around the problem the Bayard Company, owners of most of Seneca Falls' valuable real estate, formed the Seneca Lock Navigation Company in 1813. Their intention was to build a series of locks to open navigation between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes so as to do away with the laborious portage around the Seneca Falls rapids, which was a serious economic drain on their operations. Between 1801-1806 the pilots at the portage point had taken in nearly \$1,500, nearly all of it from portaging products from the Bayard Company's two mills which held a virtual monopoly on processing and exporting local grain products. Although they had the best of economic reasons for wishing to build the canal, the company fell short of the requisite cash, and work on the Seneca-Cayuga Canal lagged until the state stepped in with an additional \$21,000 grant. In 1817, the first canal boat came through the locks, providing Seneca Falls with yet another link in its transportation network. [8]

Although the early canal provided an important transportation route, both in and out of the Finger Lakes region, it was not until 1828 that the canal reached its full potential. In that year, the state took over responsibility for the waterway, and proceeded to link it with the great Erie Canal system at Montezuma. Andrew Tillman, a local businessman, was awarded the contract for the canal improvement. Under his direction the locks were rebuilt, the channel widened, and the first towpath added. [9] Seneca Falls now had an inexpensive direct outlet

to all of the eastern markets, and incoming settlers had a convenient water route from the coastal cities.

The modernization of the Seneca-Cayuga Canal and the concomitant freeing of the village water rights by the liquidation of the Bayard Company, had an enormous impact on the settlement. The 1830s were a period of enormous growth for the village, particularly along the south side of the river. Dozens of new mills appeared along the waterfront, hundreds of new residents joined the town, and an energetic boat-building industry appeared. The primary commercial activities in the village at this time included the processing of local agricultural products (milling, tanning, distilling), boat building, coopering, and canal tending. All of the major economic activity depended directly or indirectly on the canal. The annual toll figures for several years show the phenomenal increase in the number of goods being shipped in and out of the area.

1829 — \$ 8,643.49
 1833 — \$ 18,130.43
 1841 — \$ 23,583.37 [10]

Passenger traffic also greatly increased with the introduction of packet boat service in 1828. It brought regular transportation service, comfort, and excitement to the town. One early resident recalled that before their introduction "our village was indifferently connected with the outside world . . . the packet wrought a decided improvement, brought us in close touch with other communities and converted us into a canal town with something of cosmopolitan features." [11] Demand for the packet service was so great that at one time, two rival companies competed for business with raucous brass bands, fancy uniforms, and free rides, all to the great delight of the village residents. [12] It was on one of these packets that Thomas McClintock and his family travelled from Philadelphia to Waterloo in 1835-1836.

On July 4, 1841, the first Auburn-Rochester train arrived in Seneca Falls and foretold the demise of the canal. The Seneca Falls Democrat reported that on the historic occasion, "The Cars were filled to overflowing; and their approach to this village was announced by the roaring of cannon, and the shouts of a vast multitude of citizens and strangers, who had collected in the neighborhood of the depot to welcome 'the steam horse' and his load." [13] The coming of the railroad had a great impact on the village, as it did for all the settlements along its route. No longer did one have to wait for the lumbering stagecoach to bring mail over the turnpike, it could now be whisked away by rail. Passengers and goods could now be in Buffalo or Albany in a matter of days rather than a week or more. News, people, and products began to travel faster and more efficiently, linking the small rural village to the outer world. Amelia Bloomer's The Lily owed much of its success to the railroad which allowed it to be quickly distributed across the state and the nation. Without that outlet, it would necessarily have remained a local, village journal.

The railroad also made possible the extensive trips made by the many reform lecturers and organizers. While speakers had previously made the circuit by coach and horse, the railroad vastly increased their mobility and availability. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's letters are full of references to meeting friends and sympathizers at the rail depot in Seneca Falls. We know for instance that the Motts and Martha Wright arrived at the Convention by train, as presumably did many others. Lucretia Mott wrote to Stanton a few days before the gathering, "We shall go from the Cars directly to the Meeting . . . Give Thyself no trouble about meeting us." [14] The train made it possible for news of the convention to be quickly spread across the area, as well as bringing participants to the gathering itself.

In addition to facilitating the movement of people and ideas, the train made it possible for local manufacturers to have national markets for their goods. It was at precisely the same

time that the railroad first arrived in town, that Seneca Fall's industrialists began to shift from a processing oriented economy to one dependent on heavy manufacturing. In the early 1840s, the tide of migration through New York began to slow, and the major grain producing area shifted westward to Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa. No longer were farmers bringing in wagonloads of wheat to be processed in the village mills and then shipped to local markets by canal boat. As the demand for milling decreased, so did the dependent trades of coopering and boatbuilding.

Seeking new economic opportunities, the various mill owners began diversifying and shifted their operations over to manufacturing. Abel Downs led the way with the establishment of the first pump factory in 1840, and others soon followed suit. Such an industry would not have been possible 10 years earlier. The local market would soon have been glutted with pumps, with no system for transporting the surplus elsewhere. It was only with the coming of the railroad and a nationwide system of rapid transport that such industries could become viable concerns. The local pump and manufacturing industries were also fortunate in that their rise coincided with the opening of the western prairies, creating a huge market for their various pumps, plows, and tools.

One by-product of the railroad was the revitalization of the business district on the north side of the river. Although it was the oldest part of town, it had been overshadowed by the south side during the 1830s when that area had been heavily developed by Ansel Bascom, Andrew Tillman, and Gary V. Sackett in conjunction with the improvements on the Seneca-Cayuga Canal. The location of the new railroad depot on the north side of the river shifted the transport and passenger emphasis from the canal on the south side to the railroad on the north side.

Although the coach, canal, and turnpike continued to be used in Seneca Falls throughout the 1840s and 1850s, the days of their supremacy were definitely over by 1845. The village inhabitants were now connected to the larger world by a more rapid and efficient means of transportation, and they were eager to embrace it. The 1840s and 1850s witnessed a period of great energy and experimentation as Seneca Falls attempted to analyze and utilize the new opportunities and problems presented by the railroad.

B. Industry, Commerce, and Labor

The 19th century industrial development of Seneca Falls divides itself easily into three distinct phases: 1787-1826, a frontier economy based on trade and mill center with regional markets; 1825-1850, a developing trade and mill center with regional markets; and 1850-1890, a thriving industrial and manufacturing town with national and international markets. As can be seen, the Women's Rights Convention occurred during the transitional period when Seneca Falls was transforming itself from a rural mill village to a booming industrial center. The stresses, energies, and opportunities which attended this shift all played a part in the emergence of the women's right movement.

The first white settlement of the area around Seneca Falls occurred in the 1780s when families began establishing themselves at the Seneca River rapids, hoping to make a living by portaging travellers and their goods around the mile long stretch of rough water. Business was fairly good as more and more settlers began moving westward to claim land in the newly opened Military Tract of western New York. From the first day of its settlement, Seneca Falls' economic development would be intimately connected with the water power available along the shore of the Seneca River.

An energetic surveyor named Elkanah Watson first recognized the potential of the area when he visited it in 1791. He quickly began acquiring the title to land lying adjacent to the river,

and a few years later formed a company with three friends to raise the necessary capital to develop it. Through a series of shady transactions, political favors, and outright purchase, the Bayard Company managed to procure the sole right to all of the water power along the rapids, and eventually owned nearly 1500 acres on both sides of the river. In 1795, Wielhelmus Mynderse arrived in Seneca Falls to act as the agent for the company and proceeded to erect several mills on the rapids, the first of many which would later line its banks.

Though extravagant in the amount of land it owned, the Bayard Company was extremely conservative in its management. Adamant about maintaining their monopoly of the milling rights in the area, they refused to lease any of their property for other operations. Population growth in Seneca Falls fell far behind that of neighboring settlements, as the only livelihood available other than farming was tavern keeping, portaging, or coopering for the mills. Mynderse later established a saw mill, a fulling mill, a blacksmith shop, and a tannery, but any profits these concerns generated went directly into the Bayard Company coffers. All of these operations were centered around processing the raw materials brought to the mills by the neighboring farmers (grain wool, hides, wood), and then distributing them to a local market. This short sighted reliance on one type of activity soon spelled the doom of the Bayard Company.

With the opening of the first Seneca-Cayuga Canal in 1817, neighboring settlements along the river began to establish mills of their own. Mynderse's two Red Mills began to lose business as customers took their grain to cheaper and more convenient mills at Waterloo and The Kingdom. While other villages began experiencing a minor economic boom, Seneca Falls stagnated. A comparison of figures between Waterloo and Seneca Falls for 1824 tell the story:

	<u>Seneca Falls</u>	<u>Waterloo</u>
houses	40	80
stores	3	7
inn (taverns)	2	6
inhabitants	200	500 [15]

Finally bowing to the inevitable, the Bayard Company cut their losses in 1826, and divided up the property among the three remaining stockholders who immediately sold most of it to local entrepreneurs who had been eagerly awaiting the demise of the monopolistic company. Mills, factories, homes, and businesses sprang up with astonishing rapidity, and until the depression of 1837 slowed progress, Seneca Falls enjoyed a major burst of growth and economic activity. The riverfront was soon lined with mills, distilleries, tanneries, and factories. Within only seven years, the population grew from 200 to 2000, and the number of manufacturers had increased from five to more than 25. The newspaper reporting this information in 1832, assured its possibly skeptical readers that for "those who have not known the village for four or five years, the above statement may appear extravagant, but it is strictly true." [[16](#)] In keeping with its newfound status, the village was incorporated in 1831 with Ansel Bascom as its first President. Schools, churches, newspapers, and meeting halls began to appear as the village matured. (See Appendix A.)

A detailed recital of all the businesses established, renovated, merged, or failed during this period is much too complex for a report of this nature, but generally speaking, flour milling continued to be the major type of activity. In 1845, the nine mills then in operation produced a total of 2000 barrels of flour each day. [[17](#)] Textile mills also emerged as a successful enterprise, as did small factories producing paper, window sashes, carriages, and tools. The reason that the town was able to diversify so quickly from the simple processing plants of the

Bayard Company was due largely to the Seneca-Cayuga Canal.

Although the canal had been in operation since 1817, it was poorly constructed and rapidly fell into disrepair. In 1828, however, the state purchased the canal from its private company and proceeded to renovate it and link it with the Erie Canal system. This opportune involvement by the state gave Seneca Falls the outlet it needed for its products, and contributed greatly to the economic growth of the village. The improvements of the canal also spawned a vigorous boat building industry in the village which peaked around 1840. Fortuitously situated along the major highways of the canal and the turnpike, and the natural advantage of the falls, Seneca Falls quickly became a thriving market and manufacturing center.

Instrumental in orchestrating Seneca Falls' new prosperity was a small energetic band of local entrepreneurs. In contrast to the methods of the absentee stockholders of the Bayard Company, these men lived in the village and did everything in their power to facilitate and encourage its economic and social growth. They served on every civic board imaginable, supported every public improvement, and served as the unofficial village elite. Such individuals included Ansel Bascom, Gary V. Sackett, Andrew Tillman, the Metcalfs, the Lathams, and the Bayards. Many of these and other prominent village figures were connected to Elizabeth Cady Stanton by either ties of marriage or friendship. Their support and high standing in the community helped lend legitimacy to the Convention in which several of them participated.

The most obvious economic contribution of these town boosters was the development of the south side of the river during the 1830s. When the Bayard Company liquidated its holdings, Bascom, Tillman, and Sackett each purchased large pieces of property on the south side. After reserving portions for their own use, they subdivided the remainder into commercial and residential lots and offered them for sale. Prior to this point, there had been almost no development at all on the south side. An early resident described it in 1828 as limited to farming with only "an old Log House and Frame Barn." [18] During the next decade it experienced an explosion of growth and rivaled the northern side of town for commercial prominence until the coming of the railroad in 1841 once again shifted attention to the north side of the river.

James Sanderson, who moved to Seneca Falls as a boy in 1829, recalled that Sackett and Bascom had a healthy rivalry going to see who could do the most toward developing the south side of the river. "They both had high ideals and both were going to make their own locality the business center for the north end of the county—Mr. Bascom at the south end of the Ovid street bridge and Judge Sackett at the south end of the Bridge street bridge." [19] Their competition was all to the gain of Seneca Falls, for Bascom built Union Hall and the three-story American Hotel on the corner of Bayard and Ovid, while Sackett commissioned an L-shaped block of commercial buildings and the Franklin Hotel on the corner of Bayard and Bridge (the last two developments are still standing). (See Illustration 1.) These substantial structures did much to draw people and investments across the river. Union Hall was described as "the center of village life," [20] hosting everything from temperance lectures to firemen's balls, gospel revivals to wax work exhibits. [21] Amelia and Dexter Bloomer were given a gala reception here in 1853 before their departure from Seneca Falls. Sackett's commercial block was described as "the first row of buildings in the village" [22] and the principal mercantile center of the town, containing dry goods stores, a druggist, and a hardware store among others.





Illustration 1. Undated 19th century view of the Sackett Commercial Block on the corner of Bayard and Bridge Streets. Photograph taken from Revivalism, Social Conscience and Community in the Burned-Over District, Altschuler and Saltzgaber. Original at the Seneca Falls Historical Society.

Beginning in the 1840s the town began a noticeable shift toward the mercantile-manufacturing emphasis that characterized it in the late 19th century. As the major grain producing areas moved westward toward Ohio and Illinois, the Seneca Falls millers found there were fewer farmers bringing their grain to be ground. The owners began selling the mills or renovating them to serve as small furnaces and manufacturies. A great flurry of activity was occurring along the waterfront in the 1840s as the old traditional businesses went under and new ones took their place. With the coming of the railroad in 1841, manufacturers could produce goods for a national market and not have to rely solely on the local or regional demand. A new breed of industrialists entered the village scene, quite different from the somewhat paternalistic group of early developers. Interested in tapping the new markets open to them, industrialists in the 1840s established such concerns as Down's Pumps, Cowing's fire engine factory, and Washburn Race's stove regulator business. This trend toward industrialization continued unabated in the next few decades, producing in the end, a vigorous, manufacturing oriented economy for the village. In the 1840s and early 1850s though, this process was just beginning, and the changes it brought to the commercial activity, lifestyle, and population of the village help to explain the unsettled conditions which produced the first Women's Rights Convention. (See Appendix H and Appendix L.)

One of the first indicators of this switch from a milling to a manufacturing economy was the introduction of cash payments for goods and services instead of the previous barter system. As the agricultural activity in the area began to taper and more and more people made their living through commerce or industry, the barter system became uneconomical and impractical. Previous to the 1840s, nearly all commercial activity in the area had been on a trade system. Money was scarce, and farm products always in demand. James Sanderson described how in the late 1820s the local farmers would come into Hoskins' store on Fall Street and exchange their produce for shoes or medicine:

The country customers from far and near would come and rummage over the piles of shoe leather and rattle around among the tinware, have a smoke in the meantime, sit round in everybody's way, and go home at night, having had a nice visit, disposing of their eggs at six cents a dozen and their butter at 12-1/2 cents per pound, with their pay in what they ransacked the store for. [23]

By 1848, many businesses were beginning to insist on cash payments for their products. As town dwellers and eager capitalists, they had no need for extra eggs and butter. Traditionally minded concerns like S.S. Gould's might reassure their customers in their newspaper ads that they were "always glad to exchange for Butter, Eggs, Cheese, Pork, Poultry, Dried Fruits, Fethers [sic] Good Paper or Gold dust," [24] but new businesses like the "Empire Cash Store" made no apologies for accepting cash only.

The new factories also began to institute cash wages for their employees. Prior to this time, many of the mill owners had paid their help partly in currency and partly in goods from the mill. Workers at Richard Hunt's Woolen Mill in Waterloo received only half their wages in cash, the remainder in bolts of broadcloth. [25] A young Welshman who worked in a similar mill in Skaneateles from 1848-1854, was very unhappy with this non-cash system, and described his six years in the mill as

the dulllest period of my whole life. The daily schedule of labor began at five o'clock; breakfast at six-thirty, work again from seven o'clock until twelve noon; begin again at one o'clock and leave off for the day at six-thirty p.m., making a total of seventy-two hours a week." [26]

Hoping to get ahead in the world, young Bailey travelled to Seneca Falls and secured employment in one of the many factories there. Here, too, employees were not paid in cash. His reaction to this situation was typical of the new breed of mill hand appearing in the mid-19th century.

No cash payments were made to the employees of the . . . firm. There were no pay days; the men were given script orders which were accepted at all the stores and boarding houses in payment for all necessities at a discount of from 2% to 15% according to the urgency of the needs of the holder. I endured this treatment for about eleven months. I then secured a position in the works of Cowing and Co., the firm consisting of John P. Cowing and John A. Rumsey. This firm paid their help in currency, monthly. As a machinist, I looked upon pump work as a little below me, but the cash payments did away with these notions." [27]

Bailey's unwillingness to accept the paternalistic script system which effectively tied him to one factory and one town, was symptomatic of the changes in the laboring class at this time. Mill hands were no longer the sons of local farmers helping a family friend run a small milling operation. Most were now strangers, foreign-born as often as not, with no traditional ties to a particular locale. Many were highly motivated and ambitious, working to save enough money to set themselves up in businesses of their own. Cowing's new firm with its cash wages was infinitely more attractive than the traditional, restrictive script system.

Like Bailey, many other individuals were attracted to Seneca Falls by the opportunities available in its burgeoning mills and factories. In the 18 years between 1824 and 1842, the village's population grew from 200 to 4,000, and the number of houses increased from 40 to 400. [28] We do not as yet have any definite statistics on who these new residents were, but hopefully careful study of town and census records will help us to learn who exactly was keeping all of the villages' many factories in day-to-day operation.

Scattered references in available letters and documents indicate that this mid-century influx of newcomers was heavily Irish. This would certainly coincide with the documented pattern in other upstate villages. After the Irish Potato Famine of 1847, millions of Irish migrated to America, with a large proportion ultimately settling along the various canal routes. Initially hired as laborers to build the canals, many of the Irish stayed on to settle in the villages which sprang up alongside them. This pattern would seem to fit the Seneca Falls situation. A local

history states that the first permanent Irish settlers arrived in 1827 and were named Thomas Sullivan and Patrick Quinn. [29] The first Catholic church was built in 1835, but "so rapid was the increase of the Catholic population of the village" says another history, that a much larger church had to be built in 1848. [30]

The years of the heaviest Irish-Catholic influx into the village coincide exactly with the years when the Seneca-Cayuga Canal was being extensively renovated and rebuilt. Although we lack any firm documentation to prove this, it seems probable that the initial Irish settlement in the village occurred as a result of the need for unskilled laborers to help with the construction of the canal. Once the canal had been finished the booming economic condition of the village, combined with the many practical inducements of such promoters as Gary V. Sackett, probably convinced many to settle in Seneca Falls permanently. Their numbers rapidly increased through the 1840s and 1850s as word spread regarding the many opportunities in the town's new factories and mills. By 1862, the number of Irish-Catholics in the village was estimated to be 1,500. [31]

Some of these new Irish immigrants were of course women, but we know even less about them than the men. We have yet to discover any personnel books for any of the factories in this period, so we have no clear indication how many women, Irish or otherwise, might have been working in the mills. The census records do not generally record the occupations of females, even in cases where we know they were earning money. We do know that some women were working at the mills, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton notes in an 1859 letter that, Mary, her cook "went into the factory, as she was tired revolving round the cook stove." [32] What she did there or how much she earned is a mystery.

Other scattered references seem to indicate that many women worked for the factories by doing piecework in their homes, rather than in the factory itself. Charlotte Woodward, one of the signers of the Declaration of Sentiments, earned extra money for her family by sewing gloves which were sent to her home in Dewitt from a factory in Gloversville. [33] An 1860 abstract for the Seneca Knitting Mills lists 350 employees and 3000 "finishers" doing outside work. [34] These 3000 finishers may very well have been women working, like Charlotte Woodward, in their homes.

Even if a woman did not go into a factory to work, or labor over piecework at home, the growing industrialization in the village nevertheless had a profound impact on her life. If nothing else, it somewhat eased the daily burden of living. With factories churning out such items as candles, baskets, stockings, and mattresses by the thousands, women no longer had to spend hours making their own by laborious hand techniques. One local resident remembered how thrilled his mother was when the textile mills opened in the area and she no longer had to produce all her own wool and linen at the farm. Instead, she would exchange raw wool at the mill for "a piece of factory" as she called it, and have it fashioned into clothing for the family by travelling "tailoresses." [35] The pumps for which Seneca Falls was to be so famous also vastly improved the quality of most women's lives. Having an indoor kitchen pump was vastly superior to drawing water for washing, bathing, and cooking from an outdoor well.

Although many women welcomed the material benefits of industrialization, and the opportunity to gain some economic independence, the process often did much to worsen their situation. Although the opportunity to work in a factory was theoretically liberating, in actual fact it often placed a double burden on women. Many were forced to work at uncongenial jobs to earn money which immediately went into the hands of husbands and fathers, and they often had to continue performing the traditional female housekeeping tasks in addition to their factory work.

The change from a family oriented rural lifestyle to one where the male members of the household now worked long hours away from the home, also served to buttress the idea that a woman's sphere was in the home, while a man's natural place was in the vigorous business world. Far from giving women equal economic opportunities, the new industrialization often only served to further circumscribe their lives and aspirations. Part of the frustration that induced women like Charlotte Woodward to attend the Convention was produced by these new stresses which industrialization had brought in its wake.

C. Community Development and Neighborhoods

As with any growing community, Seneca Falls began to organize itself into clearly definable residential and commercial neighborhoods in the 1830s and 1840s. The earliest settlement (1787-1826) had been almost entirely confined to the riverfront near the rapids, and the edges of Fall Street where stores and taverns cropped up to cater to the travellers on the turnpike. With the freeing of the water rights and the opening of the south side after 1826, however, new patterns of settlement emerged. The industrial activity continued to be concentrated around the river frontage, but new commercial and residential areas appeared to support the increasing number of new residents arriving in the village.

It must be emphasized that most of the conclusions in this section of the report were drawn from a very limited study of assessment records, census rolls, maps and personal papers, and can in no way be considered definitive. Further research must be completed in this area before we can be absolutely certain of the village's settlement pattern, but this preliminary study does seem to indicate basic trends and allows us to make some generalizations. Most of the records that were available for this study date from the early to mid-1850s (1850 Census, 1851 Assessment Records, 1852 and 1856 Maps), but as Seneca Falls experienced no great socio-economic upheaval between 1848 and 1856, we can probably safely assume that the trends which appear in these records were the continuation of forces which had certainly begun by 1848.

Local histories and census records indicate that Seneca Falls' population in the 1840s and 1850s was in the 3000-4000 range. The obvious question arises as to where these people were living. Most of them were apparently factory workers, living on fixed incomes. We do not have the personnel records of any of Seneca Falls' early industries, but we do know for instance that in 1862, the Seneca Knitting Mills employed about 400 workers in the factory, with 3000 others doing "finishing work" in their homes. [36] Taking this as a general guideline, we can obtain some idea of the number of people needed to run Seneca Falls' numerous mills and factories. Further study of local gazetteers and business records at the Seneca Falls Historical Society will hopefully provide more information.

A look at the 1851 real estate assessment records shows that a fair number of these people owned their own homes. Approximately 650 separate names appear on the assessment list as property owners. [37] This indicates that there was a house for about every five persons, suggesting a high rate of home ownership given the size of the average mid-19th century family. Assuming that the factory workers had a limited supply of ready cash and would be living in fairly inexpensive housing, a list was made of those individuals whose property was assessed at a value between \$100 and \$300. These homes would have been decidedly modest, as an unoccupied or abandoned house was usually valued at \$100, and many homes in the village were well up into the double figure range. The Stanton House for comparison was valued at \$1,500. Fifty-six homes fell into this \$100-\$300 category, with a high concentration in the south side area bounded by Haigh, Toledo, and Bridge Streets.

This orientation supports the traditional belief that Judge Gary V. Sackett was very active in promoting settlement in the property he owned on the south side of the river. It was said that

after he divided the land into lots in 1827, he offered the property on exceptionally easy terms to facilitate the settlement of the area by the Irish-Catholic laborers then flooding into the area. A study of any existing deeds would have to be done to verify this claim, but it certainly appears plausible. The vast majority of small property owners, most of whom had Irish surnames, were indeed located in the Sackett district.

Sackett's enterprising community spirit is well documented through his various commercial, political, and social activities. The fact that he donated the property at the corner of Toledo and Bayard Streets for the new Catholic church in 1848 [38] is a further indication that he was actively promoting Irish worker settlement in the area. At a time when anti-Catholic prejudice was exceedingly strong, Sackett, himself an Episcopalian, was making a strong goodwill gesture by this action. By providing low interest housing loans and familiar community and religious amenities, Sackett was attempting to create a stable and congenial neighborhood for Seneca Falls' newest citizens.

Sackett's activities in this area were surprisingly ahead of their time, and not at all the usual practice among early 19th century real estate barons. Most Yankee citizens were rather frightened by the flood of Irish immigration which engulfed them in the 1840s and 1850s. Suspicious of their religion, and disapproving of their lifestyle, they generally left the Irish to their own devices when it came to finding homes and jobs. The results were often unpleasant, both for the incoming immigrants, and for the old residents who were scandalized by the untidiness and overcrowding which characterized many early Irish communities. As a proud community leader, part of Sackett's motivation in encouraging Irish settlement on his property was no doubt an effort to avoid a similar slum development in Seneca Falls. Simple economic sense also dictated that if he wanted to sell his land, he had to do it to the newcomers, who just happened to be Irish. His intense personal involvement in the neighborhood, however, implies that he was interested in more than just a quiet town and a full pocket.

Sackett himself lived in the area in a large limestone house which he built on Sackett Street across from the Catholic church. His efforts in developing the neighborhood resemble nothing so much as a concentrated effort to create a well-planned, self-contained community specifically for the laboring classes around the Bridge Street artery. A contemporary of Sackett's recalled that the Judge and Ansel Bascom were rivals of a sort in developing the second ward, with Sackett concentrating on the west end, and Bascom on the east. [39] A glance at the 1856 map shows that Sackett won out, at least in the number of residents he attracted. The large commercial block he built at the corner of Bridge and Bayard Streets anchored the neighborhood and added greatly to its prosperity and stability.

This development of a carefully planned working class neighborhood was rather unusual in early mill towns. Although many mill owners did erect housing specifically for their workers, these developments were often tied to one particular factory, with the workers as often as not obliged to live there because the company script they received as wages could be used as rent nowhere else. Seneca Falls never developed this type of factory housing system. Instead, it offered Sackett's traditional neighborhood development with private lots and individual home ownership. The opportunity for a mill hand to actually own his own home and piece of land was extremely rare in the early 19th century. It is a tribute to Sackett's open-mindedness and community spirit that it happened in Seneca Falls.

Not every new worker in the village of course could afford even one of Judge Sackett's reasonable lots. We know that there were boarding houses in the village at this time, as a young machinist mentioned in his memoirs that they would all accept the factory script he received as pay in return for rooms. [40] Unfortunately, we do not know how many there were or where they were located. Interestingly enough, the assessment records seem to

indicate that at least some of them might have been situated in the neighborhood of the Wesleyan Chapel.

The 1851 assessment records show that a number of individuals owned multiple modest houses on Mynderse, Clinton, Jefferson, Chapel, and Troy Streets. In almost every case, they also owned a much more substantial house elsewhere in the village. Josiah Miller for example, owned a \$1,200 house on Cayuga Street and a \$300 house on Mynderse. Joseph Metcalf owned a house and barn valued at \$11,000, in addition to a \$600 house on Mynderse Street and a house under construction on Jefferson Street. Since these and the dozen other men who owned several houses in the Chapel area could not live in all of them at once, some of the properties must have been rented. Assuming that the owners would be using their most substantial house as their private residence, this leaves a fairly high number of available rental properties surrounding the Chapel. The 1851 assessment roll shows that there were at least 17 houses in the immediate neighborhood of the Chapel, presumably available for rent. Because the assessment records did not always list the location of multiple properties, there may well have been more. The records do seem to indicate that it was a popular area for real estate investments. (See Appendix B.) The 1856 map of the village shows that this trend continued; Josiah Miller and others having acquired several more properties in the area in the intervening five years.

We do not know if these houses were being used as single family dwellings or multiple occupancy boarding houses. Generally speaking, they seem to have been quite modest, only a small step above the houses in the Sackett neighborhood. Most of them fell into the \$300-\$400 range, with an occasional \$600 or \$800 house. The census records seem to indicate that there was not a large transient population of unattached adults in the village, most of the workers settling there with their families. Given the presumed size of the rental properties, it appears unlikely that they were run as high occupancy boarding houses, although some of the larger ones certainly might have been. The general impression is that the houses in the vicinity of the Chapel were rented as single family dwellings by members of the working class. Some of the homes may have been shared by more than one family. Duplexes were not unknown in the village as the assessment records indicate that there was a double house in the Sackett district at the corner of Haigh and Swaby Streets. Besides the investment rental properties, the Chapel area was characterized by numerous small property owners much like the Sackett district. Here and there would appear a more substantial house in the \$600-\$700 range, indicating that at least some of the residents were working their way up the economic ladder.

There seems to have been a small amount of commercial activity in the area as well, as the assessment rolls list one or two unspecified shops connected to homes in the area. These were probably very modest operations, as the maps and records seem to indicate that this was a predominately residential neighborhood. It is interesting to note though, that one local history states that there used to be a brickyard where the second Methodist church now stands on the corner of Clinton and Fall Streets. [41] The 1856 map shows the entire western half of the Clinton/Mynderse Streets block as unsurveyed and undeveloped. Is this the old brickyard? It apparently was no longer in operation in 1856, as the map fails to label it. Although no one has ever mentioned a brickyard next to the Chapel in conjunction with the Convention, it is theoretically possible that one was located there and in operation in 1848. We know that Joseph Metcalf, the founding father of the Wesleyan Chapel, had a brickyard and supplied all the brick for the Franklin House and Sackett's commercial block. He supposedly had a yard at his farm 1-1/2 miles north of the village, but he also owned a building directly behind the Chapel, and may have operated another brickyard operation from there. [42]

The view south from the Chapel was less obstructed in 1848 than it is today. There were

several large mills along Water Street, but none of the commercial development along Fall Street which would come later. William Arnett's textile mill (1844) was visible directly to the southeast. Still in operation today is the Seneca Woolen Mill (now known as the Seneca Knitting Mill), the only remaining evidence of the once extensive mill and factory complex which stretched along the riverfront.

D. Stanton House Neighborhood

The chance bit of fate that placed Elizabeth Cady Stanton on the corner of Washington and Seneca Streets in 1847 was instrumental in the development of her women's rights philosophy. By her own admission, her isolated situation and exotic neighbors were part of the stimuli that compelled her to call the Convention. Her particular location in the village provided her with certain opportunities and insights she probably would not have experienced elsewhere.

Stanton was correct when she said that her home was on the outskirts of town. Although living alongside the major east-west axis of the Seneca Turnpike, she was inconveniently far from the south side commercial district which was centered between Bridge and Ovid Streets, and which was a major center of community activity in 1848. The real cause of her isolation was probably her lack of neighbors. For a garrulous energetic woman like Stanton, her situation was decidedly isolated when compared to the cozy neighborhoods her friends lived in throughout the rest of the village. Exactly why the Locust Hill area remained so sparsely settled when businesses and homes were popping up like weeds everywhere else on the south side is unknown. The Seneca Falls Historical Society has an 1853 map in its collection (#A6) which was prepared for an auction sale of the lots lying in the triangle formed by Washington, Seneca, and Bayard Streets. A look at the 1856 map seems to indicate that only two of the 42 lots were sold, if indeed the sale were ever held. Perhaps the owners were asking exorbitant prices, or perhaps that portion of town was simply considered undesirable for one reason or another. In any case, Stanton spent her years in Seneca Falls largely marooned by herself on top of Locust Hill.

She does mention that "there was quite an Irish settlement at a short distance," [\[43\]](#) and the records do indeed show that there were about a dozen families living within the immediate vicinity, most of them along Seneca Street. The assessment records show that most of them, at least by 1851, owned their own homes. (See Appendix C.) Because we lack any other documentation, we can only assume that the individuals who appear on the 1851 list were the same ones who were living there in 1848. As with the Sackett neighborhood and the area around the Chapel, most of the homes have very modest appraisal values ranging from \$200-\$350. Joseph Payne's brick home was valued at \$500.

There is an indication that some type of commercial activity was being pursued along Seneca Street, for an O. R. Wickes, whose property was just below the rear of the Stanton lot, is listed in the assessment rolls as having a house and shop there worth \$700. There is no indication what sort of shop it might have been, or whether it was in active operation. James Luce is listed as the owner of the "old sash factory" on Seneca Street, but we do not know whether he was just living there, operating it as a business, or leaving it vacant.

It would be interesting to find out when these dozen, mostly Irish, families moved into the area and why they tended to congregate along the north side of Seneca Street. Might it have had something to do with work on the turnpike which ran in front of their houses, or was it somehow connected with the distillery located behind them on the river? Why did they settle here on the outskirts of town and not in the Sackett district where the majority of Irish were making their homes? At this point we neither know when they settled there, why, or how they made their living. That they were of the working class appears fairly certain, judging by the

value of their homes and Stanton's oblique references to them. This, probably more than anything made Stanton feel somewhat isolated. Though the well-to-do Chamberlain family lived at the foot of Seneca Street, Stanton was used to being surrounded by a large number of well-educated and liberal-minded companions, not first generation Irish laborers.

Her unexpected interaction with her neighbors resulted in a valuable eye-opening experience for her. Initially, her relations with them were strained as her children insisted on throwing rocks at their houses and livestock, but as they began to get used to one another, "amicable relations were established." [44] Stanton became something of the neighborhood umpire and midwife, arbitrating her neighbor's squabbles and delivering their babies. Her midnight excursions into their small homes had a profound impact on her, enabling her to see with her own eyes how alcoholism and poverty adversely affected the lives of many women. If she had settled in a comfortable middle class neighborhood among friends and relatives, she would most likely have never set foot in an Irish laborer's home, and learned how harsh life could be for poor women.

Stanton's open, generous nature soon led her to make friends with her neighbors, something many another privileged woman would not have done. She lent them newspapers, gave the children toys and clothing, and shared the family's fruit and produce with them. That her friendship with them was genuine seems certain. Before she ever moved to Seneca Falls she attacked those who were deploring the large Irish immigration caused by the potato famine. "What indescribable suffering the poor Irish must now be undergoing," she wrote her cousin, "The best way to relieve them is to bring them here to our land of plenty. I think instead of mourning over the increase of migration, we should rejoice for surely their condition is improved." [45] She tried to keep in touch with them as well after she left Seneca Falls, once writing to a friend, "I wish you would go down some day and inquire about my neighbors, Old Ann Dunnigan especially, I wish you would read Theodore's letter to her and say that we wish to hear all about her, about Michael, Mary and the dog." [46]

Except for these dozen Irish families, the Chamberlains, and the schoolhouse down the road on Washington Street, there was no other development in the immediate area. Although we cannot know this for certain, it is likely that the area to the south and west of the house was fairly open country. It is not very likely though that the neighborhood enjoyed anything like country quiet. Although the heyday of the turnpike was over by the time the Stantons moved to Seneca Falls, the road ran just alongside their property and was still the major thoroughfare for east-west traffic entering and leaving the village. A fairly steady procession of people and goods must have passed the house each day. Boats still plied the nearby canal as well, with all their attendant noise and confusion. Perhaps the most annoying intrusion was the large mill complex behind Seneca Street. Originally a flour mill, it was converted into a distillery sometime between 1852 and 1856. Less than pleased with the resultant change in the local air quality, Elizabeth Cady Stanton published a note in The Lily thanking the owners "for the magnificent bouquet just presented to her by that firm at a cost of ten thousand dollars." [47]

Figuratively and physically, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was positioned between the pastoral world of the early 1800s and the increasing industrialization of the post-1850 years. She could look out her back door and see fields and fruit trees, and gaze out the front upon churning millwheels and smoking chimneys. Across Bayard Street were the proud scions of old Yankee families, but down the hill were the vigorous families of recent Irish immigrants, struggling to make ends meet. Recognizing the old problems of society, and discovering some new ones along the way, she set in motion a movement that would address them all, and in the end, attempt to redefine society's conception of human worth and expand its notion of justice.

Important Sources of Information and Suggestions for Further Research

1. Seneca Falls Historical Society Collections.

The local Historical Society has a veritable treasure trove of information on the village which to date, has largely gone untapped. Time constraints allowed only a quick survey for this report, but further concentrated research should be done in this area. Important collections include:

Seneca Falls Historical Society Papers—These are papers written or collected by members of the early Historical Society on all aspects of life in the village. They are an incredibly rich source of information, containing many first person narratives from residents who lived here in the early 19th century. Most, if not all, have been bound in a series of books at the Historical Society.

Family Records—The Society has a large collection of papers documenting village families. Though some may contain only one or two items, they provide a wealth of miscellaneous material on the social, economic, and religious life of the community.

Business Records—The collection does not represent all of the industries once active in the village, but does contain early ledgers, accounts, and other business books. No personnel records have yet been found, but they may exist somewhere within the collection.

Assessment Records—Further study of these may help us identify neighborhoods and trace community development.

Newspapers—The Society has a sizeable collection of early 19th century newspapers on microfilm. They provide excellent insight into early community life through advertisements, descriptions of social events, editorials, and human interest stories.

Map Collection—Includes village maps from all time periods. Very valuable for determining when the various historic properties were built or altered.

Photographic Collection—Contains thousands of prints and glass plate negatives of village people, places and events.

2. United States Census Records.

More work should be done with these to help us get a better sense of the community composition. It would be useful to know for instance, exactly how many people were in the Irish families on Seneca Street. Stanton implies that they were overrun with children. Was this really the case?

3. ""Woman's Rights and Other "Reforms" in Seneca Falls:" A Contemporary View" by Mary S. Bull, edited by Robert E. Riegel New York History Vol. XLVI, No. 1 (Jan. 1965). Copy at the Seneca Falls Historical Society.

This particular article is full of information on Stanton, Bloomer and Seneca Falls in the 1840s and 1850s. It was written by Ansel Bascom's daughter who attended the Convention as a girl of 13. First published in the magazine "Good Company" in 1880, it describes the characters and reform movements of Seneca Falls in an engaging, entertaining fashion. Although allowances must be made for Bull's own prejudices, it is a valuable first person account of activities in Seneca Falls. When the article first appeared in 1880, Amelia Bloomer took exception to certain statements in it and wrote a rebuttal. This was printed in the Seneca Falls Revielle on July 30, 1880, and is available at the Historical Society on

microfilm. It too contains important information on The Lily and Bloomer's relationship with Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

4. "A Century of Seneca Falls History—Showing the Rise and Progress of a New York State Village." A paper prepared by Edward C. Eisenhart as part of his B.A. degree work at Princeton, 1942. Copy available at the Seneca Falls Historical Society.

A good overview of the village's development in the 19th century. Manages to make sense out of all the complex commercial and industrial activities which characterized the village during that period. Goes beyond the usual listing of factories to which most Seneca Falls histories seem to be addicted.

5. As We Were and Lost & Found, Photographic collections published by the Seneca Falls Historical Society. Contain many early 19th century views of Seneca Falls, including such items as the Stanton House and the Sackett commercial block.

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Last Updated: 10-Dec-2005

Women's Rights

Special History Study



CHAPTER TWO:

THE CONVENTION IN WESLEYAN CHAPEL

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel of Seneca Falls was established on March 27, 1843, as part of a nationwide schism in the Methodist church over the issue of slavery and abolitionism. From the moment of its inception, the residents of Seneca Falls identified the Wesleyan Chapel with radical reform convictions. It came as no surprise to them when the first Women's Rights Convention was held within its walls in July 1848.

The 60-70 individuals [1] who met in the first Ward School House on the evening of March 27, 1843, to form the "First Wesleyan Methodist Society of Seneca Falls" [2] were, for the most part, excommunicated or disaffected members of other Protestant denominations in the village. Nearly all had separated from their original churches over the issue of slavery. While most of the churches in Seneca Falls considered themselves antislavery and passed resolutions to that effect during the 1830s and 1840s, [3] their convictions did not extend to abolitionism or immediate emancipation. The more militant members of the congregations attempted to instill a stronger abolitionist sentiment in their various churches, but met with little success. Certain members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in particular, were quite outspoken in their insistence that the northern Methodist churches break off all ties with the proslavery southern congregations. As early as 1839, the Seneca Falls Methodists sent a letter to the General Conference denouncing them for not adopting a stronger stance against slavery.

We love and revere the Methodist ministry . . . Still, as you have taught us, a death-like Silence, and a cowardly inaction does not become us in any good cause. . . .

We believe sumthing [sic] effectual may be dun [sic] to save the Church from Slavery. . . .

We believe the time has arrived when the best counsels of the Church should concentrate there [sic] wisdom and energies, not . . . to quell the prevailing Solicitude or subdue & punish abolitionists as to devise some measures which may free the Methodist Episcopal Church from an evil which 'Mr. Wesley calls the sum of all villanies.' [4]

When it became apparent that the church leaders were going to ignore the slavery issue in the interests of national unity, the pro-abolition members of the Seneca Falls Methodist Episcopal Church broke away to form the new Wesleyan Methodist Church. They were joined by like-minded individuals from the Presbyterian and Baptist churches. [5]

It is difficult to know exactly how large the original Wesleyan congregation was. Different sources give figures ranging from 39 to 70, and all admit that they are only estimates. [6] [7] Records for the early history of the Chapel are fragmentary, a member having burnt most of them in 1858. [8] Exactly why he did so remains a mystery. We do know that the

membership never exceeded 200 during its first 2-1/2 decades and that the average number of members was probably close to 100. Momentary surges in membership occurred during several revival periods in the late 1850s and early 1860s. The earliest surviving entry in the church records refers only to the first six trustees: John C. King, H.L. Warden, Abram Failing, E.O. Lindsley, Joseph Metcalf, and William Fox, and their resolution "to negotiate for & purchase a Lot for the erection of a House of Public Worship & also to circulate a Subscription to raise money to buy a Lot & the Erection of said house of worship." [9] (See Illustration 2.)

At a meeting held pursuant to the Revised Statutes of the State of New York of the Society worshipping in the School House in District No 1 in Seneca Falls for the purposing of organizing themselves into a Religious Society under the Statute on the evening of March 27. 1843.

H. L. Warden was Chosen Chairman
A. Failing Secretary

It was motioned & carried that we proceed to elect 6 Trustees of said Society. Whereupon the following persons were elected

John C. King & H. L. Warden	for 3 years
Abram Failing & E. O. Lindsley	2 do
Joseph Metcalf & Wm. Fox	1 do.

Abram Failing was Chosen Clerk of the Trustees.

The following Resolutions were passed

Resolved That this Society be known called & distinguished from as the Ant Wesleyan Methodist Society of Seneca Falls.

Resolved that the Trustees be empowered to negotiate for & purchase a Lot for the erection of a house of Public Worship & also to circulate a Subscription to raise money to buy a Lot & the Erection of said house of Worship

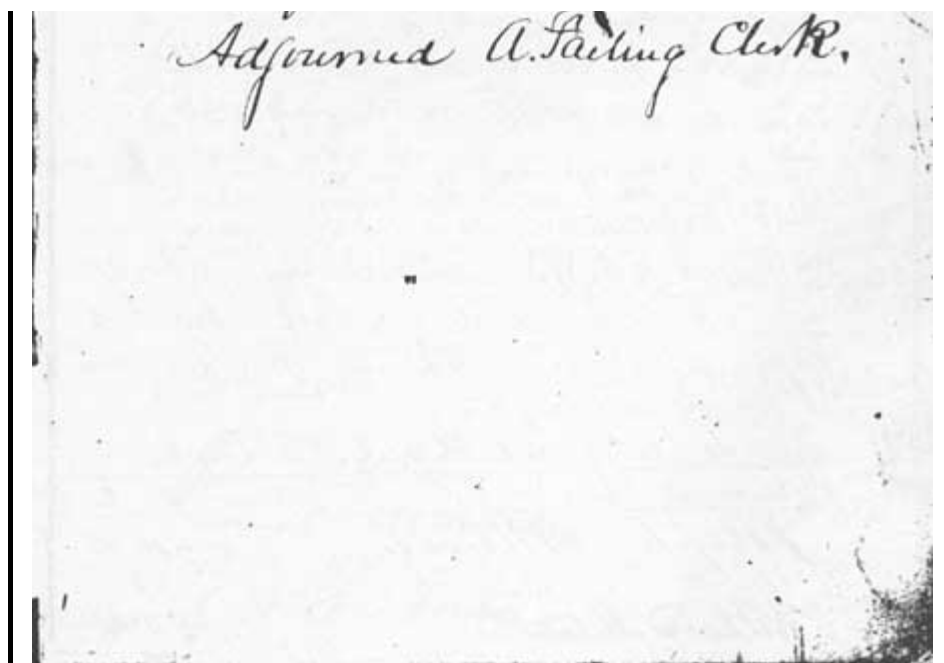
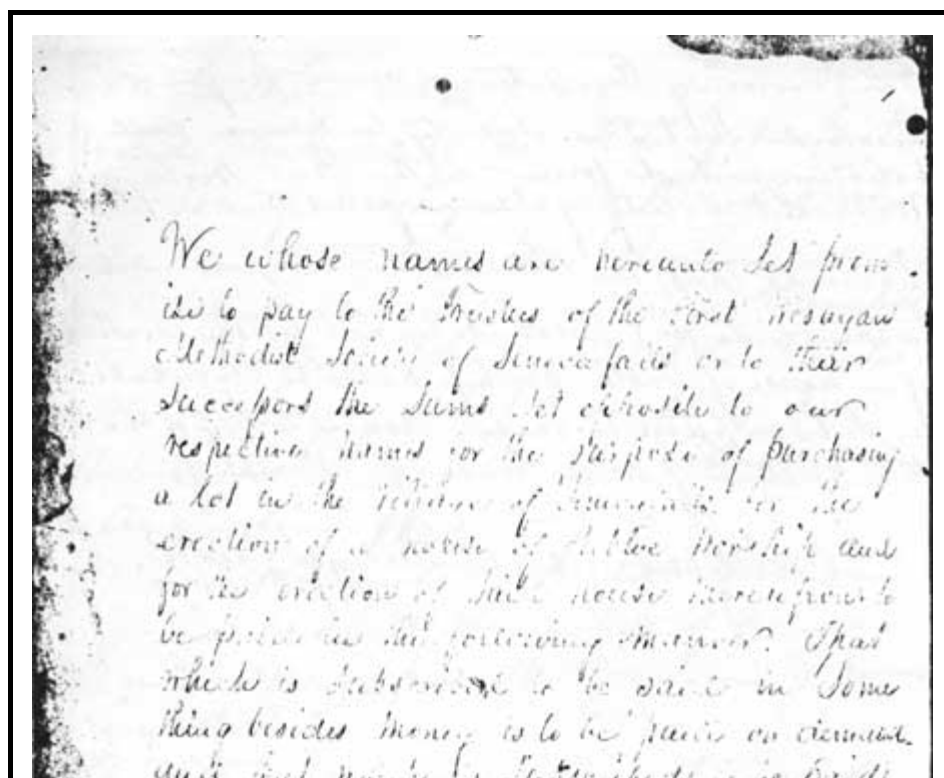


Illustration 2. List of Trustees of the First Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. From Trustees Book #1.

Assuming that the first membership of the Chapel numbered about 50, and that at least half of these individuals were probably non-property holding wives and dependents, the subscription list the trustees circulated in April of 1843 shows a strong spirit of involvement by the early members of the church. Twenty-four individuals pledged either services or money toward the completion of the Chapel. Joseph Metcalf, a former founding father of the local Baptist church, led the way with a pledge of \$500. Less affluent members (12 in all) each promised \$5 in cash, or \$5 worth of such services as blacksmithing, tailoring, or brickwork. The remaining 11 subscribers rounded out the list with pledges ranging from \$10 to \$100. [10] (See Illustration 3.)



to each to be paid one half when said
house is enclosed and the other half when
it shall be completed.
Dated Seneca Falls April 20. 1848.

Subscribers Names	What to be paid me	\$	C
Joseph McCall		500.	00
Robert W. McCall		38.	00
Willard McCall		50.	00

William Fox	2000
To one hundred in produce	100 00
John C. King	50 00
E. Partridge	\$ 50 00
I. Will to be paid in 26	5.00
D. Kidmore to be paid in Sailing	5 00
Gerardo Livingston in brick	1250
Christopher Mowbray -	20.00
Samuel Taylor	10 00
Ch. W. Ranger in Sailing	15 00
if given the amount of the produce in the	
C. & C. 1094 in Blacking	5 00
Henry J. Foster in Work	5 00
Archable	5 00
Marion C. Hain	5 00
John Bunker	10 00
Samuel Stansbury	5 00
W. H. Johnson	5.00
J. W. Dickerson in Sailing	5 00

David Crowell in Team work	\$ 5 00
George Pegler	5 00
R. P. Thayer for	100.00

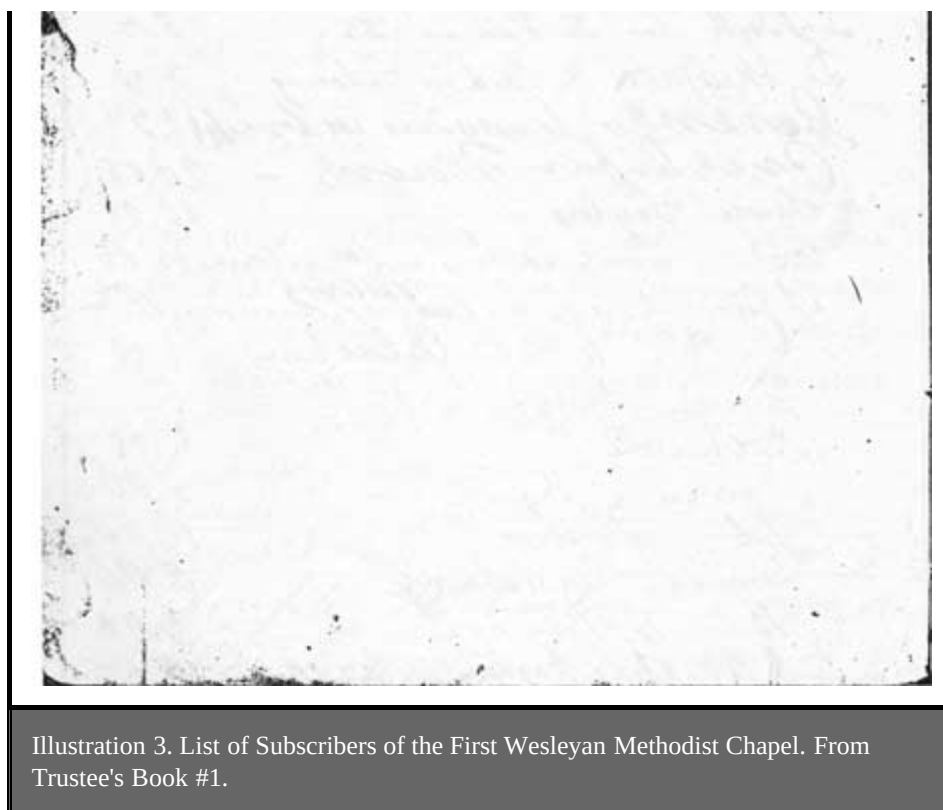


Illustration 3. List of Subscribers of the First Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. From Trustee's Book #1.

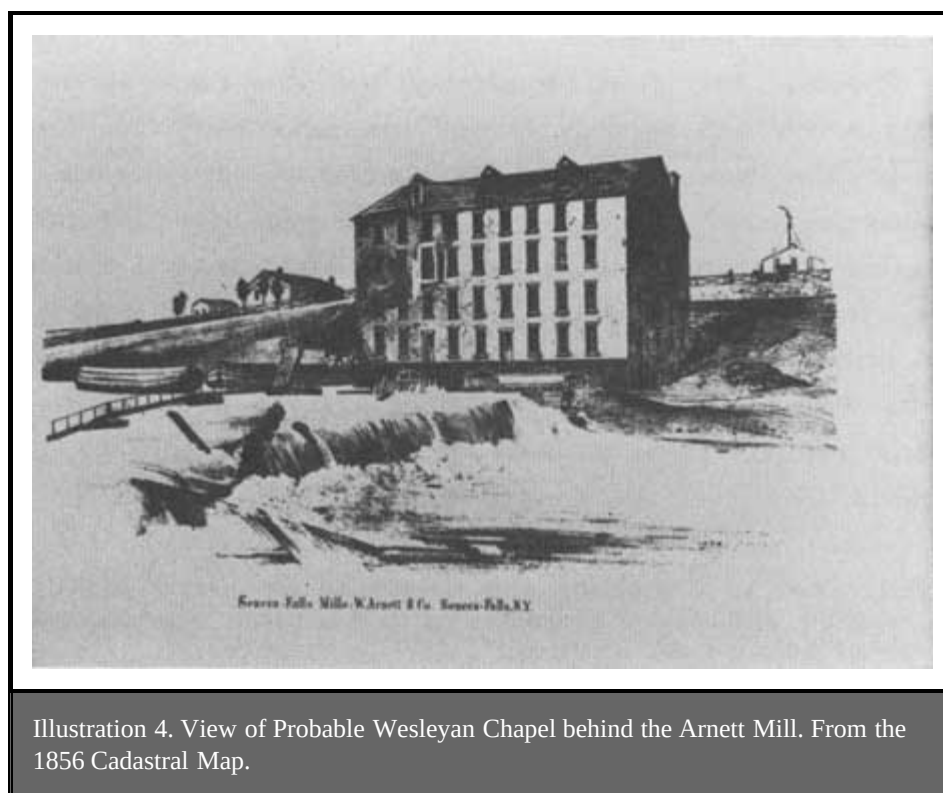
The composition of this subscription list seems to indicate that the early Wesleyan congregation represented a wide cross section of Seneca Falls inhabitants. Drawn together by strong personal beliefs and a militant social awareness rather than hereditary church affiliation, they were a diverse group both socially and economically. Interestingly, the name R. P. Hunt appears at the end of the list next to a pledge for \$100. This presumably was Richard P. Hunt, [11] a prominent abolitionist Quaker from Waterloo. Although never a member of the Wesleyan congregation, Hunt apparently felt strongly enough about what the Chapel stood for to offer the new church some financial assistance.

After the usual construction delays and difficulties the Wesleyan Chapel was completed within the year at a cost of about \$1,770 [12] and dedicated in October of 1843. [13] (See Illustration 4.) Once settled in their new home, the outspoken congregation lost none of its militancy. In April 1845 they hosted the first convention of the several Wesleyan congregations which had recently formed themselves into the Rochester Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America. The Reverend George Pegler, the pastor of the Seneca Falls Chapel, was elected president of the conference. [14] During this and subsequent conferences, the Wesleyans passed numerous resolutions stating their unequivocal stand on the moral and social issues of the day. A sampling of statements from conferences in the late 1840s and early 1850s reveals the Wesleyans resolute spirit on such topics as women's equality, slavery and temperance:

Resolved, That as Christians and Wesleyans we cannot identify our Christian and moral character with societies where women and colored persons are excluded (1847 Conference). [15]

Resolved, . . . therefore the Fugitive Slave Law, so called, is a violation of the law of God, and of the most sacred rights of humanity, that it is false in principle, wicked in its design, cruel in its operations, the crime of its authors and abettors, the foulest blot on our statute books, the infamy of this nation, and the disgrace of this age, and that no man can execute or obey it without sinning against God and man. . . . (1852 Conference). [16]

Resolved that we will not tolerate any member in our church who uses the elective franchise to promote the sale or use of ardent spirits as a beverage (1847 Conference). [17]



The Wesleyans of Seneca Falls did not confine their reforming zeal to conference resolutions, but made an active effort to practice what they preached. The most visible evidence of this was their willingness to open the Chapel, free of charge, to any reform speakers seeking a public forum. This was a very important concession to make in 19th century America. Most people of the time considered themselves good Christians, and opposed slavery and discrimination on general principles, but they had no desire to force the issue and make social conscience a prerequisite for salvation. The various abolitionist, feminist, and temperance reformers who appeared on the scene at this time felt just the opposite and made a determined effort to force the traditional churches to adapt a social program to combat the evils and inequalities of the day. They invariably tried to deliver their lectures from the pulpit of a church, hoping that people would thereby come to identify social reform with a Christian life.

Seneca Falls witnessed a major battle on this issue in August 1843 when Abigail Kelley, a famous abolitionist speaker, arrived in the village to give a series of lectures against slavery. Her presence caused a good deal of excitement, both because of the subject of her talks and the fact that she, a woman, would be addressing a mixed audience. Because she could find no church willing to offer her a meeting place (the Wesleyan Chapel was not yet completed), she ended up giving her talks in Ansel Bascom's yard.* Subsequently, Rhoda Bement, a member of the Presbyterian Church was excommunicated for attending the lectures. The transcripts of her trial provide important insights into the sentiments in Seneca Falls regarding reform, women's rights, and freedom of speech, and help to explain why the Women's Rights Convention eventually took place at the Wesleyan Chapel.

*Bascom was an influential Seneca Falls resident and lobbied strongly in favor of the Married Woman's Property Act of 1848. He was a good friend of

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and took an active part in the discussions at the Women's Rights Convention.

During Mrs. Bement's trial, the prosecuting church Elders made much of the fact that the lecture had been given by a woman, something they clearly considered "contrary to the established sentiment of the church." [18] Mrs. Bement was also charged with being "very unladylike & very unchristian" [19] for trying to persuade the pastor to read a notice from the pulpit announcing another abolitionist lecture. Women's rights was clearly an issue in Seneca Falls even before Elizabeth Cady Stanton arrived on the scene.

An 1843 article in the Seneca Falls Democrat noted that:

John Neal, an excentric [sic] genius, has been lecturing in New York on the rights of women. Hear what the Brooklyn news says of him: He thinks women should vote, should participate in the duties of juries, and have a voice in the civil and military engagements of our government. What absurd stuff is all this prattle about the "Rights of Women!" Suppose Mr. Neal's notions were carried into operation, what a beautiful spectacle would not this country present in a very short time! The strong, vigorous, enterprising Uncle Sam transformed into a Jerry Sneak—a gigantic specimen of a poor, hen-pecked son of sorrow. In time of war how effective would be our army and navy—the commander-in-chief in a delicate situation, her officers darning stockings. [20]

Not surprisingly, Mrs. Bement lost her case with the Presbyterian Elders who proceeded to excommunicate both her and her husband. Searching for a compatible church to join, they became members of the new Wesleyan Methodist congregation. [21] At least two other members of the Presbyterian Church also joined the Wesleyans about this time. [22] This infusion of new members, still smarting from their recent battles with the Presbyterians, could only have strengthened the resolve of the determined reform-minded Wesleyans.

Although the Trustees had agreed at the January 14, 1844, meeting that the Wesleyan "House of Worship shall not be opened for the purpose of speaking or preaching in favor of electing to Power either of the political parties of the county," [23] they immediately opened their doors to any abolitionist or reform groups seeking a place to meet. Mary Bascom Bull, the daughter of the Ansel Bascom who had placed his yard at the disposal of Abby Kelley, remembered that "very often the old chapel was lighted up of an evening and a champion of women's rights addressed the people. While we were sometimes honored by the presence of true good women like Frances Gage, or women of undoubted genius like Elizabeth Oakes Smith, we often had some very funny kinds of persons stray this way." [24] Major abolitionist speakers such as Frederick Douglass, Charles Lenox Remond, and William Lloyd Garrison also "held forth in the old Wesleyan Chapel," [25] in the 1840s.

When it came time for Elizabeth Cady Stanton to establish a meeting place for her proposed Women's Rights Convention, the Wesleyan Chapel would have presented itself as the obvious choice. It was the most aggressively liberal and reform-minded church in the village; it made a practice of welcoming radical speakers; it had a highly sympathetic congregation; and, not unimportantly, there was no fee charged for the use of the church. (The Trustees instituted a \$5 charge for the use of the building in 1855.) [26]

Neither Stanton nor the church records tell us how the arrangements were made for the use of the Chapel. Much is often made of Stanton's statement in The History of Woman Suffrage that the Chapel door was locked when she arrived, and that her nephew had to climb through a window to unbolt the door from the inside. [27] Some commentators have interpreted this to mean that the Chapel authorities suddenly had second thoughts about opening their doors

to such a radical group, and attempted to lock them out. This seems highly unlikely given the Trustees' past generosity toward reform gatherings, and the fact that Saron Phillips, the minister of the Chapel, was so much in sympathy with the Women's Rights Movement that he signed the Declaration of Sentiments. The more reasonable explanation for the locked door is that Stanton simply arrived before the key-bearer, or that this individual was a little late in arriving.

The two-day Convention began at 11 on the morning of July 19, and attracted more participants than even the organizers had expected. Three days before the event, Lucretia Mott had written to Elizabeth Cady Stanton warning her that "the convention will not be so large as it otherwise might be owing to the busy time with the farmers, harvest, etc. — But it will be a beginning & we may hope it will be followed in due time by one of a more general character." [28] Both ladies were pleasantly surprised to find "crowds in carriages and on foot" [29] moving toward the Chapel on the day of the Convention. Mrs. Stanton reported that "the house was crowded at every session," [30] and estimated the attendance at 300. Amelia Bloomer arrived late on the second day and remembered that she "was compelled on account of my late arrival, and the immense 'crowd' already congregated, to take a seat in the gallery." [31]

What exactly had drawn all these people from their homes on such short notice on a blistering hot midsummer day? [32] Charlotte Woodward, a 19-year-old glove maker from Dewitt who did piecework in her home in the country, remembered the sentiments that compelled her to attend the convention. She said that most women accepted their unequal position in life

as normal and God-ordained and therefore changeless. But I do not believe that there was any community anywhere in which the souls of some women were beating their wings in rebellion Every fibre of my being rebelled, although silently. All the hours that I sat and sewed gloves for a miserable pittance, which, after it was earned, could never be mine. I wanted to work, but I wanted to choose my task and I wanted to collect my wages. [33]

Seeing a chance to mingle with like-minded women, Woodward and half a dozen sympathetic friends piled into a farm wagon on the morning of the 19th, and headed for Seneca Falls 40 miles away. "At first we travelled quite alone . . . but before we had gone many miles we came on other waggon-loads [sic] of women, bound in the same direction. As we reached different cross-roads we saw waggons [sic] coming from every part of the country, and long before we reached Seneca Falls we were a procession." [34]

Unfortunately, we know very little about the people who formed this procession. Except for the 100 stalwart souls (Charlotte Woodward among them) who signed the Declaration of Sentiments, we do not even know their names. We can only assume that they, like Charlotte Woodward, were women who keenly felt the injustice in their lives and wished to do something about it.

Thanks in large part to the research of Judith Wellman of the History Department at State University of New York at Oswego, we do know a bit more about the 100 people, 68 women and 32 men, who signed the Declaration of Sentiments. Generally speaking, they were white, middle-class, middle-aged citizens from the immediate Seneca Falls/Waterloo area. Nearly all were already active in various reform movements, either through the Progressive Quakers of Waterloo or the antislavery Free Soil Party of which Henry Stanton was a member. At least one-third of the Seneca Falls signers were members of the Wesleyan Chapel, one-half of the Waterloo signers were Progressive Quakers. [35]

It appears that for the 100 signers at least, the Convention was less a sudden consciousness

raising experience, as a chance to publicly affirm their support for women's rights. Most had already taken a stand on this issue through their affiliations with such reform-minded groups as the Wesleyans, the Quakers, or the Free Soilers, all of whom were already on the record as opposing sexual inequality. How much the other 200 participants shared these views prior to the Convention, it is impossible to say.

As the audience began to gather in the Chapel, the organizers were surprised to see about 40 men [36] scattered amongst the crowd. The announcement publicizing the Convention had said that the first day's session was to be for women only, but as Stanton later recalled

they were already on the spot, and as the women who must take the responsibility of organizing the meeting, and leading the discussions, shrank from doing either, it was decided in a hasty council round the altar, that this was an occasion when men might make themselves preeminently useful. It was agreed they should remain, and take the laboring oar through the Convention. [37]

Charlotte Woodward admitted that "it was the presence of these uncommonly liberal men that gave her courage to stay over for the second day's sessions." [38] James Mott was accordingly chosen to be the moderator, and Mary McClintock the secretary. [39] With the formalities out of the way, the Convention then began in earnest.

Mary Bull, the 13-year-old daughter of Ansel Bascom who attended both days of the Convention, remembered the event 32 years later:

. . . the whole scene comes before me as vividly as if yesterday,—the old chapel with its dusty windows, the gallery on three sides, the wooden benches or pews, and the platform with the desk and communion-table, and the group gathered there; Mrs. Stanton, stout, short, with her merry eye and expression of great good humor; Lucretia Mott; whose presence then as now commanded respect wherever she might be; Mary Ann McClintoc [sic] a dignified Quaker matron with four daughters around her, two of whom took active part in the proceedings. [40]

Elizabeth Cady Stanton opened the proceedings with a brief statement as to their purpose in gathering, and then turned the floor over to Lucretia Mott who presented "a survey of the degraded condition of women the world over, [and] showed the importance of inaugurating some movement for her education and elevation." [41] Elizabeth Cady Stanton then read the Declaration of Sentiments to which changes and revisions were made by the audience. The question of whether the men present should be allowed to sign the Declaration was "discussed in an animated manner; [and] a vote in favor was given." [42]

The meeting then adjourned until 2:30, when the Declaration was once again read and "papers circulated to obtain signatures." [43] The 11 resolutions to the Declaration outlining specific demands in the interests of justice and equality were next presented, followed by speeches from Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth McClintock. The meeting then adjourned until 10 the next morning. During the evening, Lucretia Mott gave a general lecture on reform movements, presumably in the Wesleyan Chapel. [44]

The Convention convened on the second day at its appointed hour, and the Declaration of Sentiments was once again read and debated. Thomas and Mary Ann McClintock, Ansel Bascom, and Frederick Douglass were all identified as being active participants in the proceedings. At the close of the morning session, the Declaration was, according to the printed report, "unanimously adopted." [45] This claim of entire unanimity is probably not completely true, as Stanton reports in The History of Women Suffrage that the ninth

resolution calling for the vote for women was by no means universally accepted at the Convention. Strong debate occurred on the issue, but she and Frederick Douglass "persistently advocated the resolution, and at last carried it by a small majority." [46] In spite of this one disagreement, the unanimity of convictions among the Convention participants appears to have been strong and heartfelt.

The afternoon session on the 20th was concerned with discussions and revisions on the resolutions which, "after some criticism, much debate, and some alterations, were finally passed by a large majority." [47] The evening session, which began at 7:30, was largely taken up with general closing speeches by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Thomas McClintock, Mary Ann McClintock, Frederick Douglass, and Lucretia Mott. At one point, Mott proposed an additional resolution calling for the "overthrow of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to woman an equal participation with men in the various trades, professions and commerce." [48] The resolution was presented to the convention and adopted, after which the proceedings were closed "by one of Lucretia Mott's most beautiful and spiritual appeals." [49] (See Appendix D for Report of Convention and Appendix J for location of farmsteads of Waterloo signers of the Declaration of Sentiments.)

The Convention's organizers did not have long to wait for the public's reaction to their revolutionary ideas. Stanton recalled that "the proceedings were extensively published, unsparingly ridiculed by the press, and denounced by the pulpit, much to the surprise and chagrin of the leaders . . . [who] were wholly unprepared to find themselves the targets for the jibes and jeers of the nation." [50] She continued:

So pronounced was the popular voice against us, in the parlor, press, and pulpit, that most of the ladies who had attended the convention and signed the Declaration, one by one, withdrew their names and influence and joined our persecutors. Our friends gave us the cold shoulder and felt themselves disgraced by whole proceedings. [51]

Once the initial shock had worn off, however, Stanton resolutely set herself the task of bringing public opinion around to her way of thinking. The Convention had been a turning point for her. She later wrote, "The discussions had cleared my ideas as to the primal steps to be taken for woman's enfranchisement, and the opportunity of expressing myself fully and freely on a subject I felt so deeply about was a great relief." [52] With the much appreciated support of such liberal newspapers as Frederick Douglass' North Star, and Horace Greeley's New York Tribune, she embarked on her lifelong campaign for the cause of women's rights.

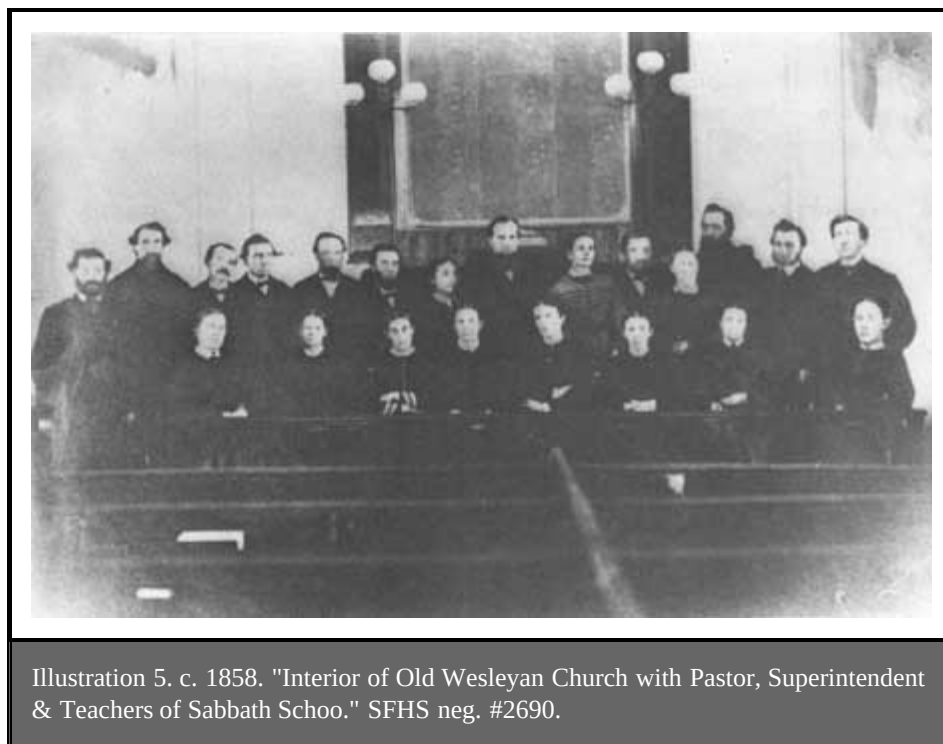
As with any proper revolutionary campaign, she had first to deal with the enemies in her own backyard. Not all of the churches in Seneca Falls were so open-minded as the Wesleyans, and the women's rights movement came under heavy attack from various pulpits in town. Conspicuous in this assault was the Reverend Horace P. Bogue, the same Presbyterian minister who had excommunicated Rhoda Bement for attending Abby Kelley's antislavery lecture five years before. According to Stanton, Bogue preached several sermons criticizing the Convention and the cause of women's rights, but she felt that she counterattacked quite neatly with an article in the county papers. [53]

The Seneca Falls Wesleyans and their liberal minister, Saron Phillips, presumably continued their support for the cause of women's rights. We can only hope that Reverend Phillips was not one of those who withdrew his name from the Declaration once the storm of ridicule broke. Phillips left Seneca Falls in 1849, and was replaced by the Reverend Benjamin Bradford, who remained until 1852. [54] (See Appendix E.) The various resolutions passed by the Wesleyans at their conference conventions after 1848 show that they continued to press for social and moral reforms of all types. Between 1848 and 1869 they passed, among

others, resolutions calling for an end to slavery, social inequality, and unjust wars in no uncertain terms. In 1864 for instance, they proclaimed that "we hate American Slavery with an increased hatred; and while we witness with gratitude the liberation of so many of the oppressed, we will increasingly pray Almighty God to cause, if need be the sword to be used until the last yoke is hewn from the necks of those who have worn it so long." [55]

While waging war against sin and social injustice in the wider world the Wesleyans were involved in some internal battles of their own. In 1852, Reverend Bradford and an unspecified number of his congregation left the Chapel in a dispute over church hierarchy, and attempted to form a new Congregational Church. This experiment lasted only 1-1/2 years, and most of the former Wesleyans returned to the Chapel when Bradford's health forced him to abandon his plans in 1854. [56]

The reunified congregation was served by three different pastors from 1853-1857, all of whom were active in promoting revivals and open air meetings. The largest revival occurred in 1858 under the ministry of the Reverend H.B. Knight, who managed to add 118 new members to his flock. It was also during this time that most of the church records were burned by one of the congregation. It is interesting to speculate on whether the passionate religious revival then in progress had anything to do with this event. The church history also notes that antislavery feeling was particularly high at this time, and that many of the members of the Wesleyan Chapel were active in the Underground Railroad, hiding fugitive slaves and assisting them on their way to freedom in Canada. [57] It seems the congregation had lost none of its passion for social reform and political involvement. (See Illustration 5.)



The Chapel apparently continued along in this vein under various pastors until 1869 when a major split occurred in the congregation. Under the Reverend William W. Lyle, the issue of church hierarchy and authority once again became a bone of contention. The church membership split down the middle on the question of whether the individual congregation or the Conference of Elders should have the final say in matters pertaining to the members. Unable to reach a compromise, Lyle and 63 followers left the Chapel and formed the First Congregational Church of Seneca Falls. This left the Wesleyan Chapel with only 60 members and no pastor, roughly the same situation they had started from 21 years earlier.

[58] Things were also complicated by the fact that the departing members laid claim to the Chapel as their property. The issue was eventually settled by the payment of \$2,500 to the Congregationalists, with the Wesleyans retaining the Chapel. [59]

The 60 remaining Wesleyans must have been a very determined lot, for only a year later, they had developed both the ambition and the wherewithal to build a new church. Comments concerning plans to sell the old chapel begin appearing in the Trustees' Record Books on November of 1870 and by March 1, 1871, they had "Accepted [the] Deed of [a] lot on [the] corner of Fall and Clinton Street, from Bro. C.G. Corwin. Also completed article of agreement for sale of old church to C.G. Corwin." [60] Work on the new building was begun that summer.

Progress was very slow though, as the congregation had difficulty meeting the construction costs. They moved into the new building in the spring of 1872, even though only one meeting room was finished. It required three more years before the Wesleyans could raise enough money to complete the structure. They finally managed to do so, and dedicated the new church in August 1875. [61] As a tribute to the old brick Chapel, they placed its original cornerstone over the doorway of the new church.

The original Wesleyan Chapel, once the scene of so much impassioned rhetoric, was remodeled into a concert hall and several stores (see "Architectural Survey" by Barbara Pearson for subsequent history of Chapel). Its days of hosting fervent abolitionist orators and determined feminists was over, but it had served a vital function during its first 29 years by providing a sympathetic home for reformers of all creeds and causes. Throughout its short ecclesiastical history, it had proved to be a shining haven of liberality in a generally doctrinaire world.

Important Sources of Information and Suggestions for Further Research

1. First Wesleyan Methodist Church of Seneca Falls—Records 1843-1911 1 reel of microfilm (#13) and original material at the Seneca Falls Historical Society.

Contains numerous pieces of information on the physical changes made to the Chapel, i.e., the introduction of gas in 1858 and the lowering of the pulpit in 1860, etc. Discusses the several splits in the congregation which occurred in 1852 and 1869, eventually resulting in the formation of the First Congregational Church of Seneca Falls. Contains information on the sale of the Chapel in 1872 and the plans for building the new church.

2. One Hundred Years of Service for Christ in the Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1844-1944 (New York) copy at Seneca Falls Historical Society.

Contains good examples of the various reform resolutions passed by the Rochester Conference of Churches, of which the Wesleyan Chapel was a member.

3. "The Signers of Seneca Falls: Who Were They?" Judith Wellman. Paper prepared for the Social Science History Association, copy at the Seneca Falls Historical Society. A detailed, statistical study identifying the signers of the Declaration by age, sex, occupation, religion, etc.

4. History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Ira Ford McLeister.

No copy of this book was found during the research for this paper, but it may contain additional information on the chapel and its members.

5. Local Church Records

The local Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian Churches may still have some records in their possession which were not given to the Historical Society, and should be contacted.

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Women's Rights

Special History Study



CHAPTER THREE:

ELIZABETH CADY STANTON

Elizabeth Cady Stanton always asserted that it was her experiences in Seneca Falls, New York, that forcibly brought home to her the wrongs and injustices suffered by women, and induced her to become an outspoken advocate of women's rights. The Convention of 1848 was the result of her dissatisfactions and frustrations with her domestic lot in the village. An examination of her circumstances and situation during her 16-year stay in Seneca Falls goes a long way toward explaining her subsequent view, actions, and philosophy regarding the women's rights movement.

Prior to her arrival in Seneca Falls in 1847, Elizabeth Cady Stanton had led an exciting, stimulating life as the wife of the abolitionist orator Henry B. Stanton. She had married Stanton on May 10, 1840, at the age of 25 and accompanied him immediately thereafter on a journey to the World's Anti-Slavery Convention in London. At the close of the convention, the Stantons traveled around the British Isles and France for several months; in November 1840, they returned to Elizabeth Cady Stanton's childhood home in Johnstown, New York, where Henry Stanton studied law for two years under his father-in-law, Judge Daniel Cady. In 1842, Henry Stanton started a law practice of his own in Boston and the family relocated to a home outside the city of Chelsea. [1]

Here, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote "I spent some of the happiest days of my life, enjoying, in turn, the beautiful outlook, my children, and my books." [2] Through her husband's associations with the leading abolitionist and reform figures of the day she made the acquaintance of many of the liberal, literary, and philosophical lights then illuminating Boston. Stanton took full advantage of her stimulating situation and later wrote that "I attended all the lectures, churches, theaters, concerts, and temperance, peace, and prison-reform conventions within my reach. I had never lived in such an enthusiastically literary and reform latitude before, and my mental powers were kept at the highest tension." [3] Henry Stanton's health, however, was not up to the raw Boston winters, and after four years the decision was made to return to New York state.

Judge Cady provided a home for the Stantons by deeding to his daughter a house on approximately two acres of land in Seneca Falls, New York. [4] Although we do not yet know the full extent of his holdings, Judge Cady apparently owned a good deal of property in and around the village. From comments in letters between Cady and various members of the Stanton family, it seems probable that the Stantons were in some measure helping to manage these properties and receiving income from them. Henry Stanton is listed as the agent for Cady's Seneca Falls properties on the 1851 tax assessment rolls. The fact that Elizabeth Cady Stanton says that her new home stood on "five acres" [5] rather than the two specified in the deed, may also indicate that Judge Cady owned contiguous property which the Stantons freely used as their own. Visitors and relatives most often described the grounds as fairly extensive, encompassing lawns, a playground, fruit trees, and vegetable gardens, intimating at least that the property they used included more than just the two acres owned by Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Her son Gerrit remembered the Seneca Falls home as "a long rambling house

surrounded by lawns, trees, and several acres of ground." [6]

Some confusion exists as to whether the Stantons first arrived in Seneca Falls in 1846 or 1847. In her autobiography, Stanton says that they arrived in the spring of 1847. [7] The deed transferring the property to her is also dated 1847. Elsewhere in her book though, she says that while she remodeled the house, she frequently discussed the New York Constitutional Convention, "then in session," [8] with Ansel Bascom. Because this convention was convened in 1846, some commentators have concluded that Stanton, who is often unreliable on dates, was mistaken when she said they arrived in 1847, and that they really came earlier in 1846. It is unlikely that she would forget the year she arrived in Seneca Falls, and the year 1847 is supported by the date of the property transfer itself. The confusion over Stanton's conversations with Ansel Bascom can be explained by the fact that some of the issues under consideration at the Constitutional Convention such as changes to the Married Woman's Property Act, continued to be the subject of debate, discussion and petition until their final adoption in 1848. As an active politician and subsequent member of the New York legislature, Bascom would very likely have been travelling back and forth between Seneca Falls and Albany to keep abreast of developments on these issues in which he had so much interest. His conversations with Stanton on the proposed legislative changes before the convention could just as easily have occurred in 1847 as in 1846. The fact that Stanton erroneously says in The History of Woman Suffrage that the Constitutional Convention occurred in 1847, [9] shows too that she was mistaken about the date of the convention, not about her arrival in Seneca Falls. To date, no evidence has surfaced which conclusively establishes the date for Stanton's arrival in Seneca Falls, and the issue remains an open one. (See the "Architectural Survey of Women's Rights National Historical Park" by Barbara Pearson for a further discussion of this point.)

The Stantons did not all come to the village at once. While Henry Stanton stayed in Boston to close up his practice, Elizabeth and her three children headed for New York in the company of her sister and her two children. After dropping off the children at her parents' home in Johnstown, Stanton proceeded on alone to Seneca Falls, "quite happy with the responsibility of repairing a house and putting all things in order." [10] The property apparently needed a great deal of "putting in order," for Stanton reported that "the house we were to occupy had been closed for some years and needed many repairs, and the grounds, comprising five acres, were overgrown with weeds." [11] Although we cannot positively verify this, several local histories say that the house had once been used as an Episcopal boarding house and day school for boys before the Stantons' arrival. [12]

Continuing his generous support of the family's relocation, Judge Cady gave his daughter a check for the necessary repairs and the following challenge, "You believe in woman's capacity to do and dare; now go ahead and put your place in order." [13] Stanton accepted both the check and the challenge, and set about renovating the house. "After a minute survey of the premises and due consultation with one or two sons of Adam, I set the carpenters, painters, paperhangers, and gardeners at work, built a new kitchen and woodhouse, and in one month took possession." [14] Stanton was excited about her new home, and wrote her cousin that she was sure to be "happy and contented . . . for the country & that climate is very delightful." [15] She was less sanguine about her husband's attitude, writing in the same letter that "he dreads the change from Boston to Seneca & I fear he will long for the strong excitement of a city life, tho' I hope after a time he will be happy and contented." [16]

By the late spring or early summer of 1847, the entire family was apparently settled in their new home. At this time, the Stantons consisted of 42-year-old Henry, 31-year-old Elizabeth, 5-year-old Daniel, 3-year-old Henry, and Gerrit, aged 1 and some months. Four more children were born to them in Seneca Falls; Theodore in 1851, Margaret in 1852, Harriot in 1856, and Robert in 1859. [17] See Illustrations 6, 7, and 8.) Once the excitement of her new

home had worn off, Stanton began to find that her life in Seneca Falls was not the exciting and varied one it had been in Boston. Although her married sister lived in the village, and Stanton knew the area and people well through previous visits, she described her new life as

comparatively solitary. . . . The change from Boston was somewhat depressing. There, all my immediate friends were reformers. I had near neighbors, a new home with all the modern conveniences, and well-trained servants. Here our residence was on the outskirts of town, roads very often muddy and no sidewalks most of the way, Mr. Stanton was frequently from home, I had poor servants, and an increasing number of children. [[18](#)]



Illustration 6. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and son, c. 1854. From [Eighty Years and More](#), Elizabeth Cady Stanton.



Illustration 7. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and child, c. 1857. From [Eighty Years and More](#), Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

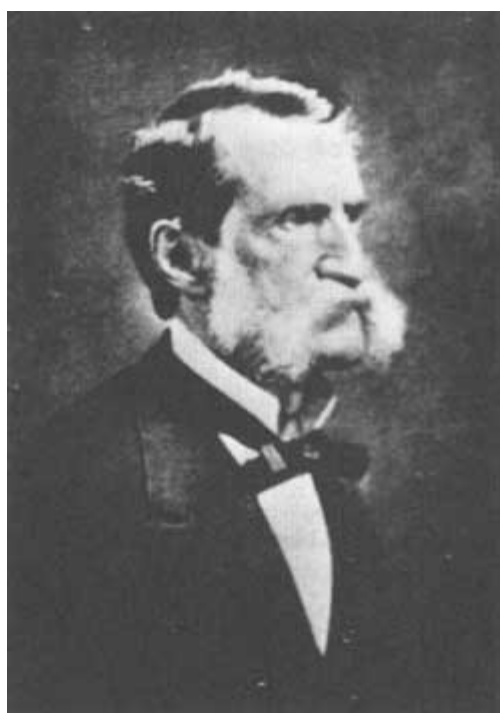


Illustration 8. Henry Brewster Stanton. From *Eighty Years and More*, Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Unable to cope singlehanded with the demand of her sprawling household and worn to exhaustion through the care of her four malaria ridden children, Stanton packed up her brood and headed home to her parents for some relief and a respite from her troubles. [19] Reality had to be faced, however, and Stanton was soon back in Seneca Falls frantically trying to keep her children healthy, properly clothed, and fed.

Heretofore, Elizabeth Cady Stanton had always lived in comparative ease and comfort. Her father was one of the wealthiest men in the state, and her life in Boston had apparently been one with few domestic cares. She was accustomed to being surrounded by exciting and stimulating friends, with ample leisure time in which to cultivate her various interests and hobbies. Her sudden plunge into the daily drudgery of housekeeping and childcare was traumatic and depressing. Her life was probably no more onerous than that led by millions of other women of her day, but it came as a particularly heavy shock to her because it was so unexpected. If she had not experienced this life for herself, she probably would not have developed the extraordinarily perceptive and all encompassing philosophy of women's rights which she did. No doubt, she would have labored for women's rights even if her domestic life had remained carefree, but it would have been the fight of a privileged woman fighting for legal and political equality. Stanton's personal experiences as an overburdened housewife in an isolated village gave her some invaluable insights into the inequities and injustices which ruled the average woman's life. It was precisely because she had previously been in a privileged position, that she recognized what it was that these other women were missing, and how the customary rules regarding such things as child rearing, cooking, sanitation, and house design were robbing them all of their potential. She then became determined to change the entire social fabric if need be to release herself and all women from their needless drudgery.

Stanton wrote of her feelings at this time in her autobiography:

I now fully understood the practical difficulties most women had to contend with in the isolated household, and the impossibility of woman's best development if in contact, the chief part of her life, with servants and children. . . . The general discontent I felt with woman's portion as wife, mother, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide, the chaotic conditions into which everything fell without her constant supervision, and the wearied anxious look of the majority of women impressed me with a strong feeling that some active measures should be taken to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular. [20]

The result of this determination was of course, the Women's Rights Convention of July 1848. (See chapters on the Wesleyan Chapel and The Hunts.) With the backing of her Quaker friends in Waterloo, Stanton set in motion the first organized women's rights movement.

The effect of the Convention on Stanton's own situation was deep and immediate:

The discussions had cleared my ideas as to the primal steps to be taken for woman's enfranchisement, and the opportunity of expressing myself fully and freely on a subject I felt so deeply about was a great relief. . . . With these new duties and interests, and a broader outlook on human life, my petty domestic annoyances gradually took a subordinate place. Now I began to write articles for the press, letters to conventions held in other States, and private letters to friends to arouse them to thoughts on this question . . . instead of mourning, as I had

done, over what I had lost in leaving Boston, I tried in every way to make the most of life in Seneca Falls. [21]

One of the reasons that Stanton was able to suddenly have the leisure time to engage in these activities was the fortuitous hiring of a 16-year-old Quaker housekeeper named Amelia Willard. [22] Stanton described her as "a treasure, a friend and comforter, a second mother to my children, . . . [she] understood all life's duties and gladly bore its burdens. She could fill any department in domestic life, and for thirty years was the joy of our household. But for this noble self-sacrificing woman, much of my public work would have been quite impossible." [23]

In addition to Amelia Willard, Stanton generally employed one or two women to act as housemaids or cooks. She seemed to have a singularly difficult time keeping them as her letters are full of woeful tales of inept servants or disappearing kitchen help. She tried to be philosophical about it, but rarely succeeded when it was she who had to fill in behind them. The servants left so frequently it seems, not because the Stantons were particularly difficult to work for, although the children did have the reputation in town of being somewhat hard to handle, but because the other opportunities available elsewhere were more attractive than domestic work. Stanton noted in an 1859 letter that one cook was leaving to take a job in a factory, and that she really could not blame her for being tired of "revolving round the cook stove." [24] Stanton was not the only Seneca Falls resident who had trouble retaining help. A farmer who settled a few miles outside of the village in 1848 recalled that "household help was difficult, if not impossible, to come by. . . . We tried sometimes to work it out with immigrant girls from Ireland or Germany, but just as soon as the girl learned the language and something of the ways of the family, she was apt to get restless and move on. Or some young fellow would come along and marry her, and off they'd go." [25]

Stanton's inability to secure good household help in Seneca Falls helped to strengthen her belief that a communal life-style was the most desirable and equitable domestic arrangement. She had spent a short time at the Brook Farm Community while living in Boston, and was much impressed with the utopian experiment. [26] To have men and women sharing equally in all domestic and agricultural work, and enjoying frequent literary and musical diversions with congenial companions, was to her, an ideal living arrangement. She spoke and wrote frequently on the subject, and never ceased calling for a more equitable distribution of household duties between the male and female members of a family. She was very resentful of the system which confined her to the house while her husband was free to pursue any interest he pleased. Henry Stanton was generally willing to let his wife pursue her reform interests if she could find the time, but even this very liberal individual was not going to volunteer to assume any of the domestic duties to allow her some leisure in which to work. Her frustration boiled over in the following letter to Susan B. Anthony:

Oh how I long for a few hours of blessed leisure each day. How rebellious it makes me feel to see Henry going about where and how he pleases. He can walk at will through the whole wide world or shut himself up alone, if he pleases, within four walls. As I contrast his freedom with my bondage and feel that, because of the false position of woman, I have been compelled to hold all my noblest aspirations in obedience in order to be a wife, a mother, a nurse, a household drudge, I am fired anew [27]

Stanton decided that if she could not go out into the world for spiritual and intellectual stimulation, she would bring the world into her parlor. Her home became one of the standard stopping places and boarding points for the legions of reform lecturers and politicians who passed through the region in the 1840s and 1850s. Her son Gerrit provides here a rather irreverent look at the typical comings and goings at the Stanton house:

The Seneca Falls Convention woke up all the cranks, long-haired individuals, ismists, both male and female in the State of New York and all roads led to Seneca Falls and the Stanton mansion. . . . The house with its wings had many bedrooms and as Mrs. Stanton was an hospitable hostess it was just the place for "advanced thinkers" to gather without being disturbed, express their views while partaking of the Stanton's viands by day and calmly reposing in the Stanton beds at night. . . . The writer's recollections of his early life at the Stanton home were rooms full of people and no vacant chairs in the dining room. For many years a constant string of invited and uninvited guests, principally the latter, came and generally lingered. They were poor in purse and often the Stanton family was called upon for railroad fare to help them to their destination. [28] (See Illustration 9.)



Illustration 9. Stanton House, c. 1880-1890. From SFHS Collection, neg. #60, print #685.

In addition to the "cranks" that Gerrit Stanton mentions, the Stantons also entertained such respected figures as James and Lucretia Mott, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, and Gerrit Smith. During the 1848 Convention the Motts and Martha Wright stayed at the house, along with other guests whose names we do not know. [29] This recital of constant entertaining inevitably leads to the question of how the Stantons could afford to keep such a generous "open house" for their fellow reformers, in addition to providing them train fare home.

Unfortunately, there are no known records that can tell us how much money Henry Stanton was earning or of what the family income consisted. Popular tradition has held that Henry Stanton made little money as a lawyer, preferring to spend his time in nonremunerative political and reform activities. If this is so, and it may be, then he must have been receiving income from other sources, for the Stanton life-style certainly appears to have been in the comfortable upper middle class range. As noted earlier, they may have been receiving income from some of Judge Cady's properties. The 1851 assessment records list his holdings in Seneca Falls as a house and barn valued at \$7,950, a vacant building listed at \$250, and a plaster mill with a value of \$800. As noted earlier, Henry Stanton is listed on the assessment records as the agent for these properties. It has often been assumed that because Judge Cady gave the Seneca Falls house and property to his daughter, her family must have been in financial difficulties. This is not necessarily true, as he may just have wished to present the

house as a gift, or because it was to his benefit to have someone in Seneca Falls to keep an eye on his other properties there. In either event, the property was one of the larger homes in the village, coming in in the top seven percent on the assessment records for its ward in 1851. [30] If the family were having financial trouble, the acceptance of a large, vacant house with all of its attendant maintenance problems would hardly have seemed a reasonable thing to do.

The Stantons' social life and circle of friends certainly shows that they were at ease among the well-to-do, and in no embarrassment regarding the reciprocation of any social invitations. Stanton lists among her closest friends the Bascoms, the Sacketts, and the Hunt family of Waterloo, all wealthy entrepreneurs and leaders of Seneca Falls/Waterloo society. Elizabeth Cady Stanton also makes an interesting statement in her autobiography that the Tylers were "my nearest neighbors." [31] A quick glance at the village maps shows that there were almost three dozen families living closer to the Stantons than the Tylers, the implication being that Stanton considered the wealthy Tylers the nearest neighbors of her own social and economic class.

Although no definitive statement can be made about the Stantons' economic situation based on the available evidence, the various oblique references cited above seem to indicate that they were in comfortable circumstances. They may have been living on direct handouts from Judge Cady, but that does not alter the impression that they were living well, whether on money provided by Judge Cady or earned by Henry Stanton. The present author has not been able to find any references in the Stanton correspondence that indicate that any of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's generous entertaining activities, or Henry Stanton's extensive travelling had to be curtailed through lack of available funds.

Remarks that Stanton made in regard to the Conversation Club she inaugurated also hint that she was a member of the village elite. The Club was a weekly gathering where interested members all read or wrote on a predetermined social or political topic, and then met to share their ideas and impressions. Stanton recalled that "in this way we read and thought over a wide range of subjects and brought together the best minds in the community. Many young men and women who did not belong to what was considered the first circle,—for in every little country village there is always a small clique that constitutes the aristocracy—had the advantages of a social life otherwise denied them." [32] Dexter Bloomer noted that his wife Amelia regularly attended these meetings "in the parlors of prominent residents" and "derived much mental culture" [33] from them.

In addition to sponsoring the Conversation Club, Stanton sought to enrich the lives of the young women and girls in town by becoming a general mentor and "mother confessor" to them all. Seeing that the lack of funds for elaborate refreshments kept some of them from enjoying the companionship of a party or a dance, Stanton announced that she would host gatherings without any refreshments, to relieve anyone of the necessity of having to respond in kind. "I told the young people, whenever they wanted a little dance or a merry time, to make our house their rallying point, and I would light up and give them a glass of water and some cake. In that way we had many pleasant informal gatherings." [34] She also installed a billiard table in the barn so that her older sons would have a congenial place to bring their friends. [35]

One teenage girl who frequently spent her spare time at the Stanton home, described Elizabeth Cady Stanton as

fascinating in manner, cultured by travel, society and books; warm-hearted, impulsive, 'a very woman,' for a secret was not safe an hour in her possession. She soon exerted a wide-spread influence over the younger and more advanced portion of society. The older and more conservative might point to her disregard

of Sunday, or ordinary religious duties; but they were answered by an appeal to her conduct as a wife and mother, to her admirable housekeeping and charming hospitality, as proofs of Christianity in life and conduct. [36]

Many Seneca Falls residents were no doubt wary of entrusting their daughters to Stanton, as it was well known that she held advanced notions on child rearing. She had developed her new theories after some humorous and also frightening episodes with her own children. Rejecting many of the accepted child rearing practices of that dictatorial and non-scientific age, she created her own system based on common sense and the belief that children had rights and preferences too. She used her own seven children as her "guinea pigs" so to speak, and would later write and lecture extensively on the subject.

Stanton's new theories were rooted in the belief that children, as well as adults, were rational beings who could decide for themselves what they ought to do. Her children recalled in later years that "our mother had had enough of military rule in her childhood home. There was no inflexible order at her own fireside; every law bent easily to human needs." [37] Her permissiveness often created problems for those outside of the family who had to deal with the children. The young piano teacher remembered the day that 10-year-old Theodore decided that he wanted to go and play rather than practice his scales:

Mrs. Stanton happened to come into the room. I appealed to her. I will say here that one of her favorite theories about the bringing up of children was the uselessness of coercion. When differences arise between parents and children she would say impressively, sit down and talk over matters rationally with them; it will have far greater effect than arbitrary compulsion. In fact, she didn't believe in compelling children to do anything. . . . So when I appealed to her she stopped short; 'Theodore, be a reasonable being,' said she, and passed on. I was discouraged for Theodore had not the slightest intention of being a reasonable being. He was going out to play, and that ended it. . . . [38]

The teacher was eventually able to keep Theodore at his lesson by promising to sing him a funny song, a triumph of bribery over reason, as she saw it. The children were always getting into scrapes, and one neighbor somewhat disapprovingly noted that they were always "roving around the neighborhood." [39] There were frequent complaints that the boys threw stones at the pigs, cows, and houses on Seneca Street, [40] that one of the children was seen floating down the Seneca River in a homemade, cork life preserver, or that the baby had been spotted perched on the roof of the house. [41]

In an effort to keep the boys out of mischief and involved in less hazardous pastimes, Stanton "had all sorts of swings, bars and ladders put on the grounds and had the barn equipped as a gymnasium for rainy days." [42] She was a firm believer in plenty of physical exercise and play for children, a view not often held in 19th century America, nor did she feel that physical education should be limited to boys only. When Stanton learned that gym classes were being offered for the boys of the village in Union Hall, she decided that the girls should enjoy this privilege as well since, in her view, the girls were even more in need of the exercise than the boys. Accordingly, she made it a practice to wait outside the Seneca Academy after classes where she would gather as many girls as she could. She then delivered them to Union Hall where she successfully persuaded the German instructor to give them the same course of training as the boys. [43]

We can only assume that Stanton's enlightened theories of childrearing ultimately produced well-adjusted, physically fit, productive adults. Susan B. Anthony seemed to have some doubts on this score as evidenced by the following letter written around 1862. "Most sincerely do I regret that your household must give you such greeting on your return—it is a

shame that those large boys, young men, do not begin to feel a pride in helping to keep good order. . . . It is a shame that you can never be released from constant presence at your house." [44]

Henry Stanton, it seemed, tried to regulate the boys from a distance through his correspondence. One postscript in a letter to his wife reads "—Boys! Get the leaves & the ice out of the gutter! —Boys! Go to school!" [45] It is difficult to know exactly how Henry Stanton fit into the Seneca Falls household. By his wife's admission, he was very seldom home, and she mentions him only very briefly in her autobiography. He was extremely active in state politics, helping to form the Free Soil Party platform in Buffalo in 1848, campaigning across the state, serving two terms in the New York State legislature in 1849 and 1851, and helping to organize the new state Republican Party in 1855.

His letters home to his wife are full of affectionate bantering and queries as to the state of affairs in Seneca Falls. A touch of homesickness is apparent in the following letter he wrote from Washington in 1857:

Why don't you write me? It is too bad. This is the 4th or 5th letter I have written home, & not a word from there! Pray write & tell me how you all are. Have you ordered a mantilla? Have you plenty of wood? Do the potatoes freeze? Is the gutter up? How are the babies? Does Margaret Livingston Stanton go to dancing school? Does the judge go ditto? Is Mary Crowinshield married yet? [46]

In a later letter announcing his impending arrival home, he writes, "My dearest Lee—Lo, open wide your arms, for I shall rush into them with all the impulse which love and longing can inspire." [47]

In spite of these affectionate missives, we do not know how the two related to each other in the course of day to day living. Elizabeth Cady Stanton appears to have been very proud of Henry's political achievements and thoroughly enjoyed the extra company, rallies, and excitement which attended his profession. In 1855, she wrote to Susan B. Anthony that "I am rejoiced to say that Henry is heart and soul in the Republican movement and is faithfully stumping the state once more. I have attended all the Republican meetings and have had Senator John P. Hale staying with us." [48] Her husband, however, did not always appear to be quite so supportive of her work. In another letter to Anthony, she said she could not lecture around the state with her as "the pressure on me just now is too great. Henry sides with my friends, who oppose me in all that is dearest to my heart. They are not willing that I should write even on the woman question. But I will both write and speak. I wish you to consider this letter strictly confidential. Sometimes, Susan, I struggle in deep waters. . . ." [49]

We know that Henry Stanton did not sign the Declaration of Sentiments, and popular tradition says he left town the day of the Convention to show his disapproval of the venture. There is no absolute evidence by which we can prove this, but a statement by one of his sons certainly makes it appear plausible. In the article quoted earlier wherein Gerrit Stanton described the constant stream of reformers who descended on their home, there is the following sentence, "Through this long ordeal of [missing line] ton, who was a lawyer in town, would move to a hotel." [50] Because of the missing fragment, we cannot with absolute certainty say this statement refers to Henry Stanton, but the reasonable assumption is that Gerrit Stanton is here referring to his father, who preferred to board at a hotel rather than to share his home with a crowd of his wife's friends and acquaintances.

There were others in Seneca Falls who disapproved of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's zealotry. After she became a well-known lecturer, and a widely respected figure in her later years,

village residents would say with pride that she had once lived there. During the time of her actual residence though, before she had become nationally famous, it appears that many of her neighbors considered her to be decidedly eccentric. One young woman recalled that "just after I was married Mrs. Stanton was driving down the street one day, and she stopped and invited me to ride with her. But I wouldn't have been seen with her for anything, so I made some sort of flimsy excuse." [51] Another woman who visited Stanton often and thoroughly enjoyed her company, believed that the impetus behind her various reform causes was boredom, rather than deep convictions. This is no doubt the voice of someone who did not share these convictions, but it probably reflected the views of a number of others in the village. Discussing Stanton's advocacy of dress reform, she claimed that "Mrs. Stanton had worn the gloss of novelty off from most of her themes and was sighing for a new sensation, a new reform. Here it was ready to her hand, and forgetting, or not heeding, all she had said of the advantages of the long flowing robes over the male costume in her first speeches, she rushed with renewed ardor into 'dress reform.'" [52]

Although Stanton did exhibit much enthusiasm over any cause in which she was interested, she was not frivolous in what she chose to support. As with her views on child rearing, domestic arrangements, and personal health, her championship of dress reform was heartfelt and rooted in personal experience. Her cousin Elizabeth Miller had come to visit her in the winter of 1850-1851 wearing a knee-length dress with trousers beneath. Stanton was immediately enamored of the dress because of its practicality. "To see my cousin, with a lamp in one hand and a baby in the other, walk upstairs with ease and grace, while, with flowing robes, I pulled myself up with difficulty, lamp and baby out of the question, readily convinced me that there was sure need of reform in woman's dress, and I promptly donned a similar attire." [53] This change opened up a whole new range of thought for Stanton, who then proceeded to develop her ideas on the related issues of female health and exercise.

Actually wearing the so-called "Bloomer outfit" required a large dose of courage. Stanton created quite a stir the first time she appeared on the village streets in the outfit. A townswoman recalled:

Never shall I forget that first appearance! Mrs. Stanton is not slight or sylph-like in her proportions; she is, not to put too fine a point on it, the reverse. Imagine her then in a full black satin frock cut off at the knee, with Turkish trowsers of the same material, her wrap a double broche shawl, and on her head the hideous great bonnet then in fashion. I have seen scarecrows that did credit to farmers' boys' ingenuity, but never one better calculated to scare all birds, beasts and human beings than was Mrs. Stanton in the Bloomer dress. She was accompanied by Mrs. Miller in the same dress, and followed by a crowd of boys yelling, singing and laughing, while every door and window was lined with staring faces. The whole town was roused as never before. [54]

Stanton bravely clung to the dress for about two years, even though she met opposition even within her own family circle. In 1851, her eldest son asked her not to come to visit him at school while wearing the outfit. "You do not wish me to visit you in a short dress!" she replied, "Why, my dear child, I have no other. . . . You want me to be like other people. You do not like to have me laughed at. You must learn not to care for what foolish people say. Such good men as cousin Gerrit and Mr. Weld will tell you that a short dress is the right kind. So no matter if ignorant silly persons do laugh." [55] After enduring two years of ridicule and scorn, and finding herself the subject of crude doggerel whenever she appeared in public, Stanton finally discarded the "short dress" as she felt it had become more of a hindrance than a help to her work.

The harrassment that these early women reformers suffered was one reason that the Stanton

house became such a popular retreat for them. Gerrit Stanton wrote that "it was the only place and the only surroundings where the ladies were not subject to insult and ridicule from their fellow beings and where missiles were not thrown. Nearly everyone was an 'anti' at that time and occasionally a vicious one." [56] Stanton was never content to hide at home among sympathetic friends, however, she had the courage of her convictions and firmly believed in showing them to the world. One rather shocked resident remembered how, "at a time when the prejudice against color was far greater than now, [1880] she boldly walked down the main street of this town in the broad light of a June day arm in arm with Frederick Douglass." [57] She also cut her hair at this time, an almost unthinkable thing for a woman then to do. As one Seneca Falls resident rather succinctly put it, "Mrs. Stanton has never, her life through, gone willingly in a beaten path; whatever she is, she is original." [58]

Though many in the village did not agree with some of her more radical views, it seems that Stanton was widely respected and liked for her unfailing good humor, bountiful generosity, and plain common sense. She relates in her autobiography how she was often called out at night to arbitrate a fight between a drunken husband and a terrified wife in the Irish settlement along nearby Seneca Street. She was also often called to assist the women in childbirth. [59] These midnight forays into families where alcoholism and unwanted children were common, made a strong impression on her and were instrumental in forming her liberal views regarding birth control, sexual equality in marriages, and divorce. "They who have sympathy & imagination to make the sorrows of others their own," she wrote, "can readily learn all the hard lessons of life from the experience of others." [60]

One woman who did not share Stanton's advanced notions, nevertheless recognized in her a kind and generous spirit. She believed that Stanton's

private life, laid open to the world, would reflect far more honor upon her than any public effort she has ever made. Mrs. Stanton would turn from her desk, where lay a manuscript of a lecture upon the wrongs of woman in marriage, to give a young girl about to be married the most loving sympathy and the wisest and most judicious advice. I know of wives who will never cease to hold Mrs. Stanton in loving and grateful remembrance,—however they may look upon her public career,—for advice given at that most important time, so wise and good that they feel they owe much of the happiness of their lives to her counsel. [61]

Contrary to most people's notions of what a reform minded woman had to be, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was very fond of the traditional domestic tasks of cooking, entertaining, child rearing, etc. She took great pride in maintaining a modern, pleasant, efficient home, and would later deliver very popular lectures on home management and economy based on her experiments in Seneca Falls. As she became increasingly involved in the women's rights movement though, she found it ever more difficult to manage both her home and her new interests. Even with the help of the faithful Amelia Willard, she was often overwhelmed by all she had to do. "My babies, the boys and these Irish girls, [servants] as well as the generally unsettled condition of the moral, religious, and political world," she wrote her cousin, "are enough to fret to pieces the best constructed machinery. Some days I feel a general giving away." [62]

Fortunately, her "machinery" was given an overhaul by the arrival of Susan B. Anthony on the scene in 1850. An active temperance worker, she was introduced to Stanton by Amelia Bloomer on a Seneca Falls street corner after an antislavery lecture. [63] The two women forged a partnership which produced for the women's rights movement a philosophy and strategy, enabling it to grow and expand into a truly national movement. Not the least of Anthony's contribution to this partnership was her assumption of some of Stanton's domestic duties to provide the necessary leisure time for Stanton to concoct the speeches and letters that Anthony would then deliver. Anthony became almost a tenth member of the family,

spending as much time in Seneca Falls as in her own home in Rochester. Stanton recalled how "we took turns on the domestic watchtowers, directing amusements, settling disputes, protecting the weak against the strong, and trying to secure equal rights to all in the home as well as the nation." [64]

The Stanton home on Locust Hill became the unlikely center from which most of the early women's rights ideas originated. Amidst the clamor of seven children, the arrivals and departures of innumerable guests, and the ordinary happenstances of everyday living, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony would identify their targets, collect their thoughts, and commit their views to paper. Stanton wrote that among her childrens' earliest recollections was

the tableau of 'Mother and Susan,' seated by a large table covered with books and papers, always writing and talking about the Constitution, interrupted with occasional visits from others of the faithful. [65] Night after night, by an old-fashioned fireplace, we plotted and planned the coming agitation; how, when, and where each entering wedge could be driven, by which women might be recognized and their rights secured. [66] Here we forged resolutions, protests, appeals, petitions, agricultural reports, and constitutional arguments; for we made it a matter of conscience to accept every invitation to speak on every question, in order to maintain woman's right to do so. [67]

Anthony was often frustrated by the responsibilities which kept Stanton tied to children and home, leaving her to do most of the actual presentations and field work herself. She complained to Stanton that "those of you who have the talent to do honor to poor—oh! how poor—womanhood, have all given yourself over to baby-making; and left poor brainless me to do battle alone. It is a shame." [68] Stanton would indeed, sometimes call a halt to her reform activities and insist that she wanted nothing more to do with it. After the birth of her fifth child she protested to Anthony, "I forbid you to ask me to send one thought or one line to any convention, any paper, or any individual; for I swear by all the saints that whilst I am nursing this baby I will not be tormented with suffering humanity." [69] Her social conscience would soon reassert itself, however, and she would once again be back at work spearheading the movement from her parlor table.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, Stanton temporarily halted her efforts for women's rights to concentrate on securing the immediate emancipation of southern slaves. About the same time, Henry Stanton received an appointment in the New York Custom House and began writing for the New York Tribune. The family decided to relocate, and in 1862, they moved to Brooklyn. As her children grew older and more independent, Stanton began lecturing extensively on women's rights in the late 1860s, becoming the national spokeswoman for the movement.

Nearly all of the ideas that Stanton included in her women's rights philosophy had their beginnings in Seneca Falls. It was here that her vague, generalized sense of dissatisfaction finally exploded into an articulated call for women's rights through the Convention of 1848. If she had not come to Seneca Falls, had not found herself marooned in an isolated house with too many children and too little help, she might never have inaugurated the movement for women's rights. Her sudden exposure to the realities of the average woman's existence showed her as nothing else could, that women were being abused and discriminated against in almost every facet of their lives.

Her intense involvement in her own domestic cares and those of her friends and neighbors was instrumental in the development of her uniquely humanistic and far-ranging approach toward solving the problems of women. She did not limit her fight to achieving legal equality

or the right to vote, but extended it to a demand for a complete social reformation which would allow women to reach their full potential in whatever sphere they chose. She advocated communal households to free women from mindless drudgery and to provide them with intellectual and social diversions. She demanded more liberal divorce and property laws to give women some control over themselves and their earnings. Her lectures on child rearing, household management, and personal health were all geared toward releasing women from repressive, nonsensical traditions and habits. She had dealt with all of these issues either on a personal level or through acquaintances while in Seneca Falls, and her perceptive, sympathetic mind had gathered them together and redefined them into a new philosophy of women's rights. As she once wrote to Susan B. Anthony, "It is not in vain that in myself I have experienced all the wearisome cares to which woman in her best estate is subject." [70] By the time of her death on October 26, 1902, she had done much to publicize and alleviate some of those wearisome cares.

Important Sources of Information and Suggestions for Further Research

1. The standard manuscript collections and published works on Elizabeth Cady Stanton are well-known and need no repetition here. Perhaps the best possible source of new information on the Stantons will be found in the various Family Papers of village residents housed at the Seneca Falls Historical Society. There is a large collection of Family Papers at the Society covering the entire 19th century. References to the Stantons and the Convention may very well be contained in letters, diaries, and memoirs. Information contained in this report was found in the papers of various village families, but a complete, thorough examination of them all still needs to be done.

2. "Domesticity and Equality: Elizabeth Cady Stanton on Home Life," a paper prepared by Corinne Guntzel for the Second Seneca Falls Women's Conference, 1982. Copy at Women's Rights National Historical Park.

A good, concise look at some of Stanton's theories and preferences regarding domestic economy and household management.

3. "History of the Stanton House," Corinne Guntzel. Copy at Women's Rights National Historical Park, 1982.

A short paper quickly outlining the basic construction and ownership history of the house.

4. "The Stanton House: Preliminary Historic Structure Report," Barbara Pearson, North Atlantic Historic Preservation Center, 1982.

5. "Architectural Survey—Women's Rights National Historical Park, Seneca Falls, New York," Barbara Pearson—North Atlantic Historic Preservation Center, 1984.

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Women's Rights

Special History Study



CHAPTER FOUR:

AMELIA BLOOMER

During the 1840s and early 1850s, Amelia Bloomer was one of the most well-known reformers in Seneca Falls. An indefatigable worker, she became involved in temperance work, women's rights, dress reform, religious charities, and numerous other humanitarian movements. She was very early identified as a believer in women's rights, and gave that cause heavy coverage in the pages of her newspaper The Lily. Her courage in her convictions, and her willingness to act on them made her a highly visible figure among early women's rights advocates.

Amelia Jenks Bloomer first came to Seneca Falls on April 15, 1840, as the day-old bride of newspaper editor and budding lawyer, Dexter Bloomer. She had been born in 1818 in Homer, New York, where she passed an uneventful childhood and received a rudimentary education in the local district school. After a brief stint as a school teacher at the age of 17, she decided to relocate, and moved in with her newly married sister Elvira, then living in Waterloo. Within a year she had moved into the home of the Oren Chamberlain family to act as the live-in governess for their three youngest children. [1]

During this time she made the acquaintance of Dexter Bloomer, the editor and co-owner of the weekly Seneca County Courier. Bloomer's home was in Seneca Falls where he was studying law in his spare time and taking an active part in local Whig politics. The first evidence of their growing affection is a sentiment which Bloomer penned in Amelia's autograph book late in 1839. "The writer of this line humbly asks that he may be numbered in the list of Amelia's favored friends." [2] Amelia apparently granted the favor, for on April 15, they were married at the Waterloo home of John Lowden by the Presbyterian minister. The word obey was omitted from the marriage ceremony, evidence of the Bloomers' early commitment to the cause of women's rights. [3]

Dexter Bloomer recalled that the day after the wedding, he and Amelia rode in a carriage to the Seneca Falls home of Isaac Fuller "where rooms had been prepared for their reception." [4] Fuller was Bloomer's partner and the co-owner of the "paper for which he worked." Though we do not know for sure, the manner in which Bloomer refers to the Fullers seems to suggest that the newlyweds were living with them as guests until they could set up a home of their own, rather than as rent paying tenants. The two men were old friends and the families remained in close touch with each other throughout their lives. Dexter Bloomer asserted that they "proved most dear and excellent friends of the young couple who on the 16th day of April, 1840, took up their residence with them." [5]

We cannot prove with any certainty that the Mumford House on East Bayard Street, commonly referred to as the Bloomer House, was the Fuller home in which the Bloomers spent the first 5-1/2 months of their married life. There is a longstanding oral tradition in favor of this view, but no documentation has ever been found to support this contention. Although there was a house on the site in 1840, the preponderance of evidence suggests that in all likelihood it was not the Fuller home in 1840. (See the "Architectural Survey of

Women's Rights National Historical Park" for further discussion of this point.)

The question of whether this was indeed the Fuller house is somewhat academic for our purposes in any case, for it appears that Amelia Bloomer engaged in very little reform work during the first months of her marriage. She had not yet conceived of The Lily, and by her own admission was "a shrinking, bashful woman, just entering upon a new life in a home of strangers . . . [and I] scarcely dared open my mouth in presence of half a dozen persons." [6] To compound her difficulties, she contracted a debilitating fever in July, and left Seneca Falls to recover at Avon Springs near Rochester. Her health restored, she returned to the Fullers' in August, but only stayed there two months. By October 1, Dexter Bloomer wrote that they had found a home of their own, and "settled down to housekeeping in a modest dwelling." [7]

The location of this building in which they lived for the next 10 years is also much in doubt. The same is true of the "modest cottage" [8] that Dexter Bloomer purchased in 1850 and where the Bloomers lived during their last four years of residence in the village. In a paper delivered before the Seneca Falls Historical Society in 1948, Caroline Lester admitted that she was not sure exactly where the houses were located, but that she was "inclined to think that . . . [one] occupied the site where the Masonic Temple now stands [on S. Park St.]. I personally can recall a white house with a small front yard on that site." [9] She does not indicate which of the two houses this might have been. Other local residents have said that the Bloomer house stood nearer the business district, somewhere around the junction of Fall, Cayuga, and Ovid Streets. These individuals may be confusing the house site with the location of the post office where the Bloomers worked, as that structure was supposedly "a small frame building on Cayuga street just north of the present C.L. Hoskins building." [10] In any event, they all seem to agree that wherever the houses were, neither one is still standing. All we know for certain is that a "House, Barn and office" belonging to Dexter Bloomer was assessed at \$1,100 in 1851. [11]

Once settled into their new home, the Bloomers soon became very active members of Seneca Falls Society. Dexter Bloomer continued to edit his weekly paper, opened up a successful law practice, and served a term as town clerk. He was extremely active in local Whig politics and attended political caucuses and gatherings throughout the state. [12] In his spare time, he traded stories and political news with the members of Rescue Co. #3, the volunteer fire department which he had joined in 1842. [13]

Amelia Bloomer, too, threw herself into local activities, particularly church charities and local temperance societies. In 1840-1841, a vigorous and highly emotional campaign against alcohol abuse swept across the country under the aegis of the Washington Temperance Society. The Washingtonians had been founded by six Baltimore friends who one night had suddenly decided to swear off alcohol completely and to devote their lives to convincing others to do the same. The Six Reformed Drunkards, as they were forever after called, travelled throughout the country presenting lectures against the evils of alcohol which matched those of a revival preacher for passionate fervor and frightful imagery. [14] Vast numbers of people were convinced by their oratory, and signed Total Abstinence Pledges by the thousands.

Two of the Reformed Drunkards visited Seneca Falls in the early 1840s and created an enormous sensation. Numerous temperance societies sprang up overnight, and everyone began lecturing everyone else on the horrible effects of intoxicating liquor. Mary Bull, a Seneca Falls resident who was seven years old at the time of the great Temperance Reformation, remembered the effect it had on her:

Reformed drunkards were then as now the heroes of society, and I remember well the jealousy and envy I felt toward a little girl at school who was quite a

heroine among us, as her father addressed crowds every night in his character of a reformed inebriate. I can recall my mother's face now when I boldly expressed the wish, 'that papa was a reformed drunkard.' [15]

Amelia Bloomer became intensely interested in this cause and temperance reform became her major life's work. According to her husband, she entered into the battle "with her whole heart and soul," attending conventions, serving on committees, and composing essays. [16] In February 1842, Bloomer began publishing a temperance newspaper called The Water Bucket, to which his wife began submitting articles under various pseudonyms. [17] She was an uncompromising opponent of alcohol, here, castigating women who put wine in their cakes and brandy on their apple dumplings:

What examples these ladies are setting before their families! Have they a husband, a brother or a son, and have they no fear that the example they are now setting them may be the means of their filling a drunkard's grave? Have they a daughter? Their example teaches her to respect moderate-drinking young men, and receive their addresses, and should she unite her fate with such a one, almost certain ruin awaits her. [18]

Like the Abolitionist Movement, the Temperance Movement played a vital role in the development of the women's rights cause. Many of the central figures in the women's movement such as Susan B. Anthony, first became involved in reform activities through temperance societies. Their participation in these groups would begin to bring home to them the peculiarly demeaning position of women in all fields of endeavor.

When the temperance agitation first began, women were applauded for organizing their own Martha Washington Societies as adjuncts to the men's Washington Temperance Societies. Indeed, many felt that women were particularly well-suited for temperance work, as popular wisdom ascribed to them superior powers of moral persuasion and spirituality. The article by Amelia Bloomer quoted above shows how she too felt that women had a unique responsibility to reform and ennoble those around them. Nineteenth century temperance literature almost never addressed the issue of female intemperance. It was always simply assumed that women were morally better than men by nature, and that their refined sensibilities made them the obvious regenerators of degraded mankind.

Many women were attracted to the temperance movement not so much to rescue fallen men, as to protect themselves. Under the current legal and social systems, women often became the innocent victims of drunken or dissolute husbands. Unable to earn a living or own property, they were totally dependent on the head of the house for their livelihood and support. The temperance papers of the day were full of stories of women physically abused or neglected by drunken fathers or husbands.

With a personal stake in the success of the cause, women became increasingly bold in their temperance activities. Mary Bull recalled the occasion when the Ladies Temperance Society presented a banner to the men's group. As it was obviously unthinkable for a woman actually to make the presentation, Ansel Bascom, the husband of the president of the women's society made a speech on her behalf. When it was discovered that the banner had been stolen, Mrs. Bascom, under the emotion of the moment, called out that they would make another. Realizing that she had spoken out in public, she was immediately horrorstruck, and "afterwards bewailed with tears" the fact that her enthusiasm had gotten the better of her sense of womanly propriety. [19]

Although Eliza Bascom's daring had been largely unconscious, it was symptomatic of the audacity that individual women were beginning to display in the temperance movement.

Amelia Bloomer was growing restless by the restricted role she was allowed to play in her favorite cause. She complained that women "could attend meetings and listen to the eloquence and arguments of men, and they could pay their money towards the support of temperance lecturers, but such a thing as their having anything to say or do further than this was not thought of." [20] Eager to expand her involvement, Bloomer broached the subject of publishing a temperance newspaper during a meeting of the Ladies Temperance Society in the Mynderse Block in the summer of 1848. The idea was eagerly adopted by the membership, and the name, The Lily suggested by the society's president, a Mrs. Lyons. Amelia Bloomer and Anne C. Mattison were chosen as the editors. [21] The following notice was duly inserted in the Free Soil Union on August 8, 1848: "It is proposed to publish a Ladies' Journal in the village of Seneca Falls, devoted to the cause of Temperance and Moral and Religious Literature: to be the organ of the Female Temperance Society of that village, and of other similar societies." The yearly subscription rate was to be 50¢. [22]

As the realities of publishing, editing, and disseminating a newspaper began to weigh upon the society their enthusiasm for the project began to fade. According to Bloomer, "the zeal of the ladies abated wonderfully. They began to realize that they had been hasty in incurring a great responsibility for which they were not fitted, and very soon the society decided to give up the enterprise altogether. [23] Bloomer, however, was made of sterner stuff, and insisted that she

could not so lightly throw off responsibility. Our word had gone to the public and we had considerable money on subscriptions. Besides the dishonesty of the thing, people would say it was 'just like women'; 'what more could you expect of them?' As editor of the paper, I threw myself into the work, assumed the entire responsibility, took the entire charge editorially and financially, and carried it successfully through. [24]

Bloomer remained the sole editor and owner of The Lily for the next 15 years, molding it into one of the most influential and liberal publications dealing with women's issues in the early 19th century. It became a major forum for the writings of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and an outspoken advocate of women's rights.

Though it was begun primarily as a temperance paper, Bloomer's editorial in the first issue on January 1, 1849, clearly revealed her belief in an expanded field of activity for women:

It is woman that speaks through The Lily. It is upon an important subject, too, that she comes before the public to be heard. Intemperance is the great foe to her peace and happiness. It is that above all which has made her home desolate and beggared her offspring. It is that above all which has filled to its brim her cup of sorrow and sent her moaning to the grave. Surely she has a right to wield the pen for its suppression. Surely she may, without throwing aside the modest retirement which so much becomes her sex, use her influence to lead her fellow-mortals away from the destroyer's path. It is this which she proposes to do in the columns of this paper. [25]

As she gained confidence and experience, the tone of the paper became increasingly militant in its support of equal rights for women. Its columns aired debates over such issues as dress reform, equal job opportunities, suffrage, child rearing practices, and education. In the January 1, 1852, issue, Bloomer changed the original heading of the paper from "A Monthly Journal Devoted to Temperance and Literature," to "Devoted to the Interests of Woman." [26] Some local temperance advocates resented this shift in emphasis and later accused Bloomer of having absconded with their paper. [27] She stoutly defended herself by saying that "the paper being deserted by the society became my individual property to manage as I

pleased; and from the very first member to the last I had the sole charge and direction of it. It was never the 'organ' of any society, party or clique, or of any individual but myself." [28] (See Appendix F.)

Much of the credit for the political feminization of The Lily must go to Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Although Bloomer had always held deep convictions regarding the rights of women, it was not until she came into contact with Stanton that these unconnected feelings and general beliefs solidified into a formal philosophy on women's rights. Because she was out of town on the days of the Convention, Bloomer said that she was able to attend only the last evening's session. She implied that if she had been in Seneca Falls she would have been present at all the sessions. [29] According to her husband, she "had not yet thought much on the subject of women's rights . . . [and] took no part in its proceedings," [30] nor did she sign the Declaration of Sentiments. The little that she had heard apparently had an effect on her for it was only one month later that she first made the revolutionary suggestion that the Ladies Temperance Society publish their own newspaper.

Ever ready to recognize a favorable opportunity when she saw one, Elizabeth Cady Stanton considered the new The Lily to be a prime candidate for the dissemination of feminist views. With its woman editor, advanced views, and reform orientation, it seemed natural that the little temperance paper should expand its columns to the discussion of women's rights as well. Amelia Bloomer's own actions and attitude no doubt encouraged her to believe that the editor would be open to the suggestion.

In the spring of 1849, Dexter Bloomer was appointed postmaster of the village, and promptly swore in his wife as his deputy. She was eager to accept the position, which she filled for four years, because, as she later wrote:

I had determined to give a practical demonstration of woman's right to fill any place for which she had capacity It was a novel step for me to take in those days, and no doubt many thought I was out of woman's sphere; but the venture was very successful and proved to me conclusively that woman might, even then, engage in any respectable business and deal with all sorts of men, and yet be treated with the utmost respect and consideration. [31]

In addition to fulfilling her official duties, Bloomer also maintained an informal social center and clearing house for the women of the town in a room adjoining the post office. Elizabeth Cady Stanton described this adjunct as "a neat little room adjoining the public office. [It acted as] a kind of ladies' exchange, where those coming from different parts of the town could meet to talk over the news of the day and read the papers and magazines that came to Mrs. Bloomer as editor of The Lily." [32]

It was in this little lounge that Dexter Bloomer says that Elizabeth Cady Stanton first introduced herself to his wife in the summer of 1849. [33] Stanton offered to contribute some articles for The Lily, the first one appearing in the November 1849 issue under the pseudonym "Gloriana." [34] This and subsequent articles dealt with temperance issues, but Stanton gradually began submitting articles on women's rights, suffrage, child rearing and other related subjects, usually under the name "Sunflower." The Lily began to assume a much broader scope, due in large part to Stanton's frequent contributions to the paper.

Historians disagree on exactly how much influence Elizabeth Cady Stanton exerted over the editorial policies of The Lily. Bloomer obviously had strong convictions on the ability and right of women to do whatever they felt they were capable of, as evidenced by her involvement with The Lily and the post office, but whether she thought of herself in 1848 as an advocate of women's rights other than through personal example, is uncertain. Stanton

obviously felt that she had politicized a somewhat reluctant Bloomer as evidenced by the following letter she wrote to Susan B. Anthony in 1852 regarding temperance activity, "do not let the conservative element control. For instance, you must take Mrs. Bloomer's suggestions with great caution, for she has not the spirit of the true reformer. At the first woman s rights convention, but four years ago, she stood aloof and laughed at us. It was only with great effort and patience that she has been brought up to her present position." [35] In another letter to John Pierpont, Stanton asks him to send her a particular sermon, "and I will have it published in the Lily, the reform paper we started here in Seneca Falls at the beginning of the present year." [36]

That collective "we" would no doubt have surprised Bloomer, as according to her testimony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton had absolutely nothing to do with the founding of The Lily, and had not even had an article printed in it yet when she wrote her letter to Pierpont.

Other individuals agreed with Stanton that she had a large hand in turning the paper from purely temperance concerns to a much broader scope. In 1880, a former Seneca Falls resident published an article in Good Company in which she described how Stanton had subtly managed to redefine the The Lily's orientation:

[It] was conducted in a conservative manner, and was considered unimpeachable by most persons when Mrs. Stanton made her first sally upon the posts. Mrs. Stanton however understood human nature perfectly well. She was a leader in social affairs, her house a social center, distinguished persons were often her guests, and an invitation to her parties was not often declined by anyone, from clergymen down. A visit to Mrs. Bloomer, a judicious invitation or two, and the citadel was won, and 'The Lily' was henceforth the organ of the woman's rights party as represented by Mrs. Stanton. [37]

Amelia Bloomer, then living in Council Bluffs, Iowa, happened to read this article and sent an angry rebuttal to the Seneca Falls Revielle which had reprinted the Good Company story: . . . What she says of the manner and influences that led to her [Stanton] becoming a contributor to 'The Lily,' and my subjection to her leadership and influence, I pronounce a malicious misrepresentation. Mrs. Stanton was no more ready to write than I was to have her, and it required no maneuvering on her part to gain access to the paper. That it ever became her 'organ,' or in any way subject to her control, is untrue." [38]

As is generally the case in any dispute involving two very strong characters, the truth of the matter probably lies somewhere between. To Amelia Bloomer must certainly go the sole credit for first conceiving of a paper to be written and managed by women, a courageous undertaking in itself, no matter what its particular orientation might be. It must also be acknowledged that Elizabeth Cady Stanton probably did strongly influence Bloomer in the development of her subsequent feminist philosophy. Though Bloomer had been resolutely living out her convictions in her own life, it was almost certainly Stanton who opened her eyes to the wider issues and the possibilities of using The Lily as a woman's forum.

Though Stanton and Bloomer seemingly maintained a cordial friendship and correspondence throughout their lives, there were fundamental differences in their views of women's rights that created some friction between them. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was much more universal and humanistic in her approach than Amelia Bloomer, whose ideas were always firmly anchored in the tenets of traditional Christianity. She had joined the Seneca Falls Episcopal Church along with her husband in 1843, and remained a zealous and active church woman all of her life. [39] Stanton was often frustrated by Bloomer's refusal to condemn the church in The Lily for its unenlightened views on women and other reforms, [40] but Bloomer believed in effecting reform within the framework of Christianity and would not attack the religious

establishment, one of Stanton's favorite targets.

Bloomer related how they once had a little "difference of opinion in regard to changing the constitution of the Women's State Temperance Society, so that men would have equal rights therein. I did not favor this change when it was brought before the convention in 1853. Mrs. Stanton said 'a' but I did not say 'b.' She may have felt a little cool towards me over it." [41] Comments they made about each other in letters to friends seem to indicate that there was a subtle sense of rivalry between the two women, each trying to outdo the other as Seneca Falls' resident feminist and foremost reformer.

Amelia Bloomer probably had the upper hand in the earlier years. As noted before, she and her husband were exceedingly active in village affairs and had a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. It seems Amelia Bloomer was a member of almost every charitable and church organization available. She sewed clothes for the needy, opened her home to a number of orphans (the Bloomers had no children of their own), helped raise money for church improvements, and buttonholed inebriates on street corners to lecture them on their intemperance. Indeed, she appears to have been something of a busybody, freely insinuating herself into other people's lives to make them do what she felt was best for them. One biographer described her as "earnest and argumentative, with little sense of humor . . . she never doubted the rightness of her ideas or the desirability of seeing them imposed, by force, if need be, upon others." [42] Even her husband, the quiet unassuming Dexter, had to admit that she "was deficient in the quality of humour and took life too seriously." [43] A contemporary expressed somewhat the same sentiments, saying she "had no particular advantages of education, nor was she naturally an intellectual woman or a woman of talent, but she possessed the gifts of untiring energy and industry." [44] An orphaned niece who lived with the Bloomers recalled how her aunt kept her always busy with baking, sewing, painting, or mending. She particularly remembered the daily stint at quilt making. "The stitches had to be perfect, or they were pulled out, and over and over the teary stitches to be sewed in again, which seemed worse than practicing the music the other two children at times wept over. I wasn't praised. I was expected to make this perfect work." [45]

With a firm belief in the righteousness of her various causes, Amelia Bloomer set about reforming Seneca Falls the day she arrived. (She gave an impromptu temperance lecture at her wedding reception at the Fullers.) [46] With her determined character and energetic habits, she was no doubt a familiar figure about the village. Until Elizabeth Cady Stanton arrived and began seriously lobbying for women's rights, Seneca Falls' female editor and postmistress was probably the most visible, if not tolerant, example of a women's advocate in town. Stanton soon supplanted her as the main figure in the women's cause after the 1848 Convention, creating the slight delicacy of feeling which apparently existed between the two women at times. Amelia Bloomer felt that she was providing the better practical example of women's equality through her work at the post office and The Lily, while Elizabeth Cady Stanton felt that her work to develop a network and philosophy for the movement was ultimately more significant.

One issue on which both women agreed and with which Amelia Bloomer's name has been indelibly linked, was that of dress reform. Although the topic was the subject of ridicule, dress reform for women was a serious issue in the 19th century. For many women, the then prevailing fashion of tight corsets, trailing skirts, and layers of petticoats was both a symbol of women's degradation and a positive health hazard. Even the staunchest women's rights advocate had to admit that it was foolish to argue for the right to follow any profession they wished, when the clothes they were wearing would have prevented them from performing the very jobs they were seeking. Except among some patients at isolated water cures, and a few daring bohemians, little had really been done to try to popularize dress reform in the early 19th century, and the phenomenal Bloomer Movement of the 1850s was more an accident

than any preplanned strategy on the part of Amelia Bloomer.

Though the movement bore her name, Amelia Bloomer did not inaugurate the wearing of the "short dress" in Seneca Falls. As she always freely admitted, Elizabeth Smith Miller, the daughter of famous reformer Gerrit Smith, brought the outfit to the village in the winter of 1850-1851 while on a visit to her cousin, Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton described the dress as "somewhat in the Turkish style—short skirt, full trousers of fine black broadcloth; a Spanish cloak, of the same material, reaching to the knee; beaver hat and feathers and dark furs." [47] She was much impressed by her cousin's freedom of movement and promptly made a similar outfit for herself. Stanton related in her autobiography that her cousin could walk with ease, even with her hands full, while she, Stanton, had trouble pulling herself up, even with her hands empty. This convinced her of the need for reform in women's dress. [48]

Amelia Bloomer, who just happened to be engaged in an editorial exchange of views on the dress reform issue with the Seneca County Courier when Elizabeth Miller and Elizabeth Cady Stanton first appeared on the streets in the new costume, felt that "having had part in the discussion of the dress question, it seemed proper that I should practise [sic] as I preached, and as the Courier man advised; and so a few days later I, too, donned the new costume." [49] A neighbor described Bloomer at this time as:

thin, almost meager, in her proportions, short, with a small head and a dark complexion; not at all a handsome woman, rather plain, on the contrary, . . . [50] [but] she had a better figure for the dress than had Mrs. Stanton and looked better in the Bloomers than any other person I have ever seen wear them. For one thing she discarded the bonnet then universally worn and assumed a round hat, something like the sun and sea-side hats now worn! [51] (See Illustration 10.)

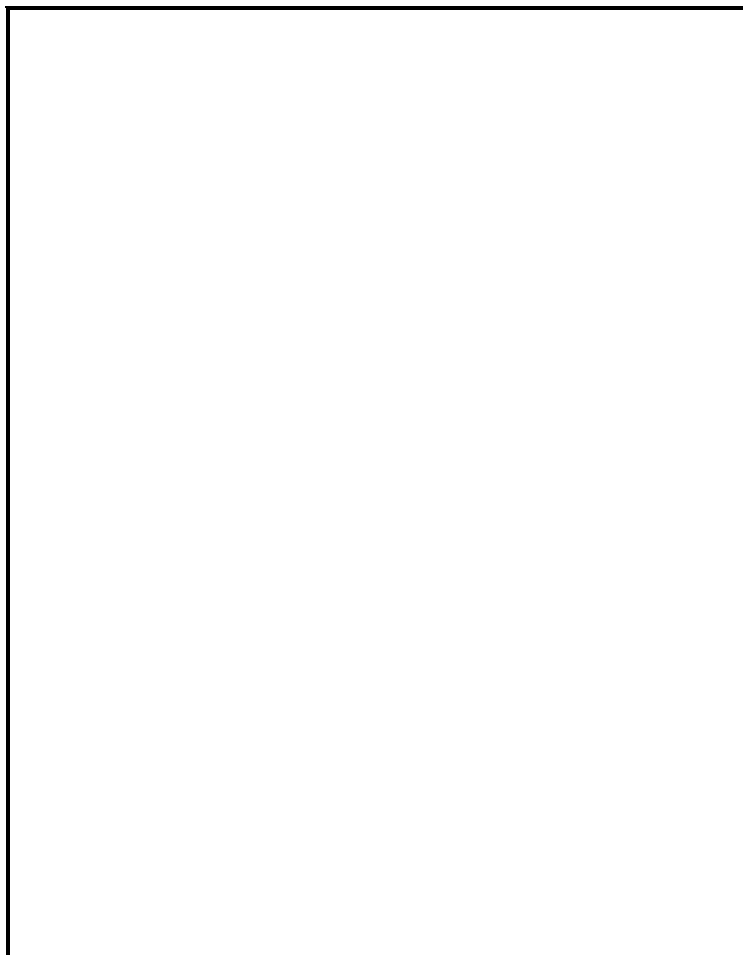




Illustration 10. Amelia Bloomer in the "short dress," c. 1852-1858. SFHS #1426.

Bloomer publicized her actions in The Lily and included engravings of herself in the outfit, but had no intention of creating a national stir. The various newspapers around the country picked up on the story and christened the new dress the "Bloomer Costume."

Their interest in it was not because they supported dress reform, but because the new costume lent itself so readily to caricature. Hundreds of cartoons and articles appeared parodying and ridiculing the dress, and the women's rights movement by implication. Many women around the country were intensely interested in the subject, however, and The Lily's subscription list exploded from 300 in 1849 to 4000 in 1853. [52] Much of this support came from women wishing to learn more about the new dress, and asking where they might find patterns for it. The enormity of this public response caught Bloomer momentarily off guard, but recognizing that dress reform was obviously of great interest to thousands of women, she gave it hearty attention and coverage in The Lily. She wrote later that "at the outset, I had no idea of fully adopting the style; no thought of setting a fashion; no thought that my action would create any excitement throughout the civilized world, and give to the style my name . . . [had Elizabeth Miller] not come to us in that style, it is not probable that either Mrs. Stanton or myself would have donned it." [53]

Feeling that she had a public responsibility now to support the dress, Bloomer wore it exclusively for the next six to eight years. [54] She began lecturing at this time on

temperance and women's issues, and always made it a point to wear the "short dress" for these presentations. Observing the huge crowds she attracted for these lectures across the state, an acquaintance rather bluntly opined that "as she had not one requisite for an orator, either voice, manner, or anything particular to say, the whole attraction must have been the dress and the notoriety she had gained in wearing it." [55] Bloomer's response to this comment was, "If the dress drew the crowds that came to the temperance meetings to hear women speak, it answered a good purpose." [56] Elizabeth Cady Stanton made some interesting remarks about the subject in a letter to Amelia Opie:

She [Bloomer] is evidently proud that this attire has been given her name. In fact, Mrs. Bloomer, who is very pious, is beginning to think that the dress is almost of divine origin and blames women who 'dare to call down before herself the wrath of the Almighty for thus mutilating and destroying the work which came perfect from His hand.' Of course I don't go quite as far as this, but you must agree with me that take it all in all, Mrs. Bloomer and her little paper are, as you well say, 'doing a good work. . . .' [57]

In addition to her advocacy of dress reform, Bloomer intensified her involvement in temperance and women's rights activities in the 1850s. As noted before, she began lecturing statewide on both subjects, and helped to form a woman's state temperance society in 1852. [58] She freely introduced the subject of women's rights into her temperance lectures; a practice not all of her audiences appreciated. Answering criticisms on this score, she wrote in The Lily in 1853:

Some of the papers accuse me of mixing Woman's Rights with our Temperance, as though it was possible for woman to speak on Temperance and Intemperance without also speaking of Woman's Rights and Wrongs in connection therewith. That woman has rights, we think that none will deny; that she has been cruelly wronged by the law-sanctioned liquor traffic, must be admitted by all. Then why should we not talk of woman's rights and temperance together? [59]

In addition to talking about temperance and women's rights together, it was Amelia Bloomer who was responsible for first bringing together Susan B. Anthony, then a staunch temperance fighter, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. These two women became the team that molded and spearheaded the women's rights movement for the next 50 years. Bloomer and Anthony were already acquainted with one another through their temperance work, and in the spring of 1850, Anthony was staying at the Bloomer house while attending an antislavery lecture in the village. After the meeting, the two women waited on a street corner for Stanton to pass, at which time Amelia Bloomer made the necessary introductions. Bloomer later wrote, "Afterwards, we called together at Mrs. Stanton's house and the way was opened for future intercourse between them. It was, as Mrs. Stanton says in her history, an eventful meeting that henceforth in a measure shaped their lives." [60]

Amelia Bloomer's own life continued on its separate path with a hectic schedule consisting of post office duties, the editorship of The Lily, church work, lecture tours, and domestic responsibilities. In 1853, she and Susan B. Anthony travelled through the state with other feminist leaders on a highly successful speaking tour. Later that same year, she attended the National Woman's Rights Convention in Cleveland, and then went on to lecture in Columbus, Indianapolis, Detroit, Chicago, and Milwaukee. In September, she attended an international temperance conference in New York City, and helped to organize the rival "Whole World's Temperance Convention" when the women delegates were refused admittance to the original conference. [61]

Late in 1853, the Bloomers decided to leave Seneca Falls, and move to Mt. Vernon, Ohio,

where Dexter Bloomer had purchased an interest in the Western Home Visitor. [62] As prominent members of the village scene, they were given a large send-off party in Union Hall organized by the Good Templars temperance society. Nearly five hundred persons attended the event, passing resolutions of regard and friendship for the couple, enjoying 10 tables full of refreshments, and dancing until the late hours of the evening. [63]

The Bloomers remained in Ohio for two years where Amelia continued to publish The Lily, as well as provide editorial assistance to her husband's paper. [64] The Lily by this time had fully adopted a woman's rights orientation, and Bloomer continued an aggressive campaign for the vote, equal educational opportunities, and alterations in the inheritance laws in its columns. She employed a vigorous and uncompromising writing style which left no doubt as to her views on these and other related subjects.

In 1855, the Bloomers moved again, this time to Council Bluffs, Iowa. The lack of printing facilities and poor postal connections on the frontier induced Bloomer to sell The Lily to Mary B. Birdsall of Richmond, Indiana. Birdsall, however, did not have Bloomer's organizing talent nor her feminist orientation, and the paper soon went out of business. Various sources state the demise of The Lily in 1856, 1857, and 1858. [65]

Though Bloomer continued to contribute editorials to The Lily, she became less active on the national scene once she had moved to Iowa. She was very active in state organizations, however, serving as President of the Iowa Woman Suffrage Society in the 1870s, and representing that state at the American Equal Rights Association meeting in New York City in 1869. [66] It was also in Iowa that she finally abandoned the "short dress" after wearing it consistently and courageously for the previous seven to eight years. She wrote a friend her reasons for doing so:

After retiring from public life and coming to this land of strangers where I was to commence life anew and make new friends, I felt at times like donning long skirts when I went into society, at parties, etc., and did so. I found the high winds which prevail here much of the time played sad work with short skirts when I went out, and I was greatly annoyed and mortified by having my skirts turned over my head and shoulders on the streets. Yet I persevered and kept on the dress nearly all the time till after the introduction of hoops. Finding them light and pleasant to wear and doing away with the necessity for heavy underskirts (which was my greatest objection to long dresses), and finding it very inconvenient as well as expensive keeping up two wardrobes—a long and short—I gradually left off the short dress

There were other questions of greater importance than the length of a skirt under discussion at the time, and I felt my influence would be greater in the dress ordinarily worn by women than in the one I was wearing. [67]

She lived out the remainder of her life in Council Bluffs, continuing very active in local temperance and church efforts. She was also heavily involved in relief work during the Civil War through the Soldier's Aid Society of Council Bluffs which she founded. She died of a heart attack in Iowa in 1894 at the age of 76. [68]

Along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer is Seneca Falls' most acknowledged women's rights advocate. It was through the columns of The Lily that many women first realized that there was indeed something inherently wrong in their position by custom and law. Bloomer provided an open, comfortable forum through which women could express and share their views, an opportunity not offered by the regular journals of the day. Without The Lily to act as their voice, the early women's rights supporters would have had no way to

regularly publicize and analyze their developing philosophy and concerns.

Amelia Bloomer's life is also an important case history of how many women became involved in the women's rights movement through earlier connections with antislavery or temperance causes. Almost every major figure in the movement began his or her career associated with the "acceptable" reform societies involving temperance or slavery. As the women began to see that they were not to be allowed to contribute to these causes as they wished, they began to realize that their position in society would make it impossible for them ever to utilize their full potential. Until their rights as women were secured, they were powerless to right the wrongs of others. Amelia Bloomer experienced this very process. Becoming interested in temperance work as a pious church woman, she soon grew impatient with the limited role she was allowed to play and took matters into her own hands with the publication of The Lily. Her increasing militancy on the women's issue was simply the natural outgrowth of her thwarted attempts to effect change in other reform areas. This process repeated itself again and again with other individuals, thereby creating the resolute core of leaders who led the women's rights movement through its earliest years.

Important Sources of Information and Suggestions for Further Research

1. The Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer, Dexter C. Bloomer (Boston, 1895).

This remains the best source of information on Bloomer, containing many quotes from her letters, speeches and editorials.

2. The Lily—The Seneca Falls Historical Society has a partial run available on microfilm. There is a complete run of all issues available at the Bird Library at Syracuse University.

3. Amelia Bloomer Collection—Seneca Falls Historical Society.

In addition to the original manuscripts of some of Amelia Bloomer's lectures, this collection contains a fair bit of information on her life in Iowa. There is little direct information from the Seneca Falls time period, but the later material does provide some clues as to Bloomer's character and interests.

4. Bloomer's Lily by Maria Temechko. A paper prepared in 1972 for the Seneca Falls Historical Society.

A good short history of The Lily and the various causes it supported.

5. "The Lily—An Interpretation" by Warren N. Paul. A paper prepared for the State University of New York at Oswego. Copy at the Seneca Falls Historical Society.

An examination of the development of the women's rights orientation in The Lily.

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CHAPTER FIVE: THE HUNTS

When Jane Hunt invited Elizabeth Cady Stanton to take tea with her on July 13, 1848, she certainly had no idea that she would end the day as one of the originators of this country's first Women's Rights Convention. Indeed, her mind was probably more preoccupied with the acrimonious debate then dividing the local Quakers in which she and her three other afternoon guests were deeply embroiled. Relatively little is known about Jane Hunt, but her involvement with Waterloo's Progressive Quakers, and her husband's well-known social and commercial activities help to explain their sympathy for the early women's rights movement, and their active involvement in it.

Richard P. Hunt first arrived in Waterloo in 1821 as a 24-year-old Quaker settler from Westchester, New York. [1] Waterloo at the time was a burgeoning settlement of 500 inhabitants with an optimistic future. (See Appendix I and Appendix K.) There were three flour mills on the Seneca River, three sawmills, a distillery, six taverns, and six stores. [2] Hoping to take advantage of the brisk traffic in and out of the Eagle Tavern on the corner of Main and Virginia Streets, Hunt established Waterloo's seventh store in the tavern's front room. [3] He stocked his store with dry goods he had brought with him, and presumably took a partner, for the store was known as Hunt & Hoyt's. [4] Hunt must have been a very persuasive salesman, or else he had brought a sizeable nest egg with him, for he soon began to acquire additional property and assume a prominent place among Waterloo's leading citizens.

In 1823, he moved out of the Eagle tavern and built himself a new frame store with attached living quarters on the site where the Semtner Building now stands. [5] That same year, he married Matilda Kendig, the daughter of another early Waterloo settler. In 1824, he was one of the six town representatives who submitted a successful petition to the state legislature requesting the incorporation of the settlement as the village of Waterloo. [6]

These were not particularly easy years for the new village, as widespread sickness and overspeculation in business and real estate ventures began to take their toll. One local historian noted that "from the number of mortgage, foreclosure and sheriff sales advertised in the papers between these dates, [1817-1827] the people had a hard struggle to keep the improvements they made." [7]

Richard Hunt had apparently found a way to profit from the unsettled times, however, because by 1829 he had acquired enough capital to enable him to sell his business and concentrate on more lucrative commercial and real estate ventures. He sold his store and stock to Elijah Quinby and his brother-in-law D.S. Kendig, and began building his impressive new brick home on the outskirts of the village. [8] (See Illustration 11.) Through a series of shrewd business deals, he soon owned most of the land in the eastern half of town. [9] The home farm alone encompassed 145-1/2 acres at the time of his death in 1856. [10]

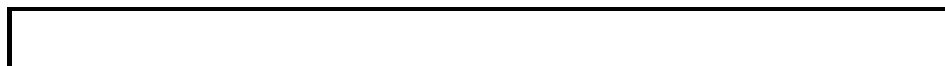




Illustration 11. Undated 19th century view of Hunt House. SFHS #1309.

During the 1830s Hunt began making significant improvements on the properties he owned. In 1836, he constructed a three-store commercial block on Main Street, adding two more next to it in 1854 and 1856-1858. [11] (All three buildings are still standing today and are generally known as the Semtner Block, the Odd Fellows Building, and the Mazzoli Building. See Illustration 12.) In that same year, he also became the principal stockholder and managing partner in the new Waterloo Woolen Manufacturing Company. [12]



Illustration 12. Commercial blocks built by Richard Hunt in Waterloo. All three are still standing. From *A History of Waterloo*, John Becker.

Hunt was the major supporter of this company, and is generally given the credit for its conception and subsequent success. It became a vital component of the Waterloo economy for the next hundred years, operating as a textile plant until 1936. [13] (One of the buildings

is still in use today as Evans Chemetics.) The establishment of the mill was a risky venture in such a far off rural area, and Hunt had to call upon all his vaunted powers of persuasion to interest investors in the scheme. He also had to convince local farmers of course, that it would be worth their while to raise sheep to provide the raw material for the factory. His arguments must have been convincing, for the mill was soon a bustling success, processing raw wool into finished cloth. One early resident remembered that "it was no uncommon sight to see fifty teams at a time standing around the grounds of the company, waiting for their turn to be served. People came from Monroe, Genesee, Ontario, Wayne, Yates, Cayuga and other counties, as well as our own, with wool, for which they received cash or goods in return." [14]

In addition to developing his many commercial ventures, Richard Hunt actively participated in local governmental proceedings. At various times he served as treasurer for the tax assessor's board, was named the first superintendent of the town of Junius, and sat on the Board of Trustees for the Waterloo Academy. In addition to these responsibilities, he was the first vice-president of the Seneca County bank and on its Board of Directors from 1833-1844. [15]

At first glance, Richard Hunt could be the archetypical early 19th century entrepreneur who made a personal fortune on the western frontier through shrewd business deals and extensive land speculation. Such a judgment would be incorrect though, for Hunt was much more than just a country schemer out to make as much money as the situation would allow. Hunt's firm commitment to liberal Quaker philosophies gave meaning to all of his multitudinous interests.

No one in Waterloo, least of all Hunt himself, could claim that he was not a wealthy man. (See "Architectural Survey of Women's Rights National Historical Park" for 1856 inventory of Hunt estate.) Early residents remembered how his large brick home was "one of the social centers of the vicinity. On occasion the equipages of the so called 'better families' of Waterloo and neighboring villages, with their well groomed horses, shiny harnesses, and attending footmen, thronged the approaches to and roadways near the Hunt homestead, bringing the 'elite' to parties and social gatherings." [16]

Few seemed to begrudge the Hunts their success, for it was commonly acknowledged that they returned to the village as much as they received. Richard Hunt's three commercial blocks were the pride of the downtown area, and the woolen mill had revitalized the local economy. One commentator paid a tribute to Hunt's public service by asserting that he always "used his dividends [from the mill] in making improvements in other parts of the village." [17]

He also noted that Hunt made special efforts to provide housing for the laborers and their families who had been attracted to the area by his mills. He built substantial homes on the many lots he owned about town, and arranged low interest, long term payment schedules for his buyers. It was said that he "sold more [homes] to machinists and laborers on time, than any one man here." [18]

Hunt and at least the last three of his four wives, were radical Quakers who firmly believed in the power of practical humanitarianism and social reform. When the "Great Separation" of 1827 occurred, dividing Quakers into Orthodox and Hicksite groups, the Hunts associated themselves with the more liberal Hicksites. The break had occurred over several issues, but the main conflict was over Elias Hicks' assertion that an individual's conscience constituted a personal communion with God, and that its dictates therefore took precedence over any which the Society's Elders might impose. The issue which had brought this disagreement to a head was slavery.

Strong abolitionists, such as Hicks and Lucretia and James Mott, felt compelled by their consciences to fight actively the evils of slavery through any means at their disposal—lecturing, petitioning, or the refusal to buy goods produced through slave labor. The Philadelphia Elders disapproved of this involvement with the "outside world," and sought to discipline the more liberal members of the Society. Refusing to abandon their belief in "practical righteousness" for the sake of theological conformity, the Hicksites disassociated themselves from the Philadelphia Society and formed new, vigorously reform-minded meetings. [19]

It was with one of these Hicksite Meetings that Richard Hunt, and presumably his first two wives, associated themselves in Waterloo. From the very earliest years of its settlement, Waterloo had attracted Quaker families. The first Quaker Meeting was established in the area sometime between 1803 and 1806 (the sources disagree on this point), and was apparently composed of the members of three to six separate families. [20] As more Friends moved into the area, the small pioneer meeting was formally organized into the Junius Monthly Meeting of the Farmington Quarterly Meeting, a member of the Genesee Yearly Meeting. When the Hicksite separation occurred, the Junius Meeting adopted the Hicksite stance.

Inherent in the Hicksite position was involvement in practical reform. Less concerned with doctrines and worship services, the Hicksites advocated active commitment to effect widespread social reform. Though their main concern was the abolishment of slavery, they also worked on behalf of the various reform movements of the day: temperance, women's rights, humane treatment for prisoners, and numerous others. As a fervent Hicksite, Richard Hunt was at the forefront of Quaker activity in Waterloo. One individual bluntly described him as "a rather belligerent Quaker who believed in accomplishment." [21]

In addition to his myriad humanitarian efforts among the Waterloo residents, he was said to have maintained a room in his carriage house for the use of weary or needy travelers passing along the Seneca Turnpike which ran in front of his house. When the Underground Railroad was established to assist runaway slaves to reach freedom in Canada, this room above the carriage house was reportedly turned into a way station where numerous fugitive slaves waited to make their dash for freedom. [22]

As the agitation over the slavery issue grew in the 1840s, a new controversy began to divide the Quakers of the Junius Meeting. A prime figure in this episode was Thomas McClintock, Richard Hunt's latest brother-in-law. After his first wife died in 1832, Hunt had married Ann Underhill, who unfortunately, had died only five months later. In September of 1837, he took a third wife, Sarah McClintock, the sister of Thomas McClintock. [23]

McClintock had moved to Waterloo from Philadelphia in 1835-1836 with his wife, son, and four daughters. We do not know when Hunt and Sarah McClintock first met, whether she came to Waterloo with her brother and first met him there, or whether they knew each other from an earlier meeting elsewhere. In any case, they were soon wed, and Thomas McClintock was comfortably settled in a store and a house both of which he rented from his new brother-in-law.

Thomas McClintock was a Hicksite Quaker minister, and a Biblical scholar of some renown. He had played a prominent part in the Hicksite schism in Philadelphia, and would now be at the center of another split among the Waterloo Quakers. As liberal as the Hicksites were, McClintock, Hunt, and many other members of the Junius Meeting felt that they were still not doing enough to effect the necessary social and political reforms.

They were particularly upset by the refusal of certain Quakers in the Farmington Monthly Meeting to open their meeting houses to abolitionist speakers, and asked the Meeting to look

into the matter:

Being satisfied that in some parts of this monthly meeting our meeting houses have been closed against the friend of the slave, and also against the slave himself, and feeling that so doing is wrong in every possible light we can view it and a very great reproach to our profession of Christianity, we wish the monthly meeting to take the subject into consideration, and if way opens, refer the subject to a committee. [24]

Much to their dismay, the proposition was tabled for one month, and the subject "dismissed for the present." [25] Similar resolutions and letters expressing concern over the lack of social commitment in the community were ignored or dismissed by the Elders. After several years of agitation and disagreements, the issue finally came to a head at the Yearly Meeting in 1848. The McClintocks, the Hunts, and about 200 other sympathizers walked out of the Yearly Meeting and proceeded to establish the radical Meeting known as the Congregational or Progressive Quakers. [26] It is important to look at what these militant Quakers believed, as four of the women who organized the Seneca Falls Convention and at least a quarter of the signers of the Declaration of Sentiments were members of this group. They were obviously particularly receptive to the idea of women's rights.

Six months after the walkout at the Yearly Meeting, the Progressive Quakers adopted the "Basis of Religious Association" as their guideline. [27] (See Appendix G.) The "Basis" had been written by Thomas McClintock and advocated an exceedingly liberal, universalist type of religious association. According to McClintock, the sole object of religion was "the promotion of righteousness—of practical goodness—love to God and man." [28] Man needed no ministers, liturgies, or doctrines to accomplish this. True spirituality was not praying in a church, but going out and working for the practical reform and betterment of the world. The Progressives did not restrict their Association to Quakers only but openly welcomed "all who seek truth . . . without distinction of sex, creed, or color. We open our doors to all who wish to unite with us in promoting peace and good will among men. We ask all who are striving to elevate humanity to come here and stand with us on equal terms." [29] They also took the pains to note that "women are by nature entitled to equality with men in all the relations of human life, whether social, civil, religious, educational, or pecuniary." [30]

This then was the philosophy which activated the four Quaker women meeting with Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Jane Hunt's parlor on July 13. Equal rights for women was an issue with which they were already acquainted, and on which they held strong views. Stanton's frustration and determination found a sympathetic audience in the reform-minded Quaker women gathered around the Hunt's tea table.

We do not know when Elizabeth Cady Stanton first met the Hunts. She probably never knew Sarah McClintock Hunt, for by the time that Stanton arrived in Seneca Falls in 1847, Sarah Hunt had already died, leaving Richard Hunt a widower for the third time. The 48-year-old Hunt waited three years before remarrying again in 1845 to Jane Master, a Quaker from Philadelphia who was 15 years his junior. [31] In 1848, the Hunt family consisted of three young children from Hunt's third marriage, (a nine-year-old boy, an eight-year-old girl, and a seven-year-old girl) and a year-old baby boy. [32] Jane Hunt would later bear two more children, a boy and a girl, and survive her husband by 33 years. [33] At least in the area of child rearing burdens, she could fully identify with Elizabeth Cady Stanton. (See Illustrations 13 and 14.)

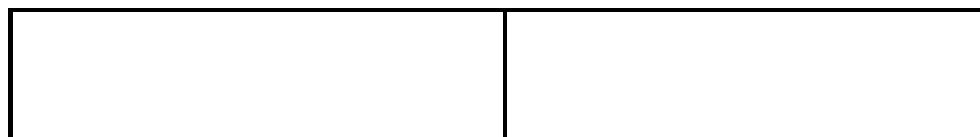




Illustration 13. Jane Hunt. From [A History of Waterloo](#), John Becker.



Illustration 14. Richard Hunt. From [A History of Waterloo](#), John Becker.

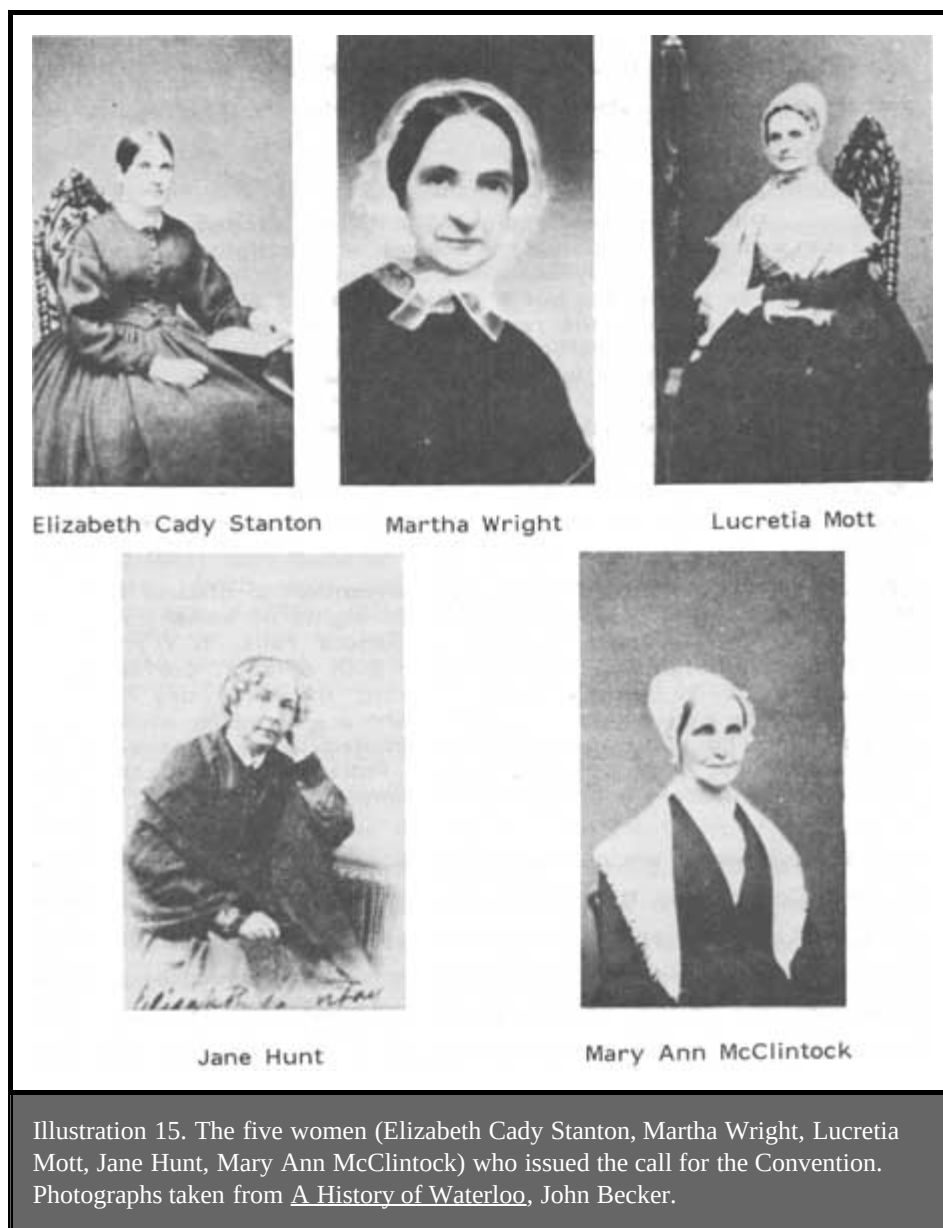
Stanton was apparently much in the habit of visiting back and forth with the Quaker families of Waterloo, for it was there that she claimed she found "the most congenial associations." [34] Knowing of her friend's special interest in reform movements and personalities, Jane Hunt invited Elizabeth to spend the afternoon of July 13 at her house when Lucretia Mott and several other Quaker women would also be there. [35] Stanton had been a deep admirer of Mott ever since she had first met her at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Mott and the other women delegates had been deeply humiliated at that Convention when they were not allowed to participate because of their sex. Stanton recalled that "As the convention adjourned, the remark was heard on all sides, 'It is about time some demand was made for new liberties for women.' As Mrs. Mott and I walked home arm, in arm, commenting on the incidents of the day, we resolved to hold a convention as soon as we returned home, and form a society to advocate the rights of women." [36]

Between family cares and attention to other reform movements, the proposed convention was never organized. As soon as Elizabeth Cady Stanton saw her old friend in Waterloo again, however, she immediately returned to the issue they had so passionately discussed eight years before. Stanton's views were, if anything, even more fervent now, as her recent careworn life in Seneca Falls had forcibly brought home to her the injustice of her position as a woman. She recalled in her autobiography that "I poured out, that day, the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent, with such vehemence and indignation that I stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare anything . . . we decided, then and there, to call a 'Woman's Rights Convention.'" [37]

It is important to remember that the "rest of the party" consisted of four very liberal Quakers. Lucretia Mott, her sister Martha Wright, Jane Hunt, and Mary Ann McClintock were all associated with the reform minded Progressive Quakers who had just broken off from the Annual Meeting the month before. (See Illustration 15.) Part of the reason that Lucretia Mott was even in the area was to attend that gathering. She had remained in the region to visit her

sister in Auburn and to inspect conditions in prisons and Indian reservations in upstate New York. [38] It was a fortuitous blend of circumstances that brought these four Quakers together with Elizabeth Cady Stanton just at the time when they were fighting a battle for equality within the Friends, and she was waging one at home. Their heightened sensibilities made them particularly receptive to the idea of a convention.

Richard Hunt is generally not included in the accounts which detail the events of July 13, but according to the Hunt family tradition, that belligerent Quaker who believed in accomplishment" helped to spur the women on to action. In 1948, Hunt's grandson told an interviewer that his father had passed along the following story as part of the family tradition.



. . . the ladies were indignant and very much excited about the wrongs being borne by women, when my grandfather came into the room. They explained their ideas to him. Grandfather Hunt was a Quaker, but a Quaker who thought, 'Faith without works, is dead.' His reply was, 'Why don't you do something about it?' They thereupon resolved upon with a fixed intention to obtain a change in laws and customs governing women, and to call a convention to consider steps to take in order to carry out their determination and to assert women's rights. [39]

Regardless of who prompted the action, the women seated themselves around Jane Hunt's tea table, "and before the twilight deepened into night," composed the following announcement for inclusion in the next day's issue of the Seneca County Courier:

WOMAN'S RIGHTS CONVENTION.—A Convention to discuss the social, civil, and religious condition and rights of woman, will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel, at Seneca Falls, N.Y., on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July, current; commencing at 10 o'clock A.M. During the first day the meeting will be exclusively for women, who are earnestly invited to attend. The public generally are invited to be present on the second day, when Lucretia Mott of Philadelphia, and other ladies and gentlemen, will address the convention. [40]

Although all five women are generally recognized as the originators of the Seneca Falls Convention, the History of Woman Suffrage seems to imply that Jane Hunt did not assist in the writing of the call. Stanton states in that volume that "this call, without signatures, was issued by Lucretia Mott, Martha C. Wright, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Mary Ann McClintock. [41]

As the lady of the house, it is quite possible that Jane Hunt was simply called away to deal with meals and children's bedtimes as the others labored on through the evening at composing the call. Stanton does list her as one of "the chief movers and managers" in her autobiography. [42] We do not know either whether she met the others at the McClintocks a few days later to write the Declaration of Sentiments. Stanton recorded only that they met, without providing names.

Jane and Richard Hunt's support for the women's rights movement is without question. They both attended the Convention and signed the Declaration of Sentiments, though it appears that neither made any formal presentation, as did Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann McClintock and Martha Wright. [43] We do know that they attended subsequent women's rights lectures in an amusing letter from Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Cady Stanton:

He [Hunt] says some of their respectable inhabitants were well pleased [with your lecture]. He would have preferred the headdress a little different—it looked rather Theatrical he thought—a kind of turban and bows'—when thou come here we can give thee an example of Quaker simplicity. I rejoice however that thou wast willing to deliver that lecture. [44]

The Hunts continued to be active in the Progressive Quakers, joining with them in passing resolutions against slavery, war, and alcohol, and calling for equal rights for women, humane treatment of prisoners, and equal educational opportunities. With their strong commitment to practical humanitarianism, we can be fairly certain that they did more than just pass resolutions, and continued to actively aid and support the various reform movements of the day. As noted earlier, Hunt even appears to have donated \$100 to the building of the Wesleyan Chapel. (See chapter on Wesleyan Chapel.) Records documenting the Hunt's activities are very scarce, and except for scattered references to them in Quaker records, we can say very little about the details of their lives. Richard Hunt died in 1856 at the age of 59, leaving the house to his wife Jane. [45] She continued to live there until her death in 1889. [46]

Though we know little more than the commercial transactions and general religious beliefs of Jane and Richard Hunt, they are important figures in the development of the women's rights movement. Their position as community leaders, and commitment toward practical reform helped to create a climate in Waterloo which made its residents particularly supportive of such a cause.

The Hunts' strong sense of individual involvement insured that they personally, would assist any cause dedicated to the betterment of the human condition. By providing the support and sympathy that Elizabeth Cady Stanton needed to organize the Convention, they insured that the movement would get off to a good start. As Susan B. Anthony once reminded Jane and Richard Hunt's son, "You should be proud that this whole movement started at your mother's tea table." [47]

Important Sources of Information and Suggestions for Further Research

1. There are no known Hunt Family Papers in existence. Information for this report has all been drawn from public records, Quaker records, and oblique references by others. There is a possibility though that such papers exist. In A History of Waterloo, published by John Becker in 1949, there are some Hunt family photographs said to be "taken from Jane C. Hunt's own personal album now in possession of her grandson, Richard P. Hunt, Clyde, N.Y." (p. 152). Efforts should be made to determine the current whereabouts of this album as well the location of other Hunt descendants who might have personal family papers.

2. Quaker Records. Further information on the split in the Junius Monthly Meeting and the activities of the Progressive Quakers can be found in the Records Library of the New York Yearly Meeting, The Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore, and The Quaker Collection at Haverford.

3. "Women's Rights, Free Soil, and Quakerism: The Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention." Paper prepared by Judith Wellman and delivered at the SHEAR Conference, 1981. Copy available at Women's Rights National Historical Park. Examines the role of the Waterloo Progressive Quakers in foreshadowing and supporting the Women's Rights Convention of 1848.

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CHAPTER SIX: THE McCLINTOCKS

Although the 1848 Women's Rights Convention is usually connected in the public mind with Seneca Falls, Quaker residents of the neighboring village of Waterloo played a pivotal role in the organization and support of the Convention. It was in Waterloo that the idea for the meeting first came to fruition, it was here that the Declaration of Sentiments was composed and written, and at least a quarter of the signers of that document were from Waterloo. Two of the major figures in this Seneca Falls/Waterloo connection were Thomas and Mary Ann McClintock.

The McClintocks arrived in Waterloo from Philadelphia in 1835-1836. [1] Various local histories give differing dates, though none is supported by independent documentation. In the December 15, 1836, edition of the Seneca Observer there appeared a notice that Thomas McClintock had purchased the drugstore of Samuel Lundy & Son, located on Main Street, just west of the Eagle Hotel on the corner of Main and Virginia Streets. McClintock continued to run the business as a drugstore, with the addition of a stationery and book section. [2] Three years later, he moved his business down one block to the easternmost store in the new commercial building owned by his new brother-in-law, Richard P. Hunt. [3] (This structure is still standing and is now known as the Semtner Building. See Illustration 12.) McClintock continued to rent this building until he left Waterloo sometime around 1856-1857. [4] The exact date of his departure is not known. Becker notes that Thomas and Mary Ann McClintock are described in an 1859 deed as being residents of Philadelphia, but he gives no indication as to how long they had been there. [5]

The house at 14 E. Williams Street in which the McClintocks presumably lived was also rented from R. P. Hunt. There is no documentation that positively establishes that this was the McClintock home except for a strong oral tradition and the 1856 inventory of Hunt's estate which refers to the lot as the McClintock House lot, so called, on the South Side of Williams Street." [6] At present, we can only assume that the McClintocks lived in this house, conveniently located behind Thomas second drugstore, for the duration of their 20-year stay in Waterloo.

The McClintocks left no records as to why they decided to move from Philadelphia to a fairly isolated village like Waterloo, but a quick survey shows some obvious family and philosophical ties. As noted earlier, Thomas McClintock was related by marriage to Richard P. Hunt, one of the most prominent and wealthiest residents of Waterloo. Thomas' sister Sarah married Hunt in 1837, dying five years later in 1842. [7] We do not know if Sarah came to Waterloo with her brother's family and there met Hunt, or if the Hunts and McClintocks were already acquainted, and the impending marriage was the reason for the move. In either case, it was obvious that the Hunts and the McClintocks maintained close social, religious, and economic ties once the McClintocks arrived.

Of more significance than the McClintocks connections with the Hunts were their ties with the radical Hicksite Quakers who had settled in and around Waterloo. Thomas McClintock

had been a Quaker minister since 1835. An entry in a genealogical study indicates that Mary Ann McClintock was granted a certificate in 1820 when she was 20 years old, which may indicate that she too was an acknowledged Quaker Minister. [8] Both the McClintocks had been extremely active in militant Quaker activities in Philadelphia. Thomas was one of the originators of the Free Produce Society which advocated the boycott of any products such as cotton and sugar which had been produced through slave labor. The ads which he consistently placed in the Seneca Observer assured his customers that all of the products in his store were "Free from the labor of slaves." [9] The story is told that he sold antislavery, sugar-free fortune cookies in his store with messages similar to the following, "If slavery comes by color which God gave, Fortune may change and you become the slave." [10] Richard Hunt was also a strong abolitionist Quaker and mirrored his brother-in-law's convictions by organizing a woolen mill in Waterloo instead of a cotton one on the strength of his antislavery principles.

Disagreement over the issues of slavery and freedom of conscience came to a head in the Quaker community in 1828, resulting in a schism and the formation of the Hicksite Quakers. Radical abolitionist Quakers such as James and Lucretia Mott, and Thomas and Mary Ann McClintock, joined the Hicksites, believing that social action was a religious imperative, and that the dictates of an individual's conscience took precedence over those of any church authorities. Inherent in the Hicksite stance was the belief that women were equal to men in all spiritual and mental qualities. [11]

When the McClintocks arrived in Waterloo, they found an already established strong and active Hicksite group known as the Junius Meeting. Begun very early in the century, some of the leading families in the society were the Connells, the Dells, the Hunts, and the Pounds. [12] Many of these individuals would later sign the Declaration of Sentiments. Their meeting house was outside of Waterloo along what is now Nine Foot Road. Although the building is now gone, the cemetery can still be seen. During the 1830s and 1840s, the Quaker meeting house, like the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, established a reputation for welcoming abolitionist and reform speakers. One individual asserted that:

perhaps no other church edifice in old Junius re-echoed to the voices of more of the old anti-slavery leaders than did the old Quaker church. Notably among those who were prominent as agitators, and who here received audience while they portrayed the iniquity of African slavery in our free land, we would mention William Lloyd Garrison, Gerrit Smith, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and others who held forth here many times. [13]

In spite of this evidence of their liberal mindedness, Thomas McClintock felt that many members of the Junius Meeting were still not active enough on social issues, and that the church Elders were violating the rights of individual consciences when they forbade certain reform activities. Both Thomas and Mary Ann established themselves in leadership positions in the Society, and attempted to liberalize their fellow Friends. Thomas continued as a minister and served as the clerk for the Yearly Meeting from 1839-1841 while Mary Ann was assistant clerk for the Women's Yearly Meeting from 1839-1841. [14] Their agitation for a more active participation in the reform movements of the day began to polarize the Society, until the McClintocks and 200 like-minded Friends finally broke away from the already liberal Hicksite Quakers in 1848 to form the ultra-liberal Congregational or Progressive Friends. [15] It is interesting to note that all of this activity was happening between June and October of 1848, just at the time of the Convention in Seneca Falls. At least half of the Waterloo residents who signed the Declaration of Sentiments were members of the new Progressive Friends. [16]

While not particularly radical today, the tenets of the Progressive Friends were quite shocking

to some. The Progressive Friends disavowed not only the need for church hierarchies or specific creeds, but pledged themselves to establishing "a Universal Church, emphatically the Church of Humanity, the portals of which may be open to Christian, Jew, Mohammedon and Pagan." [17] The emphasis was to be on practical reform rather than unity of doctrine or belief. Improving and elevating the human condition was considered much more important than quibbling over theological or liturgical details.

The guidelines for the new Society was a document written by Thomas McClintock, entitled, "Basis of Religious Association." (See Appendix G.) In it, he declares that "perfect liberty of conscience, is the right of every sane and accountable human being," [18] thereby claiming the right to engage actively in social reform if his conscience told him he must do so. Very importantly for our purposes, he also insisted that in the Progressive Friends, "not only will the equality of women be recognized, but so perfectly, that in our meetings, larger and smaller, men and women will meet together and transact business jointly." [19] Even the liberal Hicksites had always maintained separate meetings and worship services for men and women.

The attitude of the local, conservative Quakers to the zealous reformers in their midst is neatly summed up by one who wrote, "This place [Waterloo] has been much affected as far as religion is concerned by a kind of ranterism. The trouble first commenced among those who professed to be Friends, by their taking very active measures out of Society on the subject of slavery, and uniting and mixing with almost everything however absurd, until they left Society for larger liberty." [20]

In keeping with their advanced thinking, the McClintocks continued their "ranterism" after the split, and led active and highly visible lives in the village. At the time of the Convention, both Thomas and Mary Ann were 48 years of age, with four daughters ranging in age from 16 to 27. [21] (A son was apparently no longer living at home.) In addition to their work with the Progressive Friends, all six of them were active in one way or another with antislavery petition drives, temperance meetings, and abolitionist fund raising fairs. An 1843 notice in the county paper for instance, announced that "the weekly meeting of the Washington Independant Temperance Society of Waterloo, will be held on Tuesday evening at T. McClintocks School Room." [22] There is no indication whether the school room mentioned was a meeting place connected with the drugstore, or whether it was a room at the McClintock House. The possibility certainly exists, however, that frequent gatherings occurred in the McClintock house connected with a wide range of reform activities. (See Illustration 16 and Illustration 17.)

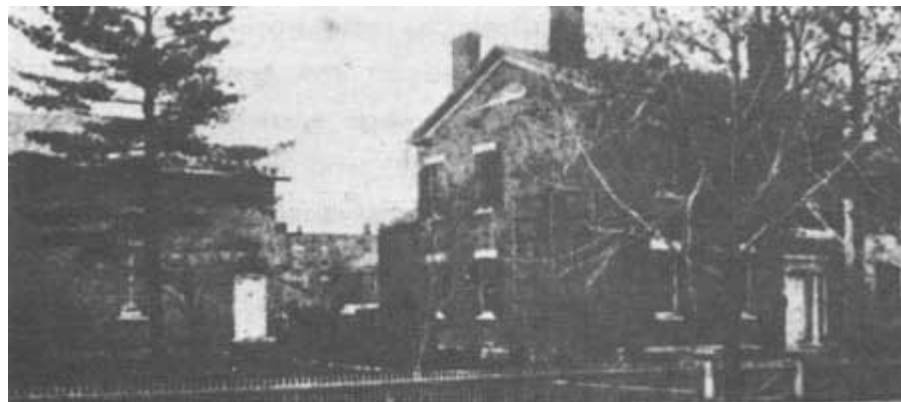
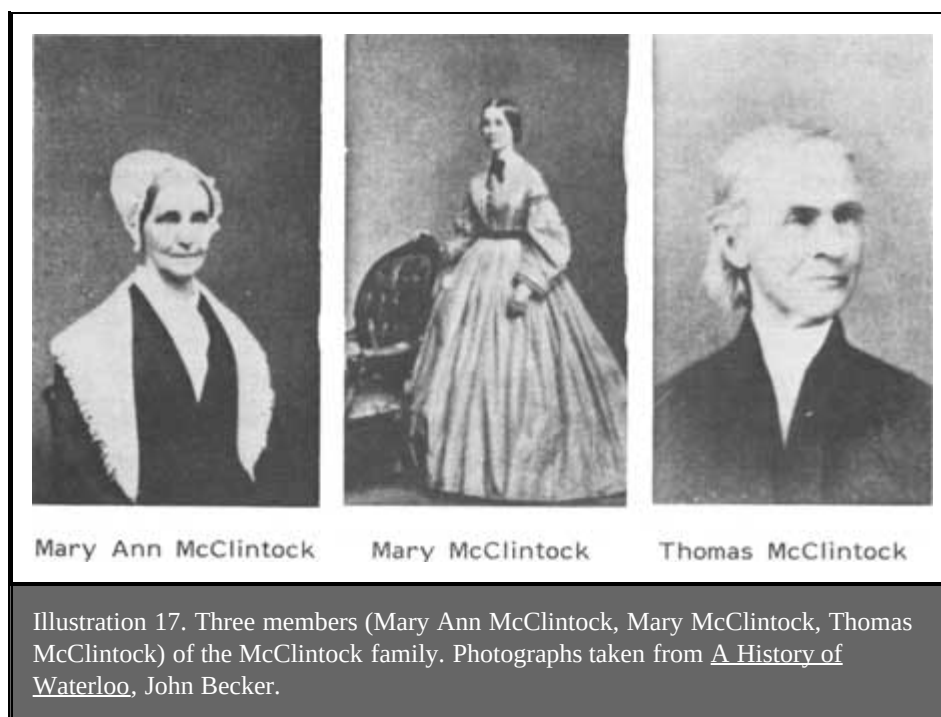


Illustration 16. The McClintock House, c. 1879. Photograph taken from [A History of Waterloo](#), John Becker.



The 1850 census records also provide some interesting clues on the family's convictions. Elizabeth McClintock, who worked as a clerk in her father's store, has her occupation listed on the census form, the only woman in Waterloo to be identified as a wage earner. While there were undoubtedly other women in the village who earned a living, only Elizabeth McClintock apparently felt strongly enough about the issue to insist on this documentation.

The 1850 census also lists three non-relatives as living in the McClintock house: a 16-year-old male clerk who presumably worked at the drugstore, a 17-year-old Black girl, and an 8-year-old mulatto child. Knowing the McClintocks' strong humanitarian and abolitionist sympathies, it seems reasonable to assume that these two girls were fugitive slaves being protected by the family rather than servants. The eight-year-old child certainly was not hired help. The fact that Richard Hunt is known to have been active in the Underground Railroad lends credence to this supposition. [23]

In any case, there can be no doubt that the McClintocks, parents and daughters, were fully committed to the myriad of reform movements swirling around upstate New York in the early 19th century. It comes as no surprise that they were intimately involved in the 1848 Women's Rights Convention, and among its main supporters.

It is not clear exactly when Elizabeth Cady Stanton first met Mary Ann McClintock, but it is generally assumed that it was before the historic July 13 meeting at Richard Hunt's house where the call for the Convention was written. Stanton wrote in the [History of Woman Suffrage](#) that while she lived in Seneca Falls she found "the most congenial associations in Quaker families," [24] in nearby Waterloo. It seems unlikely that she would not have known the McClintocks, arguably the most active Quakers in the area. In her autobiography, she states only that "I received an invitation to spend the day with Lucretia Mott, at Richard Hunt's, in Waterloo. There I met several members of different families of Friends, earnest, thoughtful women." [25]

The women she met there were Lucretia Mott, Mott's sister Martha Wright, Jane Hunt, and Mary Ann McClintock. [26] All of the women except for Stanton were Quakers. In fact, part of the reason that Lucretia Mott was in the area was to attend the Yearly Meeting of Friends of Western New York. [27] This was the same Meeting at which the Progressive Quakers

were declaring their intentions to secede from the Hicksites. Four of the five women at this meeting were therefore planning one social revolution while embroiled in the midst of another. Their heightened sensibilities over the inequities among the Friends probably helped to solidify their thinking on the related issue of Women's Rights, and made them doubly receptive to Elizabeth Cady Stanton's concerns. As Stanton described it:

I poured out, that day, the torrent of my long-accumulating discontent, with such vehemence and indignation that I stirred myself, as well as the rest of the party, to do and dare anything. My discontent, according to Emerson, must have been healthy, for it moved us all to prompt action, and we decided, then and there, to call a 'Woman's Rights Convention.' We wrote the call that evening and published it in the Seneca County Courier the next day, the 14th of July, 1848, giving only five days' notice, as the convention was to be held on the 19th and 20th. The call was inserted without signatures,—in fact it was a mere announcement of a meeting,—but the chief movers and managers were Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann McClintock, Jane Hunt, Martha C. Wright, and myself." [28]

According to Lucretia Mott, the "chief movers and managers" were Stanton and the McClintocks. Writing to Stanton in March 1855, she recalled "when James and self were attending the Yearly Meeting at Waterloo, in 1848 was it? thou again proposed the convention which was afterward held at Seneca Falls. I have never liked the undeserved praise in the Report of that meeting's proceedings, of being 'the moving spirit of that occasion', when to thyself belongs the honor aided so efficiently by the McClintocks." [29]

Stanton found Mary Ann McClintock to be a valuable assistant in organizing the Convention. With her three years' experience as the clerk of the Quaker Women's Meeting, and long familiarity with reform work, she no doubt provided both spiritual and mental support to the relatively inexperienced Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Stanton reports that the women reassembled a few days later "in Mrs. McClintocks parlor to write their declaration, resolutions, and to consider subjects for speeches." [] The task proved to be much more difficult than they had anticipated. Stanton recalled that:

they felt as helpless and hopeless as if they had been suddenly asked to construct a steam engine. . . . The reports of Peace, Temperance, and Anti-Slavery concentrations were examined, but all alike seemed too tame and pacific for the inauguration of a rebellion such as the world had never before seen. . . . After much delay, one of the circle took up the Declaration of 1776, and read it aloud with much spirit and emphasis, and it was at once decided to adopt the historic document, with some slight changes such as substituting 'all men' for 'King George'. . . . Several well-disposed men assisted in collecting the grievances, until, with the announcement of the eighteenth, the women felt they had enough to go before the world with a good case. [31]

All six of the McClintocks showed their support for the Convention by attending the sessions, and bringing all of their Progressive Quaker friends with them. Rhoda Palmer, a Waterloo Quaker and one of the signers of the Declaration, testified as to the success of their recruiting efforts. "I think without exception that every member [of the Waterloo Quaker meeting] was present." [32] At least one quarter of the signers of the Declaration were Quakers. [33] Among them were Thomas and Mary Ann McClintock, and their two eldest daughters, Mary and Elizabeth.

The McClintocks involvement also extended to active participation in the Convention itself. Mary McClintock was appointed secretary for the proceedings, and on the last evening of the conference "delivered a short, but impressive, address calling upon woman to arouse from

her lethargy and be true to herself and her God." [34] Her sister Elizabeth delivered an address at the close of the first day's session, and served along with her mother on the committee appointed to prepare a report of the proceedings for publication. Mary Ann McClintock participated in the discussions and debates throughout the conference. A 13-year-old member of the audience was spellbound by the impressive McClintock women, and never forgot the impact they had upon her at that first Convention. Many years later she remembered Mary Ann as "a dignified Quaker matron with four daughters around her, two of whom took active part in the proceedings. These ladies, Elizabeth and Mary McClintoc [sic], were beautiful women, with dignified and self-possessed manners not often seen in women brought up as they were in a country town of that day." [35]

Thomas McClintock was also a highly visible figure at the Convention. Elizabeth Cady Stanton noted that he "took part throughout in the discussions." [36] He acted as the chairman of the final session, during which he also made a strong speech "in proof of woman's servitude to man" [37] by reading a series of repressive laws then on the books. (See Illustration 17.)

The McClintocks continued to be actively involved in the movement they had helped to start. When the second Women's Rights Convention opened in Rochester three weeks later, we know that both Mary Ann and Elizabeth were in attendance. [38] Other members of the family may have also been present but their names are not mentioned in the published report. Abigail Bush was chosen to be president of the meeting, but surprisingly enough, Elizabeth McClintock declined her nomination to be secretary because she was "unprepared to have a woman the presiding officer." [39] Mary Ann McClintock, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucretia Mott all agreed with her that it was a most hazardous experiment . . . and stoutly opposed it." [40] James Mott, remember, had chaired the Seneca Falls Convention.

In spite of their ardent convictions concerning the equality of the sexes, these four pioneers of the movement feared that they, with "such feeble voices and timed manners, without the slightest knowledge of Cushing's Manual, or the least experience in public meetings," [41] would only bring ridicule down upon their heads if they attempted to run the proceedings themselves. Stanton admitted that they "were on the verge of leaving the Convention in disgust," [42] but were reluctantly persuaded to stay by their more daring compatriots. Bush's calm demeanor and self-assurance "soon reconciled the opposition to the seemingly ridiculous experiment," [43] and the Convention proceeded on to the business at hand.

Though still preferring not to act as secretary, Elizabeth McClintock made several presentations at the Convention. During the afternoon session, she read excerpts from a sermon that the pastor of the Seneca Falls Presbyterian Church had preached on the Sunday following the first Convention. In it, he had condemned the Declaration of Sentiments and the women's rights movement in no uncertain terms. Elizabeth answered his charges by reading the reply that she and Elizabeth Cady Stanton had co-written and published in the local papers. [44] At the request of Lucretia Mott, she also read a lively satirical poem called "The Times That Try Men's Souls" that had been written by Maria W. Chapman in answer to a pastoral letter from the Massachusetts clergy signed "Lords of Creation." [45]

Surviving records on the McClintocks are fragmentary at best, but we do know that they continued to be very active in the Progressive Quaker Societies through the 1850s. Given their deep involvement in the early abolitionist and women's rights movements, it seems highly unlikely that they would suddenly drop these projects after 1848, though their names appear less frequently in the available records. Their connections with the Progressive Quakers who by definition advocated total equality in all spheres, certainly indicates that they retained a passionate belief in these ideals. The lack of documentation on their activities is surely due more to the fragmentary nature of the data available for this study, than any lack

of activity on the part of the preeminently active McClintocks.

We do know that at one point, Thomas and Mary Ann were travelling around the state preaching on behalf of the Progressive philosophy. In an 1849 letter to a friend, Lucretia Mott sends the following message, "Say to Thos. McClintock please, that I have a letter from Nathaniel Baeney of Nan't enclosing \$10.00 for him or rather for Congregational Quakerism in Waterloo and other neighborhoods. Tell him also that about the middle of next month, I hope to join him and Mary Ann in helping to congregationalize Dutchess and Ulster and Westchester Counties, and hope that Long Island may unite in the movement." [46]

In 1855, the New York Progressives met in Waterloo for their Annual Meeting. The report of their proceedings shows that they had lost none of their reforming zeal in the seven years since their founding.

With Thomas McClintock and Rhoda DeGarmo acting as clerks for the gathering, they passed resolutions condemning war, calling for the humane treatment of prisoners, and advocating a liberal educational system. On the subject of women's rights, they resolved "that women are by nature entitled to equality with men in all the relations of human life, whether social, religious, educational, or pecuniary; and that we regard the Woman's Rights Movement, so called, as worthy of our hearty sympathy and earnest co-operation." [47] At that same meeting, Mary Ann McClintock was placed on a committee with Elizabeth Cady Stanton to examine "the Rights, Duties and Responsibilities of Woman," and to report on their findings at the next meeting. [48]

By the next year, 1856, Thomas and Mary Ann McClintock had left Waterloo to return to Philadelphia. [49] We do not know exactly when they left, why, nor how many members of their immediate family accompanied them. It is interesting to note that the activities of the Progressive Friends in Waterloo began to slacken at this time, and that by the early 1860s, references to them no longer appear in the Quaker records. [50] Whether the McClintocks departure had anything to do with this demise, it is impossible at this point to say. Both Thomas and Mary Ann remained in Philadelphia until their deaths, Thomas dying in 1875 at age 75, Mary Ann in 1884 at age 84. [51]

The importance of the McClintock family's involvement in the early Women's Rights Movement and the Seneca Falls Convention is well established by the surviving records. Without their practical support and the backing of their large circle of reform-minded Friends, Elizabeth Cady Stanton might never had gotten the Convention off the ground.

Among themselves, the Progressive Quakers had already accepted the tenets of equal rights for women, and were eager to help Stanton present those enlightened ideas to a wider audience. Their zealous commitment "to do all that we can to remove from the road of human progress the barriers of bigotry and superstition; to enter our protest against the evils which oppress and degrade humanity," [52] insured that they would be in the front line of any battle against social injustice. It was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's great good fortune to have a large body of these dedicated reformers near at hand to lend the moral and material support she would need in her battle for women's rights.

Important Sources of Information and Suggestions for Further Research

1. As far as we know, there are no McClintock Family Papers. What we know of them has largely been derived from Conference Reports and Proceedings. The Quaker records, and paper by Judith Wellman mentioned under "Suggestions for Further Research" at the end of the chapter on the Hunt House, can also supply additional information on the McClintocks.

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APPENDIX B:

Owners of Possible Rental Properties in Wesleyan Chapel Area

(Information from 1851 Assessment Rolls)

Joseph Metcalf —	\$11,000 house and barn, location unknown \$600 house — Mynderse Street \$300 unfinished house — Jefferson Street
Elias Crouch —	\$600 house — State Street \$400 house — Mynderse Street
John Gay —	\$3400 house — Fall Street \$100 house — Mynderse Street
Walton Jones —	\$1200 house — Cayuga Street \$800 house — Mynderse Street
Edward Lyon —	\$400 house — Troy Street \$100 house — Walnut Street \$300 house — Mynderse Street
Aaron Larzelere —	\$700 house — Bay Street \$300 house — Mynderse Street
Josiah Miller —	\$1200 house — Cayuga Street \$300 house — Mynderse Street
Josiah Stockman —	\$800 house — State Street \$400 house — Mynderse Street
James Conkling —	\$1000 house — Ovid Street \$700 brick house — Clinton Street
Jacob Francisco —	\$600 house — John Street \$350 house — Troy Street
Cornelius Moody —	\$300 house — State Street \$200 house — Troy Street
Widow Odell —	\$300 house — Troy Street \$100 house — Mynderse Street
William Pitcher —	\$200 house — Troy Street \$200 house — Troy Street
James Sanderson —	\$2300 house, shop, barn — Fall Street \$500 house — Chapel Street
John Lace —	\$800 house — Fall Street \$300 house — Troy Street

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APPENDIX C:

Property Owners on Seneca Street Listed on 1851 Assessment Rolls

Patrick Donelly — house \$300
David Hudson — vacant lot \$75
James Luce — old sash factory \$800
Ross McCabe — house \$200
Michael McGraw — house \$350
Joseph Payne — brick house \$500
Ann Sherlock — house \$250
O.R. Wicks — house and shop \$700

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APPENDIX E:

List of Pastors for the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York, 1843-1872

George Pegler — 1843
Samuel Salisbury — 1843-47
Saron Phillips — 1847-49
Benjamin Bradford — 1849-53
D.B. Douglas — 1853-55
S.B. Loomis — 1855-57
J.A. Swallow — 1857-58
H.B. Knight — 1863-64
William W. Lyle — 1865-69
Adam Crooks — 1869-70
Samuel Salisbury — 1870-72

Information taken from "Manual of the Churches of Seneca County with Sketches of Their Pastors, 1895-96," (Seneca Falls, 1896).

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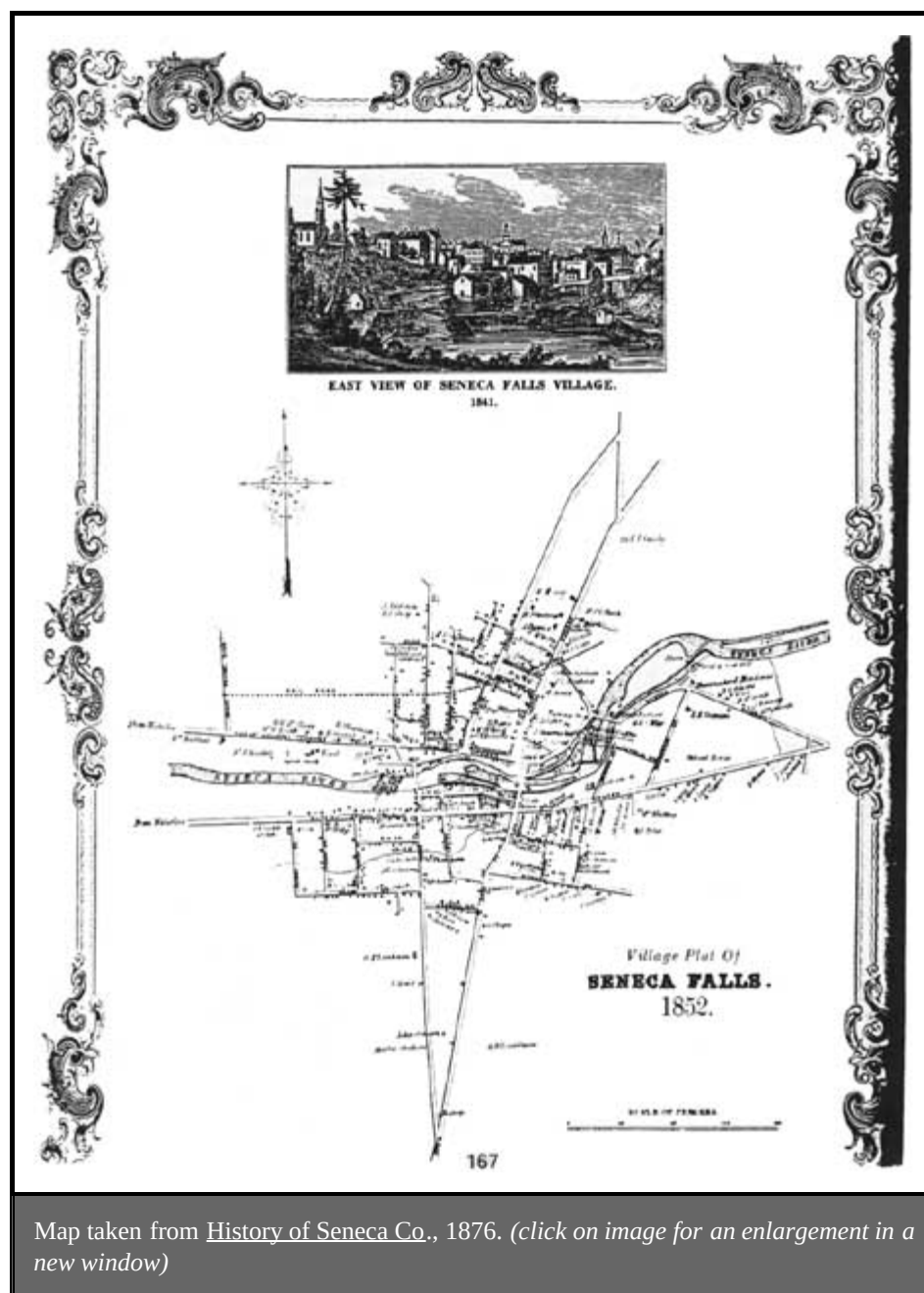
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APPENDIX H:

Village Plat of Seneca Falls, 1852



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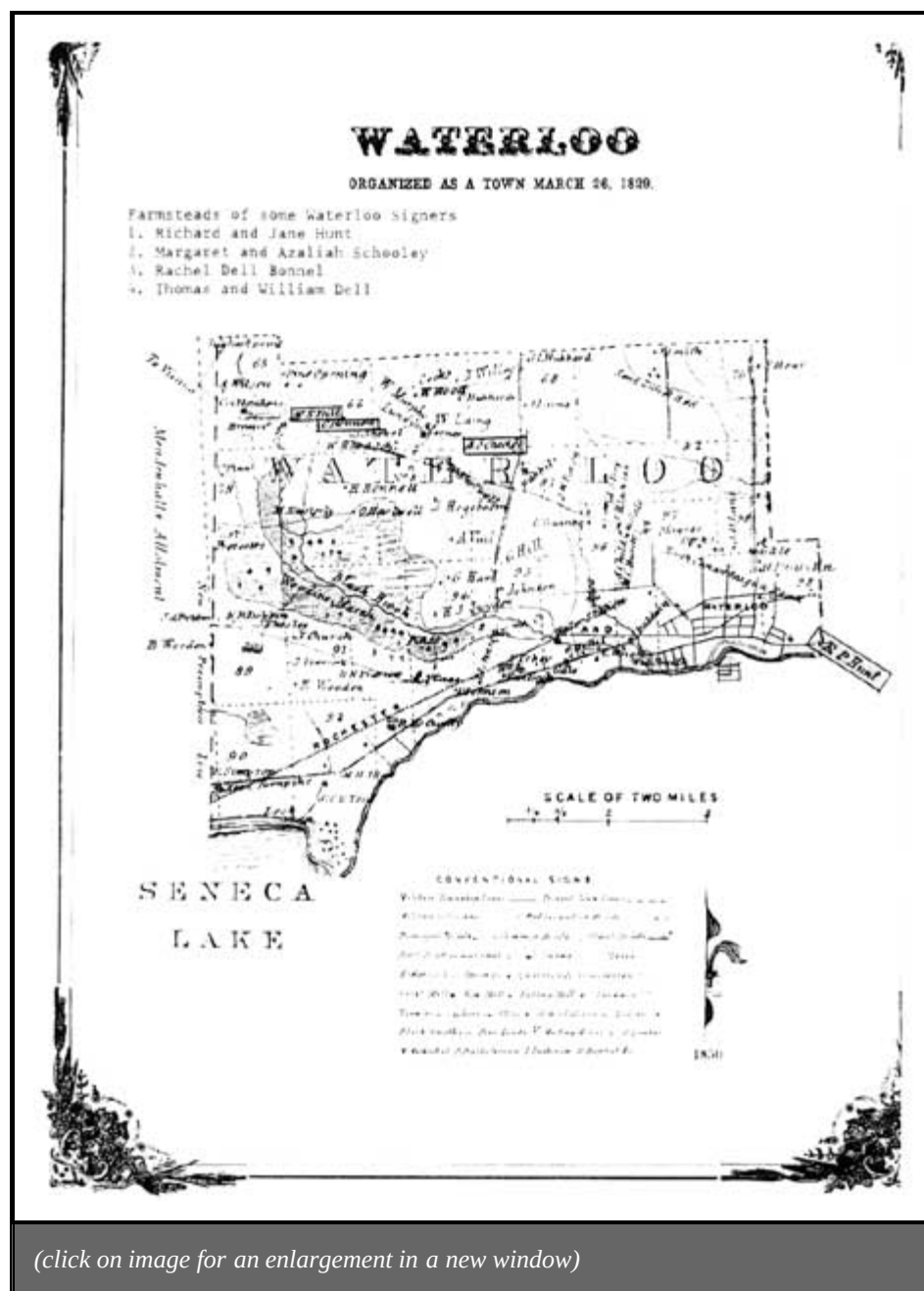
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APPENDIX J:

Location of Farmsteads of Waterloo Signers of the Declaration of Sentiments



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APPENDIX K:

Historic Site Map of Waterloo



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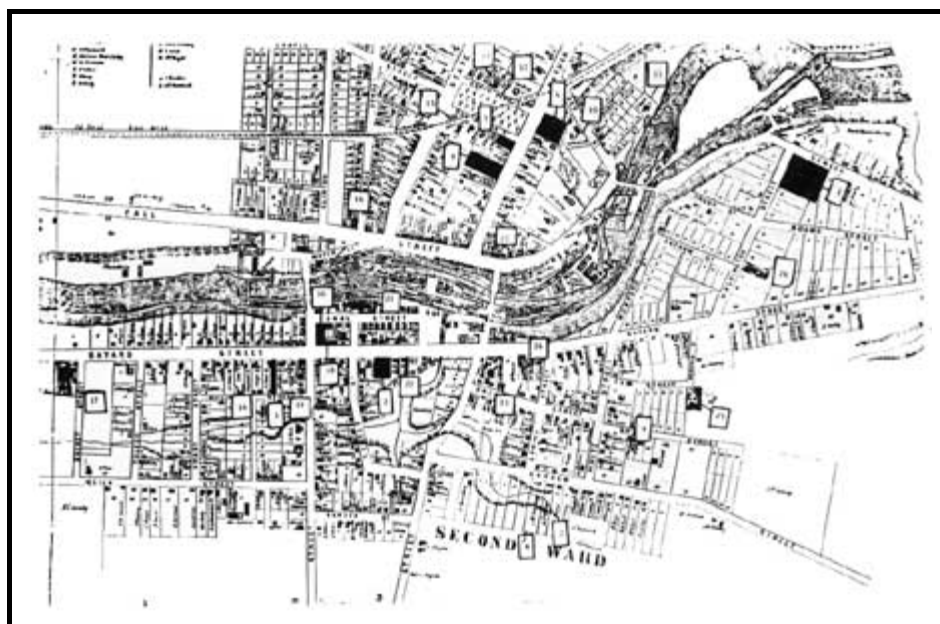
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APPENDIX L:

Historic Site Map of Seneca Falls



(click on image for an enlargement in a new window)

SIGNERS HOUSES STILL STANDING

1. Elizabeth Cady Stanton
2. Hannah and Lavinia Latham
3. Jacob Chamberlain
4. Charles Hoskins
5. Rebecca Race
6. H. Seymour

SITES OF SIGNER'S HOUSES

7. Susan Quinn
8. Elizabeth and Mary Conklin
- *9. Sarah Sisson
10. S.E. Woodworth
11. Catherine Paine
12. Elisha and Eunice Foote
13. Henry W. Seymour
14. Experience Gibbs

* more research needs to be done to confirm this.

OTHER RELATED BUILDINGS

15. Railroad Stations
16. Wesleyan Chapel
17. Gary Sacket House
18. Sacket Commercial Block
19. Franklin Hotel
20. Canal Street Boarding House
21. Seneca Knitting Mill
22. Latham Houses
23. Ansel Bascom House
24. Episcopal Church
25. O. Tyler House
26. Fourth Ward School

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At a meeting held pursuant to the
Revised Statutes of the State of New York
of the Society worshipping in the School
house in District No 1 in Seneca falls
for the purposing of organizing themselves
into a Religious Society under the Statute
on the Evening of March 27. 1843.

H. L. Worden was Chosen Chairman
A. Failing Secretary

It was motioned & carried that we
proceed to elect 6 Trustees of said
Society. Whereupon the following persons
were elected

John C. King & H. L. Worden for 3 years
Abraham Failing & E. O. Sundry - 2 do
Isaac H. Fox 1 do.

Abraham Failing was Chosen Clerk of
the Trustees.

The following Resolutions were passed
Resolved That this Society be known called
& distinguished from all the Ant Wesleyan
Methodist Society of Seneca falls.

Resolved that the Trustees be empowered
to negotiate for & purchase a Lot for the erection
of a house of Public Worship & also to circulate
a Subscription to raise money to buy a Lot
& the erection of said house of Worship

Adjourned A. Failing Clerk.



We whose names are hereunto set from
 do to pay to the Trustees of the First Wesleyan
 Methodist Society of Seneca Falls or to their
 Successors the sum set opposite to our
 respective names for the purpose of purchasing
 a lot in the village of Seneca Falls for the
 erection of a house of public worship and
 for the erection of such house hereafter to
 be paid in the following manner: That
 which is subscribed to be paid in some
 thing besides money is to be paid on demand
 and that which is subscribed to be paid
 in cash is to be paid one half when said
 house is enclosed and the other half when
 it shall be completed.

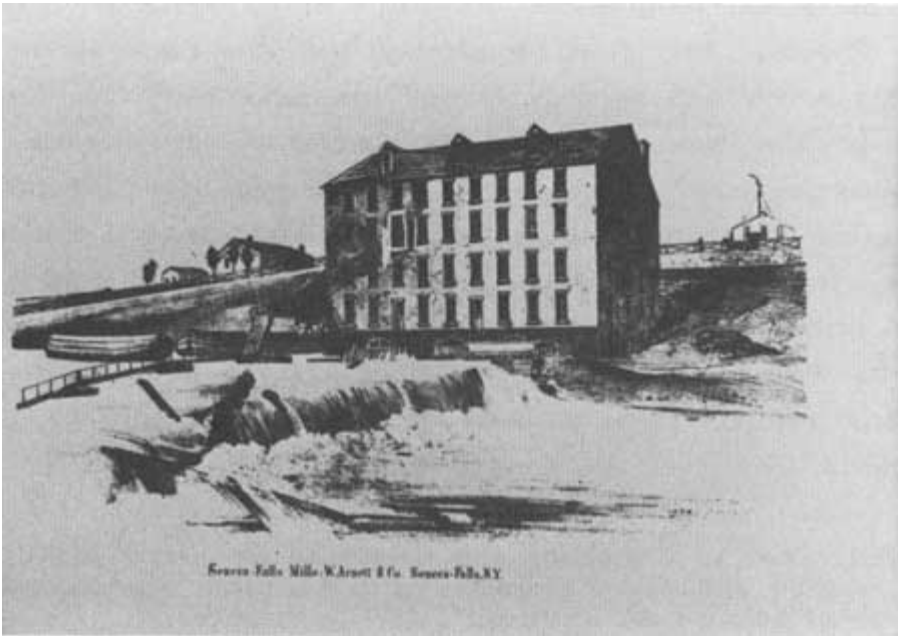
Dated Seneca Falls Oct. 1st. 1843.

Subscribers names	What to be paid in	\$	c
Joseph Metcalf		500	00
Robert A. Smith		50	00
Willard Metcalf		50	00

William Fox	2000
To one hundred in produce	100 00
John C. King	50 00
E. Partridge	\$ 50 00
I. Will to be paid in 26	5 00
D. Skidmore to be paid in tailoring	5 00
Servants Langdon in brick	12 50
Oriskany Moulds	20 00
Samuel Taylor	10 00
W. L. Ranger to be paid in tailoring	15 00
if paid in the amount of 2000 in the	
C. & C. to be paid in Blacking	5 00
Henry J. Foster in the	5 00

Archable	5 00
Marion & Hain	5 00
John Bender	10 00
Samuel Standbury	5 00
B. H. Johnson	5 00
J. W. Dickerson - Tring, Suppt	5 00

David Crowell in Team work	\$ 5 00
George Pegler	5 00
W. P. Thomsen paid	100.00

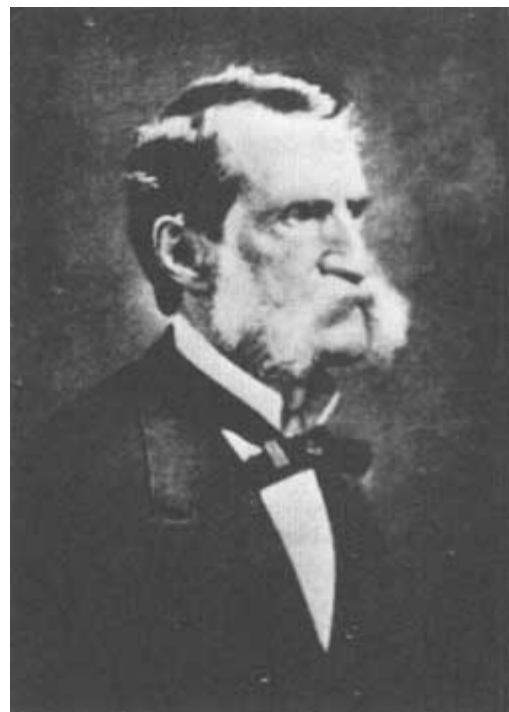


Seneca Falls Mills W. A. R. & Co. Seneca Falls, N.Y.























Elizabeth Cady Stanton



Martha Wright



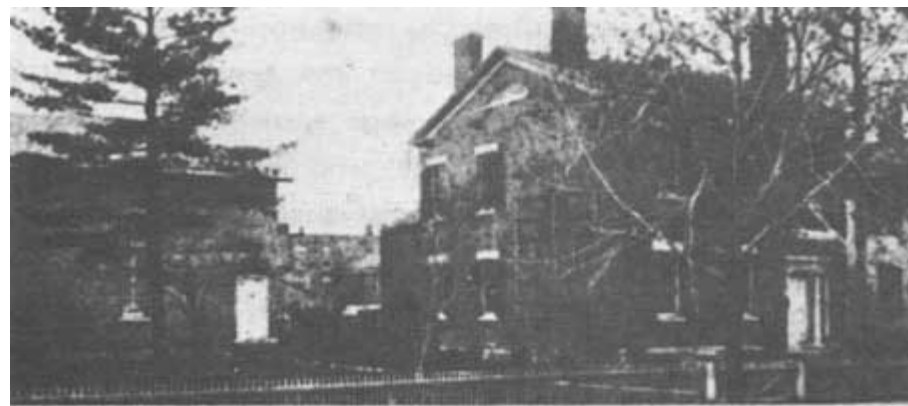
Lucretia Mott



Jane Hunt



Mary Ann McClintock





Mary Ann McClintock



Mary McClintock



Thomas McClintock