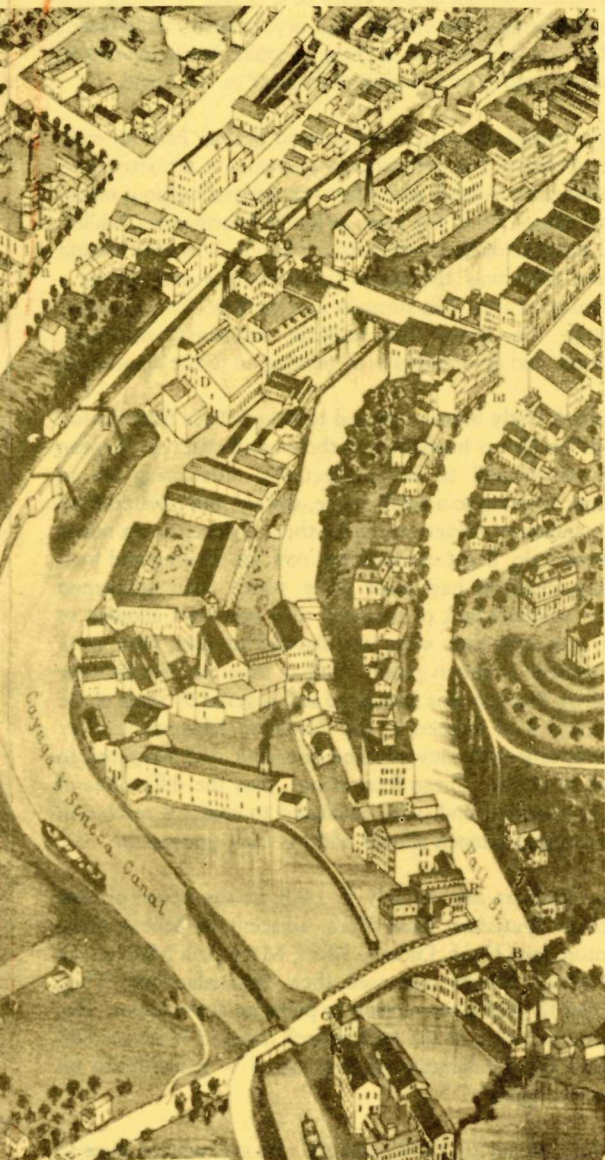


WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK



SENECA FALLS, NEW YORK

Seneca Falls emerged as a bustling mill and manufacturing community along the five natural falls of the Seneca River during the 1830's and 1840's. A rural farming area was transformed in just a few years to a center of milling and manufacturing. The change was revolutionary to women: for the first time women in the area could choose to work in a mill for paid wages, rather than work in the home.

Major change was occurring around Seneca Falls as well. The abolition and temperance movements attracted and created many radicals and reformers. Several religious movements originated in the area, including Mormonism, Millerites, and a Utopian community in Oneida. The area around Seneca Falls was the major transportation passage for a several state area. The turnpike and the Erie Canal funneled through the region the radicals, reformers, dreamers, pioneers, and speculators – all moving on to the open west.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton moved to Seneca Falls from Boston in 1847 with her husband and three small children. Stanton was accustomed to an intellectually stimulating life in Boston. Moving to a small house, distant and isolated from the community center, caring for three children and a house without help, Stanton found her new life limiting and frustrating. Stanton had since early youth been concerned about women's lack of equality: they were not allowed to own property, they were not allowed to vote, they were not allowed to retain guardianship or other powers for their children. Stanton was frustrated and angered by some of the experiences of women in the Abolition Movement: they were at times not allowed to be delegates, or if delegates, to speak in public. These frustrations, plus the difficulties of life as a mother and wife, combined to create a resolve in Stanton that women should address their grievances.

Five reformers met on July 9, 1848, at the house of Jane Hunt in Waterloo, New York, adjacent to Seneca Falls. Stanton, Jane Hunt, Lucretia Mott, Mary Ann McClintock and Mary Wright discussed their dissatisfactions. They decided to hold a convention to publicize these issues. The women met next at the McClintock home in Waterloo and drafted the Declaration of Sentiments – a manifesto on women's rights.

On July 19 and 20, 1848, over 300 men and women came to the Convention in the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls. It

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