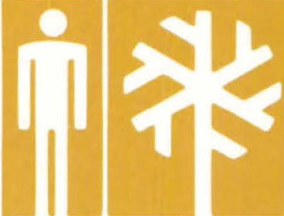


study of alternatives  
october 1979

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IN  
STORAGE

WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
HISTORIC SITES



NEW YORK

ON MICROFILM

Publication of this document should not be construed as representing either approval or disapproval of the Secretary of the Interior. The purpose of this document is to provide information for further consideration of the area as a potential submission to the Congress in compliance with Section 8 of the General Authorities Act of 1970 as amended by Public Law 94-458.

United States Department of the Interior / National Park Service



**WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
HISTORIC SITES**  
WATERLOO AND SENECA FALLS, NEW YORK

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## S U M M A R Y

### SIGNIFICANCE AND STATUS

The women's rights convention held at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, is an event of major importance in the history of the United States because it marks the formal beginning of the struggle of women for their equal rights. The Declaration of Sentiments approved by the convention is a document of enduring relevance, which expresses the goal that equality and justice should be extended to all people without regard to sex.

There are five primary sites located in Seneca Falls and Waterloo, New York, associated with the 19th century women's rights movement. These comprise the Women's Rights Historic District. It is not a historic district in the traditional geographic sense but rather a group of individual sites that are related because of their association with a common theme.

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is located on Fall Street, the main commercial street in Seneca Falls. The chapel has been substantially modified and is currently used as a laundromat, a garage, and an apartment building.

The Elizabeth Cady Stanton house, occupied by Stanton and her husband after they moved to Seneca Falls in 1847, is privately owned and occupied. It is a national historic landmark.

The Hunt house, where the resolve to hold the convention was made, is in Waterloo, New York. It is privately owned and occupied. The McClintock house, where the Declaration of Sentiments was prepared, is owned by a local church and is for sale along with the adjacent church building. The home of Amelia Bloomer, publisher of an early temperance magazine, The Lily, and popularizer of "bloomers," a new style of women's dress in the late 1800s, is located near the Stanton house in Seneca Falls. It is currently divided into several apartments.

### ALTERNATIVES

#### Alternative 1: One Site

Under this alternative, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, site of the 1848 convention, is the primary resource used to tell the story of the women's rights movement. The chapel would be acquired and developed as an interpretive center, using as much of the building's historic fabric as possible. Since preservation of the other sites is not addressed in this alternative, interpretation of

the women's movement would rely heavily on exhibits and programs at the chapel.

#### Alternative 2: Two Sites

The concept is broadened in this alternative to include two major interpretive themes at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and Stanton house. The 1848 convention and ensuing movement would be the primary themes at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, which would be acquired and developed as described in alternative 1. The Stanton house would be acquired and restored to the extent feasible, and the life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her role in the women's movement would be interpreted through programs at the house.

#### Alternative 3: Five Sites

All five sites of the Women's Rights Historic District are included in this alternative. The chapel and the Stanton house would be acquired and developed as described in alternative 2. The Hunt, McClintock, and Bloomer houses would be included in the boundary of the park but would not be acquired in fee. The Hunt house and McClintock house would be used to interpret the events leading up to the 1848 convention. The Bloomer house, or another appropriate site, would be used to interpret women's dress reform and other contributions of Amelia Bloomer.

#### Alternative 4: Historical Park

The historical park concept encompasses not only the sites of the Women's Rights Historic District but also includes a downtown preservation district. This concept would preserve the setting of the convention and the specific structures. The five sites would be preserved and interpreted as in the previous alternative. In the preservation district, mechanisms would be developed to stimulate private preservation efforts. Interpretive themes would be much broader than in the other alternatives.

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

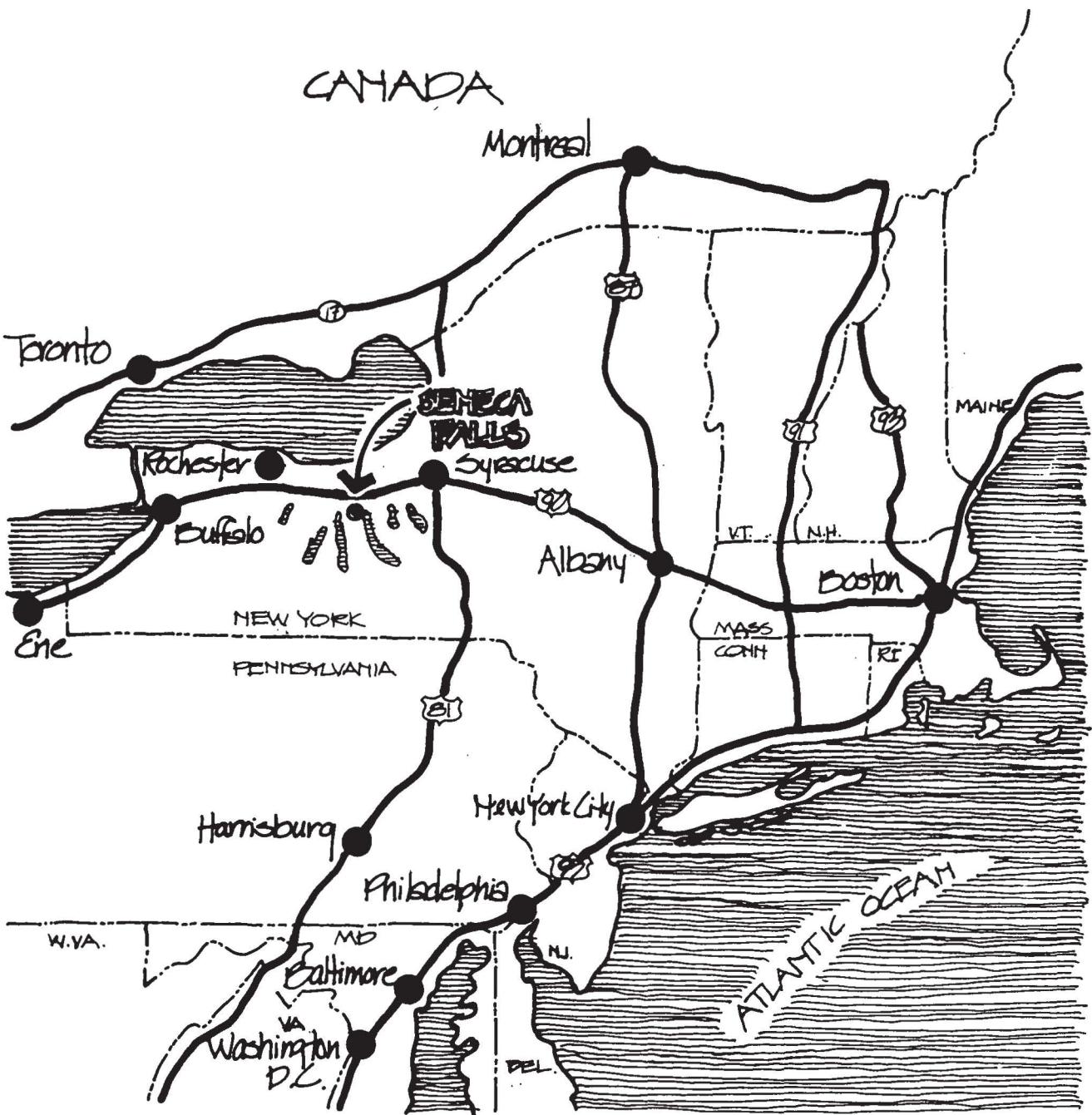
The purpose of this study is to prepare alternative strategies for the protection, interpretation, management, and use of significant resources in Seneca Falls and Waterloo, New York, related to the 19th century women's rights movement, most particularly those sites associated with the convention held in Seneca Falls in 1848. These strategies are based on a description of the resources, regional and local conditions, significance of the resources, and the suitability and feasibility of managing the resources.

This study is prepared pursuant to the provisions of the General Authorities Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-458). This law requires the Secretary of the Interior to study nationally significant areas that may have potential for inclusion to the National Park System, and to provide the Congress, on an annual basis, comprehensive reports on areas for which studies have been completed and a priority list of no less than twelve areas which appear to be of national significance.

The National Park Service initiated this study as part of an effort to investigate sites whose significance is related to themes, such as women's rights, which are not adequately represented in the National Park System. The Elizabeth Cady Stanton house was identified on the original study list, but after a preliminary site visit by Park Service planners in December 1978, the concept was modified to include the broader theme of the 19th century women's rights movement.

Concurrently, a group of local citizens met during 1978 and formulated a proposal for a noncontiguous Women's Rights Historic District. This group formed the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation for the purpose of ensuring the preservation of the Stanton house and other sites in the Seneca Falls area related to the women's rights movement.

This study is the result of discussions with state and local agencies, private groups, and individuals. People from Seneca Falls and the surrounding communities met with the study team on several occasions and provided valuable information and assistance. Representatives from the New York Office of Parks and Recreation were particularly helpful. A list of individuals and organizations consulted during the course of the study is included in appendix A.



# REGION

## WOMEN'S RIGHTS HISTORIC DISTRICT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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# DESCRIPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Seneca Falls is located in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York at the northern end of Cayuga Lake. Rochester and Syracuse are the nearest major cities, with populations of 300,000 and 200,000 respectively. Rochester is approximately 50 miles northwest of Seneca Falls and Syracuse is approximately 40 miles east.

The area is well served by the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90), which runs approximately 5 miles north of the village of Seneca Falls. State Routes 5 and 20 serve local east-west traffic connecting Geneva, Waterloo, Seneca Falls, and Auburn. Several state and county roads provide connections to Ithaca, Watkins Glen, and other towns at the southern end of the Finger Lakes. Other transportation facilities include a small private airport in Seneca Falls and railroad lines that serve local manufacturing interests. There is no passenger rail service and no local public transportation.

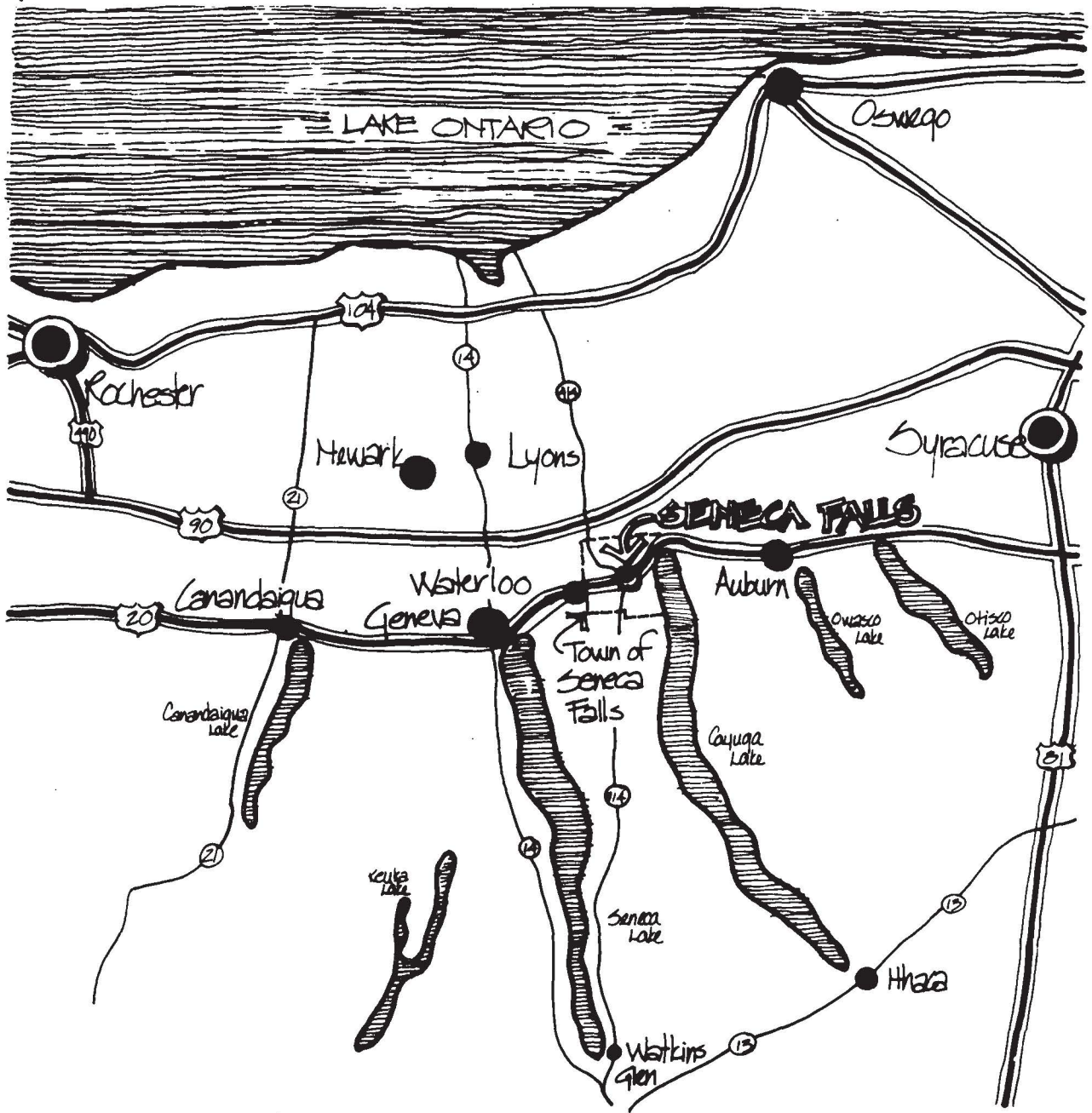
Seneca County, an area of roughly 330 square miles, is located between Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake. Most of the population is concentrated along Routes 5 and 20 in the northern portion of the county. In 1970 the population was 35,083. Long-term statistics show a stable or slightly growing population. Much of the land in the county has traditionally been used for agriculture, but this use is declining.

Industry now provides most of the local employment, particularly in the northern part of the county where there is good access to regional transportation systems. Tourism is an important regional influence.

The Finger Lakes, a series of long, narrow, glacially created lakes lying roughly parallel to each other like the fingers of a hand, are a major recreational attraction used extensively for boating, swimming, and fishing. There is much public land in Seneca County and many attractions such as historic houses, museums, wineries, and campgrounds.

Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge is a several thousand acre wildlife preserve at the headwaters of Lake Cayuga just east of Seneca Falls. It is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and serves as habitat for water birds, deer, and small mammals.

Sampson State Park, one of the largest state parks in western New York, is located 14 miles southwest of Seneca Falls on Seneca Lake. Seneca Lake State Park is located at the northern end of Seneca

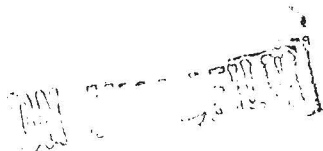


## LOCATION

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Lake. Bathing, picnicking, and boating are the main activities. The popular Cayuga State Park is located on Cayuga Lake several miles southeast of Seneca Falls. The park is several hundred acres in size with a large campground, and it often operates at capacity during the summer. The 40-mile-long Cayuga Lake is the longest lake of the Finger Lakes.

Summers are warm and pleasant with an average growing season of 150 to 160 days; winters are long and tend to be severe as Seneca Falls is located in the snow belt of upstate New York. The annual mean temperature is 48.2 degrees F., with a mean of 71.4 in July and 24.3 in January.

The Cayuga-Seneca Canal, operated by the state of New York, connects the two largest Finger Lakes at the northern end and is part of a larger inland waterway system that lies to the north. Other public land includes the Seneca Army Depot located in Romulus, several miles south of Waterloo. The depot stores various supplies and materials belonging to the General Services Administration.

Eisenhower College, located 2 miles east Seneca Falls, was established in 1965 as an independent liberal arts college with a projected enrollment of 1,500. The college has recently been taken over by the Rochester Institute of Technology, which plans to continue the liberal arts curriculum. It is too early to tell what effect this change will have on the college and the community.

Most of the large industrial employers in Seneca County are located in Seneca Falls. They include Gould's Pumps (corporate headquarters), GTE Sylvania Picture Tube Division, Seneca Falls Machine Co., Seneca Knitting Mills Co., and several food processing firms. Unlike many small upstate towns, Seneca Falls is fortunate to have fairly full employment and a sound economic base. Local corporations have generally been supportive of community efforts and interested in making Seneca Falls a better place for their employees to live. Nearby Corning, New York, the home of Corning Glass Works, has recently completed a major downtown revitalization program supported by private funds and is often cited as an example of the potential for upstate New York towns.

Seneca Falls is one of the ten townships in Seneca County. In 1970, 9,900 people resided in the 25.3-square-mile town; 7,794 people resided in the 4.3-square-mile portion of Seneca Falls, which has been incorporated into a village. The town of Seneca Falls in 1970 had a population density of 390 people per square mile and the village had 1,813 people per square mile. Thus, Seneca Falls is not only the largest community in Seneca County, but it is also one of the most heavily developed areas of the county (in 1970 the county had a population density of only 106 people per square mile).

The town of Seneca Falls has traditionally been predominantly rural with scattered houses along the major roads and extensive agriculture. Due to the low density land use, the town has had room to grow and has done so. Increased strip development, including a new Holiday Inn and several large warehouses, has occurred in recent years along Routes 5 and 20 between Seneca Falls and Waterloo. An existing shopping center has just been reopened after having been closed for a number of years, and a major new shopping center is proposed on the east side of town.

The village, which represents the urban core of Seneca Falls, is almost entirely developed and there is virtually no room for expansion, so the problems are quite different. A major concern is that shopping centers will draw businesses and customers from the downtown commercial district.

Urbanized portions of the village are served by both sanitary sewer and public water. Generally the town area does not have sewer and water service, although water service has been expanded along Routes 5 and 20, County Road 116, and the area along the Cayuga Lake shoreline.

#### Local History

In 1848 the town of Seneca Falls was a suitable stage for the dramatic conflict between traditional assumptions and a progressive view of women's roles in American society. Between 1820 and 1850, the agricultural village of Mynderse Mills was transformed into the manufacturing town of Seneca Falls.

In 1817, the farmers of the village were occupied with transporting their produce to market via the improved river and canal between Seneca and Cayuga lakes. By 1848, the town had several woolen mills and a pump manufactory fueled by the town's available water power.

The metamorphosis of the town can be attributed in part to the entrepreneurial talents of Judge Gary V. Sackett, who invested in construction of early mills and real estate that created the early industrial townscape. A historic district has been proposed commemorating Judge Sackett's contribution to the town. The Sackett Historic District, which includes residential, commercial, and industrial structures along Bayard Street south of the canal, is important because it preserves the townscape that was contemporary with the women's rights convention.

A second historic district, Fall Street/Trinity Lane Historic District, is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes 19th century industrial properties located on three islands in the Seneca River, including the industrial archeological site of the Gould Pump manufacturing plant established in 1848.

When Van Cleef Lake was created around 1914, the island industries were relocated elsewhere in Seneca Falls or environs, and the area was largely flooded. Much of the district is under water except when the lake is periodically drained.

The town's industrial and commercial properties as well as the locks and canals represent changes in economic, social, and political conditions that precipitated the women's rights convention.

Seneca Falls, located close to the Erie Canal, was in a region which people traversed on their way to the West. Abolition, temperance, and religious movements such as Mormonism and the Millerites originated in the region. A Utopian community settled in Oneida. The black leader, Frederick Douglass, published an abolitionist newspaper in nearby Rochester, New York. Further study is needed to investigate the causes for the rise of these social and political activities.

### History of the Women's Movement

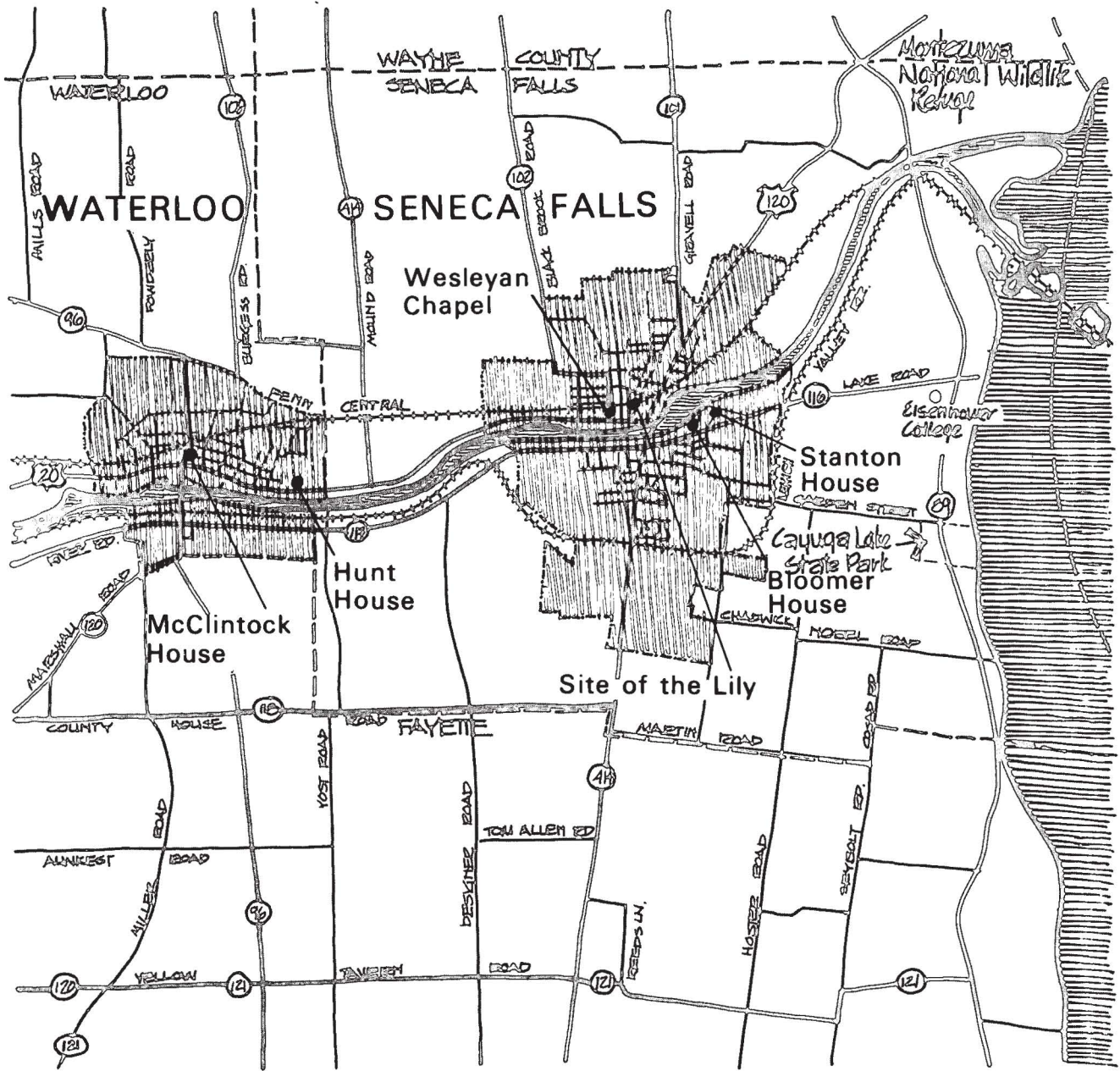
The history of women's efforts to gain civil rights is not a simple story. Any analysis, interpretation, or narration of the struggle for women's rights must recognize deeply held cultural beliefs about woman's "true nature." These traditions included the belief that women were inferior--that their sphere was hearth and home. John Winthrop, the first governor of the Puritan Colony in Massachusetts Bay, believed a woman mentally ill because she wanted to read and discuss books.

The 19th century reinforced the tradition that woman's place was in the home. The glorification of woman as mother, pious, chaste, submissive, and domestic was preached from the pulpits of the churches and praised in popular books, pamphlets, and magazines.

Alexis de Toqueville, a man of unusual perception, observed during his travels to the United States in 1830, "the inexorable opinion of the public carefully circumscribes woman within the narrow circle of domestic interest and forbids her to step beyond it."

However, industrialization forced women out of the house. A conservative educator, Catherine Beecher, who supported the "cult of domesticity," believed that it was necessary for a woman to receive a formal education in order to maintain a home, and she developed the science of home economics. By 1840 women represented 24 percent of the labor force in industrial mills, particularly textiles. During this period, teaching became a female profession. These changes were all considered acceptable because they could be viewed as an extension of the domestic sphere.

Yet women continued to be denied civil rights. In 1837, the Grimke sisters, the first women to speak in public, were declared



**AREA**

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"unwomanly and unchristian" for their daring public accounts of the oppression of slavery. Women generally were not admitted to academic colleges. Their legal status was derived through their husbands; the women did not have property rights or rights to custody of their children.

The women who became leaders of the women's rights movement received their political education in temperance and abolition movements in which they had been allowed only limited participation. Some of these women, in part through their personal discouragement, began to question assumptions about women's roles. A small number of reformers found each other in 1848 in the small town of Seneca Falls, New York.

On July 14, 1848, Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary Ann McClintock, and Mrs. Mott's sister, Martha Wright, had afternoon tea at the house of Jane Hunt in Waterloo, New York. Eight years earlier Mott and Stanton had met at the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. Mott, acknowledged as a gifted leader among the Quakers, was denied a seat at the convention because the convention resolved not to seat women as delegates. Stanton, attending the convention with her abolitionist husband, met Mrs. Mott in the gallery. The two women, angered by the humiliation, decided to hold a convention to discuss the inequitable treatment of women when they returned to the United States. Although they corresponded, it was not until their fortunate meeting in Waterloo that the women organized the convention that took place the following week, July 19 and 20, 1848.

The following notice appeared on July 15 in the Seneca County Courier:

#### SENECA FALLS CONVENTION

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, NY, 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.

Three days after the decision to hold the convention, the five women met at the McClintock house to organize it. In the front parlor the women wrote the Declaration of Sentiments and prepared the resolutions.

The organizers were surprised that 300 people gathered to attend the convention two days later because they expected only a small group due to the short notice. The original intent was to allow only women on the first day and to admit both sexes on the second day. A number of men appeared at the door on the first day, and after a hasty discussion, the women decided that men would be admitted too. James Mott, Lucretia Mott's husband, was elected to chair the meeting since none of the women felt that they had sufficient experience.

The first order of business was the Declaration of Sentiments, which was discussed in detail. Then came the resolutions, which after some discussion were passed by a large majority. The most controversial was the ninth resolution, which urged women to seek the right to vote. This idea shocked even Lucretia Mott who reportedly said to Stanton "Why, Lizzie, thee will make us ridiculous."

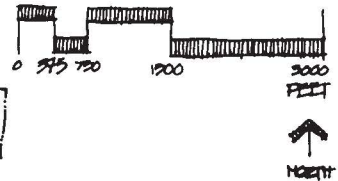
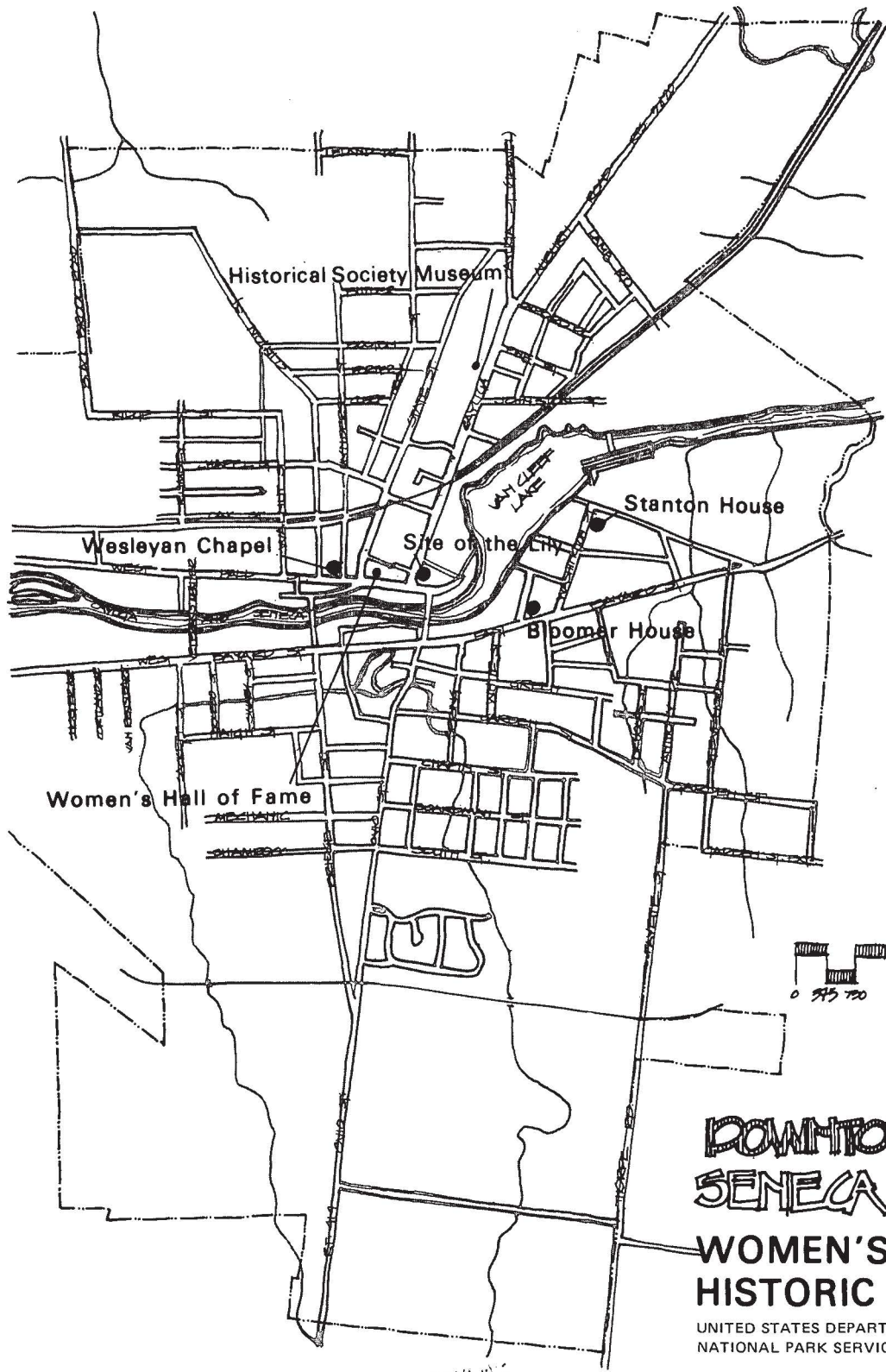
The Seneca Falls Convention marked the beginning of the struggle for women's rights in America. It was the first convention that addressed the conditions of women. Of further significance, the Declaration of Sentiments, signed by 68 women and 32 men attending the convention, is the first and most important document of the 19th century women's movement. In the declaration, the women of Seneca Falls offered a broad program that went beyond enfranchisement and sought the elimination of legal restrictions, economic discrimination, and social prejudice.

Paraphrasing the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of Sentiments began with the words "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men and women are created equal." It addressed the right of a woman to control property she earned or inherited, to have equal access to education, to enter any profession she desired, and to be allowed to speak at public assemblies. The declaration also appealed for the reform of divorce laws, the right of women to child custody, and the end of the double standard of morality. Finally, the declaration urged women to "secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise."

The Seneca Falls convention created a program for the women's rights movement. The chance meeting of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in Seneca Falls in 1850 brought together the leaders who could put the program into action. Anthony was a capable organizer, and Stanton prepared the legal arguments set before legislatures and served as the primary orator of the movement.

For the second half of the 19th century, the women's movement is the drama of the struggle to achieve these resolutions. By 1900, middle class women had broken through some of the barriers. They had entered professions and women's colleges, and coeducational





**DOWNTOWN  
SENECA FALLS**

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS  
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schools were established. Women had gained some legal control over personal property. The right to vote remained elusive for all women.

The right to vote during the colonial period was predicated upon ownership of property. Since married women could not own property, the question of enfranchisement was irrelevant. In the formative years of the new republic, the rights of male suffrage were expanded to be almost universal among free white males. During the same period, New Jersey (the only state that had woman's suffrage) rescinded it. The exclusion of women from enfranchisement expressed most clearly the cultural biases against women.

In 1869 Anthony and Stanton separated from the more moderate feminists and founded the National Woman's Suffrage Association. Anthony and Stanton wanted women to be included in the 15th Amendment to the Constitution which enfranchised blacks. Conservative suffragists preferred changes to state constitutions rather than an amendment to the federal constitution. The women's suffrage campaign was not reunited until the 1890s.

Of the people who signed the Declaration of Sentiments, only one, Charlotte Woodward, lived to see passage of the 19th amendment in 1919, which allowed women to vote in a national election.

Obtaining the right to vote has not concluded the story of the women's rights movement. Issues raised by the women in Seneca Falls which remain unresolved include sex discrimination in education and employment, differentiated wage scales, inequitable application of legal principles, and prejudicial social attitudes.

The women's rights movement of today inherited much from the women of Seneca Falls.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Wesleyan Methodist Chapel

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, site of the women's rights convention, was built in 1843, which was the same year the congregation was organized. The Wesleyan Methodists had separated from the Methodist Church over the issue of abolition. The congregation occupied the chapel in Seneca Falls for the next 30 years until construction of a new church was completed in 1874. After being vacated by the congregation, the chapel was expanded to accommodate an opera house that occupied the building until 1925 when it was converted for use by an auto dealership. In 1949 the first floor of the structure was remodelled into a laundromat that remains today. The second story was divided into apartment units at a later date.



WESLEYAN CHAPEL



STANTON HOUSE

The chapel at first glance appears to retain little of its original integrity. However, the structure has its original roofline and the outlines of the arched church windows are visible on the west wall, providing significant indications of the original exterior and interior appearance of the church. Structural features show that the chapel has been extended twice. The first expansion probably occurred some time after 1848. An engraving of the chapel, dated 1873, shows the additional bays; the account books of the Wesleyan Methodist Church mention major repair and remodelling expenses in 1858 and again in 1868. The second expansion can be attributed to the opera house, which used the rear addition for dressing rooms. Despite the dramatic modernization of the structure's facade and interior, it appears feasible to partially restore the building to its historic volume and character. Further documentary research and architectural analysis are needed to determine the exact configuration of the chapel at the time of the convention.

### Stanton House

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in 1815 in Johnstown, New York. Her father was a judge, and one of the strong memories from her childhood was the sad plight of many of the women who came to the Stanton home for legal advice. In 1840, Elizabeth Cady married Henry Stanton, a well-known abolitionist leader. After a trip to England to attend an anti-slavery convention, the couple settled in Boston where they were active in a number of reform movements.

The Stantons moved to Seneca Falls from Boston in 1847. The house, which had been owned by Elizabeth's father, was transferred to her along with 2 acres of land. Before moving into the house, Elizabeth "set carpenters, painters, paperhangers and gardners to work" and built a new kitchen and woodhouse.

The Stanton house was a modest vernacular frame house set on several acres of land at the end of a dirt road on the outskirts of town. The Stanton's maid, Amelia Willard, remembered the house as a "long rambling house surrounded by lawns and trees. The house and its wings had many bedrooms . . . There were large vegetable gardens on the Stanton place."

After the active life in Boston, Elizabeth Cady Stanton found life in her new home solitary and unstimulating. Reflecting on her life in Seneca Falls she wrote:

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. (Autobiography, p. 144)

During the 16 years that the Stantons lived in Seneca Falls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton developed as the philosophical force and rhetorician of the women's rights movement when she could be freed from the responsibilities of caring for her seven children. Susan B. Anthony often took care of the Stanton children so that Elizabeth had time to write. In 1861 the Stantons moved to Brooklyn, New York, and sold the Seneca Falls house in 1862. Elizabeth Cady Stanton lived in the New York vicinity until her death in 1902.

Between 1862 and 1871, the land surrounding the property was subdivided, and two houses were built that flanked the Stanton residence. Subsequent residents modified the Stanton house. The 1½-story wing was raised to two full stories; the windows were rearranged and the interior features altered. Despite these modifications, there appears to be sufficient evidence to restore the house to its appearance during the years it was occupied by the Stantons.

#### Bloomer House

Although her name is well known, Amelia Bloomer played a peripheral role in the inception of the women's rights movement. Active in the temperance movement from 1849 to 1853, Mrs. Bloomer published a temperance paper, The Lily, from the offices of the Seneca County Courier on Fall Street in Seneca Falls. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, writing under the pen name "Sunflower," frequently wrote letters that were published in The Lily. The letters expressed the ideology of the women's movement to the wider public audience that supported temperance.

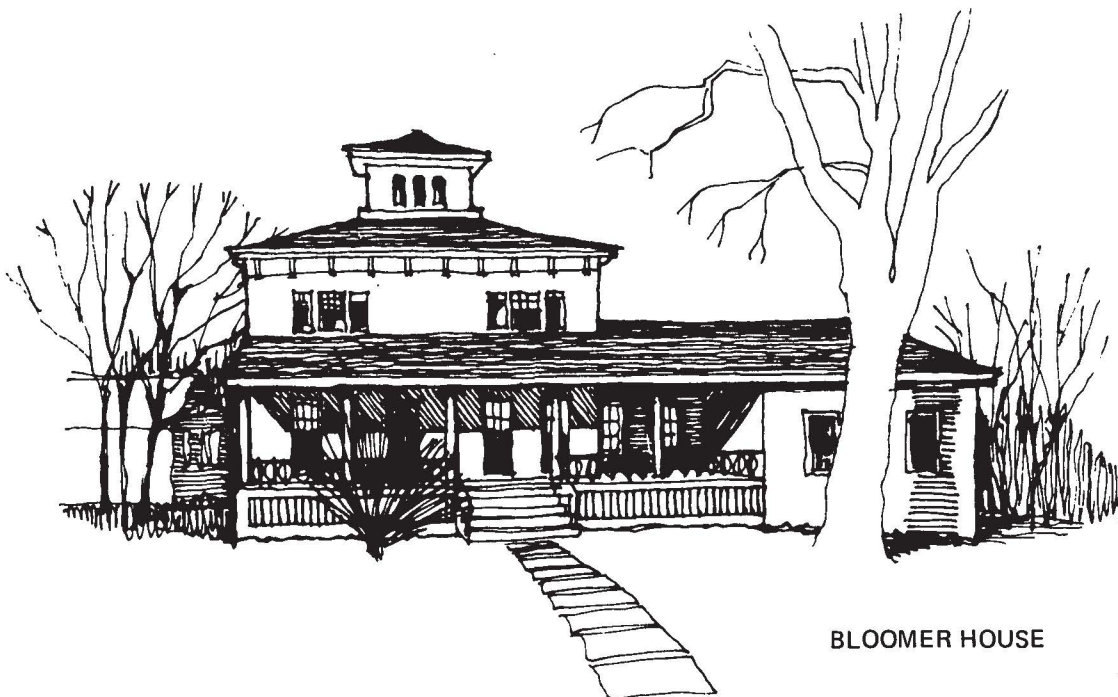
Amelia Bloomer and her paper were also significant for association with dress reform. Dress reform is an issue of cultural importance which reflects symbolically and physically the position of women in any society. The cumbersome full skirts and the binding corsets of the mid-19th century restricted a woman's movement and endangered her health and safety.

Although the fashion was introduced by Mrs. Stanton's cousin, Elizabeth Smith Miller, Mrs. Bloomer popularized the less restrictive costume by publishing the pattern in The Lily. The fashion was short lived although the nomenclature endures. Stanton, after wearing the fashion for two years, abandoned it when she realized the controversy over dress reform diverted attention from other substantive issues.

Amelia Bloomer was not an initiator, innovator, or intellectual mentor within the women's movement. Elizabeth Cady Stanton once wrote to Susan Anthony, "You must take Mrs. Bloomer's suggestion with great caution for she has not the spirit of the true reformer. At the first women's rights convention, 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." (E.C. Stanton to S. B. Anthony, April 2, 1852, Letters, p. 38). Bloomer and her husband left Seneca Falls in 1853, taking their newspaper with them and disappearing from the historic scene.

The Bloomer house, located on East Bayard Street, was occupied by Mrs. Bloomer and her husband, Dexter, for about six months following their marriage in 1840. Due to the short length of their occupancy at a period when neither was politically active, the house has minor historical significance. Architecturally, the house has been dramatically modified in both its exterior and interior features.

The Lily was published in a commercial structure located near the corner of Fall and Cayuga streets. The building was destroyed by fire in 1869. The clock tower from the building is part of the collection of the Seneca Falls Historical Society. A Texaco gas station currently occupies the site.



BLOOMER HOUSE

### Hunt and McClintock Houses

The Hunt and McClintock houses, both located in neighboring Waterloo, are directly associated with the events that organized the Seneca Falls convention.

At the tea table of the Hunt house on July 14, 1848, Lucretia Mott, Martha Wright, Mary Ann McClintock, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Jane Hunt prepared the notice announcing the convention, which appeared the following day in the Seneca County Courier.

Three days later, on Sunday, July 16, the five women met at the McClintock house to organize the convention. In the front parlor the women wrote the Declaration of Sentiments and prepared the resolutions.

At the time of the Seneca Falls convention, both the Hunt house and the McClintock house were owned by Richard P. Hunt. Hunt was a well-to-do industrialist who had, with two partners, founded the Waterloo Woolen Manufacturing Company. Hunt and his wife, Jane, were active Quakers.

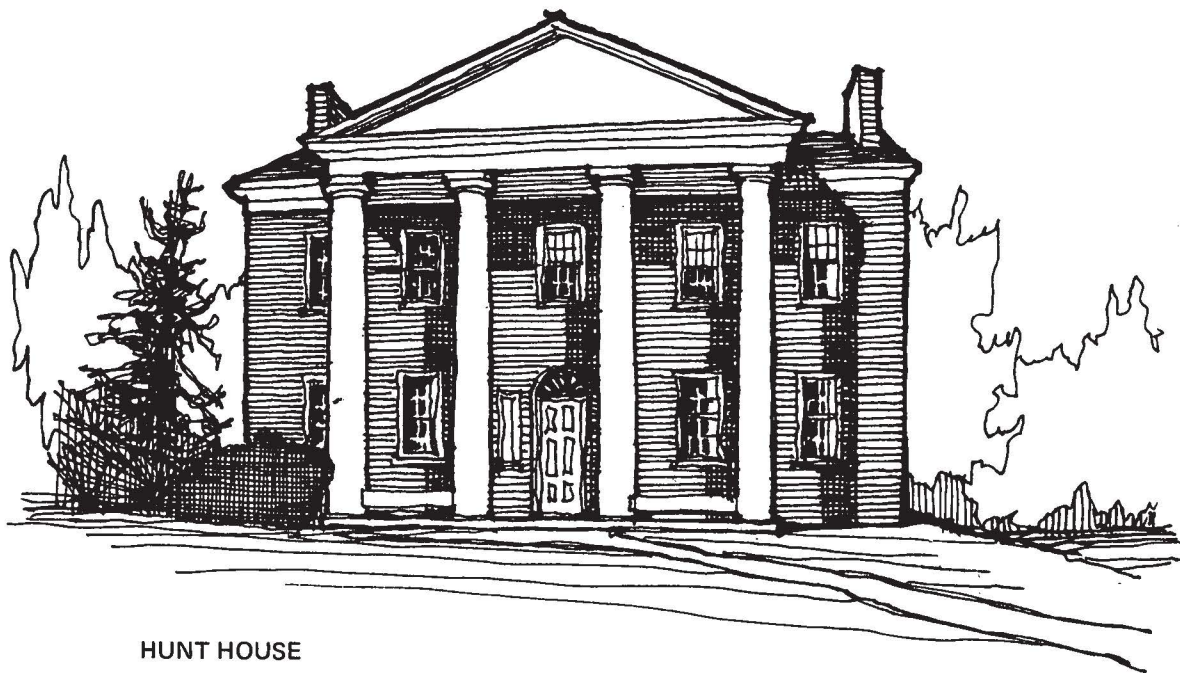
The Hunt house is located on the outskirts of Waterloo. Originally a late Federal style house of commonbond brick, the structure has been substantially modified. Side wings, original date undetermined, have been removed and rear wings added. The imposing front portico was added about 1930. The dining room retains its original interior features.

As the estate of a wealthy family, the grounds had several ancillary buildings. The Hunt carriage house reportedly had a room used by runaway slaves escaping to Canada.

The McClintock house, located on Williams Street in the center of Waterloo, was also the property of Richard Hunt who probably rented the house to Thomas McClintock (who ran a drugstore in Waterloo) and his wife, Mary Ann. Town maps indicate that the late Federal style house of commonbond brick was built between 1833 and 1836. The exterior has been altered slightly since construction, and reportedly the interior retains its original plan and features. But since the historic period, a Baptist Church has been constructed only a few feet from the house. The mahogany table on which the Declaration of Sentiments was written is part of the collection of the Smithsonian Institution.



MC CLINTOCK HOUSE



HUNT HOUSE



## OTHER RESOURCES

The five sites described above have been identified as the primary resources associated with the 19th century women's rights movement. The site where The Lily was published, although mentioned in the National Register nomination form, is not included in the district because there are no above ground physical remains.

Apart from its association with the women's rights movement, Seneca Falls maintains much of the character of earlier eras in the history of the town. The proposed Sackett Historic District on Bayard Street exemplifies the early industrial era, and the Fall Street/Trinity Lane Historic District is associated with mid-19th century development. Upper Fall Street and adjacent residential areas exemplify later 19th century development. Survey work undertaken this summer will provide additional information about the Fall Street area.

The Cayuga-Seneca Canal, which is part of a much larger waterway system, is an important historical and recreational resource for Seneca Falls and the entire region. Locks used for regulating boats on the lakes are located in Waterloo and Seneca Falls. In summer months the locks operate 24 hours per day and attract a large volume of recreational boating traffic and a number of onlookers. Proposals have been made to make the canal more a part of the communities through which it passes.

There are many sites in the vicinity related to women's rights and other reform movements--sites associated with the underground railroad, the home of Elizabeth Blackwell (the first woman doctor) in Geneva, and the home of abolitionist Harriet Tubman in Auburn.

# A N A L Y S I S O F T H E E N V I R O N M E N T

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESOURCES

The significance of the cultural resources at Seneca Falls can be evaluated by applying the criteria for determining the national significance of cultural resources as stated in the National Park Service Management Policies.

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and Hunt and McClintock houses merit evaluation under the following criteria:

Properties at which events occurred that have significantly contributed to, are identified prominently with, or outstandingly represent, the broad cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the nation, and from which an understanding and appreciation of the larger patterns of our American heritage may be gained

Properties associated significantly with an important event that outstandingly represents some great idea or ideal of the American people

As the site of the convention, which was the formal beginning of the women's rights movement, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is clearly a structural resource of national historic significance according to both criteria.

The Hunt and McClintock houses are directly associated with the events that preceded the convention, but their significance would appear to be ancillary to the chapel. Although the Declaration of Sentiments was written in the McClintock house, the importance of the documents rests in its public acknowledgement that occurred at the chapel. The Declaration of Independence, to use an appropriate historical analogy, is not commemorated by the room in which Thomas Jefferson penned it, but by the hall in which it was signed.

The Stanton house and Bloomer house merit evaluation under the following criteria:

Properties associated importantly with the lives of persons nationally significant in the history of the United States

The Stanton house has major historic significance for its association with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a woman whose life is of national significance. However, several historical facts argue against the use of the Stanton house as the central focus of a site that commemorates the Women's Rights Convention of 1848 and its influence on the subsequent women's rights movement.

First, although Stanton's discontent encouraged organization of the convention, she could not have organized the convention without cooperation and support of the other women such as Lucretia Mott, who was also a woman of great stature. Second, Stanton's greatest achievements in furthering the cause of women's rights were accomplished after 1850 when she began working with Susan B. Anthony. It would be misleading to commemorate Stanton independent of Anthony. Third, Stanton lived in the house in Seneca Falls for 16 years. Although it was an important period of her life, her commitments to raising her seven children hindered her from writing. After she moved to the New York City vicinity where she spent her later years, she coauthored her important writings, such as the six volume History of Woman Suffrage (1881) and The Woman's Bible (1895).

The resource most directly associated with Amelia Bloomer and dress reform is the site of The Lily, where a Texaco gas station is now located. Archeological features associated with the structure, which was destroyed by fire in 1869, may exist at the site. The Bloomer house, which was only temporarily occupied by the Bloomers nine years prior to her association with the women's rights movement, has no direct historical association with Amelia Bloomer's role in popularizing the fashion of bloomers.

In addition, the following criteria are used to determine significance:

Structures that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type specimen, exceptionally valuable for a study of a period, style, or method of construction, or a notable structure representing the work of a master builder, designer, architect, or engineer

Archeological sites that have produced information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States (Such sites are those which have produced, or which may reasonably be expected to produce, data affecting theories, concepts, and ideas to a major degree.)

None of the structures can be considered to be of architectural significance nor is any site expected to yield archeological information of the magnitude that merits national significance.

Although women comprise half of the nation's population, the role women have played in history has been largely ignored. Within the National Park Service, sites associated with women's history are underrepresented. Three sites, Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site, Clara Barton National Historic Site, and Maggie Walker

National Historic Site, commemorate unique contributions of outstanding women. One site, the Sewall-Belmont house in Washington, has associations with the last successful years of the fight for passage of the 19th amendment giving women the right to vote in a national election.

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel stands out as the most significant resource among those associated with the beginning of the women's rights movement. It has strong national significance and should be the focus of any National Park Service involvement commemorating women's rights in Seneca Falls.

#### CURRENT STATUS

The concept of the Women's Rights Historic District was initially discussed among local citizens during the summer of 1978. Research was conducted, and National Register nomination forms were prepared later in the year and submitted to the New York Office of Parks and Recreation, Division of Historic Preservation. The district was approved by the Committee on the Register for the New York State Board for Historic Preservation on February 15, 1979, and a designation of national significance was recommended. The next step is for the proposal to be evaluated by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in Washington. If the recommendation of national significance is accepted, the district will be designated a national historic landmark.

The former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is privately owned and is occupied by a laundromat, a garage, and ten apartment units. No action is currently planned that would alter the building further. The owner is aware of the interest of preservation groups and has been cooperative in allowing visitors to inspect the building. Due to the extensive work that would be necessary to rehabilitate or restore the building, no private group is currently interested in acquiring and preserving the structure. The area immediately adjacent to the chapel is generally 19th century in character, although there is a 20th century theater adjacent to the building on the west and a diner across the street.

The Stanton house was on the market in 1978 during the time that the district was first being discussed. A member of the preservation group purchased the property and agreed to hold it until long-term management plans could be developed. The Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation is considering acquiring the property to secure it and to relieve the current owner of the expense and responsibility.

The foundation is still clarifying its own goals and has not decided whether it is willing and able to undertake long-term management and interpretation of the site. The Stanton house is the foundation's number one priority, so it is safe to assume that there are no serious threats to this property, nor are there any pressing physical problems. The original Stanton property has been subdivided; a mobile home occupies the lot to the south, and a small house is located immediately adjacent to the Stanton house on the north. These detract from the historic scene.

The Hunt house is owned and occupied by people sympathetic to its significance. The house is located on Routes 5 and 20 between Waterloo and Seneca Falls. This is an area of rapid growth. Strip development of adjacent areas is the greatest threat currently facing the Hunt house.

The McClintock house and the adjacent church have been on the market for some time. While the house is attractive and in reasonably good condition, the church is less marketable. To date, the owner has only been interested in selling the two together. Demolition might become a possibility if the church cannot be sold. The probability of this is unknown. The Bloomer house has been converted to a multifamily dwelling and has received little maintenance in recent years. It was recently sold.

In summary, neither the Stanton house nor the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is currently threatened, although neither is reflective of its historic character. The Hunt house is not threatened, although changing land use is influencing the character of the area. The McClintock and Bloomer houses can be considered threatened. As for the broader character of Seneca Falls, its historic heritage is increasingly recognized but there is no formal mechanism to preserve it.

#### PRESERVATION EFFORTS

Until recently, there has been little formal effort to identify and protect historic resources in Seneca Falls and the surrounding area. The Fall Street/Trinity Church Historic District was established in 1973, and there was some historic survey work done by Cornell University students in the mid 1970s. In the past year, several new historic districts have been identified and researched, preservation concerns have surfaced as a focus for downtown revitalization, the Women's Hall of Fame has acquired a building, and Seneca Falls has been identified as a demonstration area for the New York State Urban Cultural Park Program.

The Chamber of Commerce Downtown Revitalization Committee provided the initiative for a Community Development block grant

applicaton for the 1976 entitlement year to cover half the cost of new sidewalks and replacement of the parking lot on the north side of Fall Street in the central business district. The presentations of a Cornell University preservation planning workshop led to the realization that more than sidewalks and parking lots was needed to revitalize the central business district. This in turn led to the formulation of a four-phase revitalization plan to provide for the tasteful development of Seneca Falls and the formation of the downtown revitalization committee to catalyze this development.

The Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation grew out of a need to assure the preservation of the five structures forming the Women's Rights Historic District. The group has defined its goals as properties, education, and finance. The foundation views its basic educational mission as that of interpreting Seneca Falls' role in the women's rights movement to the community and to the nation. The organization plans to reach this goal through walking tours, audiovisual presentations, exhibits, and an archive of material on women and the quest for equality. Detailed plans have not been formulated. However, establishing a library and research center, conducting conferences, and publishing books would certainly be considered. The role of the foundation in acquiring and managing properties would depend on the success of its fund-raising efforts and the plans of other groups. It has expressed some interest in acquiring and managing the Stanton house but feels that restoration and management of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel would be too large an undertaking.

The Women's Hall of Fame was established in 1970 to honor those American women who have distinguished themselves in the arts, sciences, or in social activity. In 1972 the first 20 honorees were selected, followed by an additional three in 1976. Until recently, the group used Eisenhower College as a storage point for its files. They purchased a bank building on Fall Street, and opening ceremonies were held this past July.

The Women's Hall of Fame will be one of the few tourist oriented activities in Seneca Falls (apart from the Seneca Falls Historical Society Museum). The extent to which it would be a major attraction depends largely upon the quality of the exhibits presented and the amount of publicity generated. Local fund-raising efforts have been very successful, and a national fund-raising campaign is underway. Prior to purchase of the current bank building, the Women's Hall of Fame considered acquisition of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel but rejected the idea because they felt a disproportionate amount of their funds would be spent on the building rather than on exhibits and programs.

The oldest preservation-related organization in Seneca Falls is the historical society, which operates an impressive museum in a

mansion on Cayuga Street. The museum includes artifacts related to various aspects of 19th century life and local history, including a room of memorabilia from the 1848 conference and several pieces of Stanton furniture. The historical society has no plans for acquisition or management of additional properties.

An advisory committee on historic preservation was established by the village board to recommend possible courses of action to further preservation activities in the community. The committee is drafting an ordinance to establish local historic districts and provide for regulation of structural alterations in those areas.



WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME

## NEW YORK URBAN CULTURAL PARK PROGRAM

In March 1977, the New York State legislature mandated the New York Office of Parks and Recreation to develop a plan for a statewide system of urban cultural parks. The Urban Cultural Parks Act calls for the "beneficial enjoyment and revitalization of urban areas through the preservation, interpretation, development and use" of New York's historical, cultural, and architectural resources.

An urban cultural park is different from a traditional city park or historic district in that it uses the uniqueness of the setting to encourage private reinvestment in adaptive reuse and general economic development. In most cases it does not include an onsite management role for the office of parks and recreation. The concept of an urban cultural park integrates historic preservation, environmental education, urban recreation, and neighborhood revitalization into a single multipurpose project, providing a rallying point for the diverse constituencies of an area.

Seneca Falls was one of the areas identified in the Urban Cultural Parks Phase I Inventory. During phase II, proposals will be prepared on how an urban cultural park might be developed in specific communities.

Seneca Falls is one of six communities that has been selected to receive a small grant to develop such a proposal. The purpose of the grant is to aid communities in taking a systematic appraisal of resource potentials and to assist them in mobilizing and effectively presenting their ideas. This grant does not commit the office of parks and recreation to further funding in Seneca Falls.

The theme of an urban cultural park in Seneca Falls would be under the general heading of reform movements. The urban cultural park's activities might include surveys of historic resources, comprehensive planning, interpretive trails and markers, and development of the canal side area.

## CONCLUSIONS

For the purpose of this study, emphasis has been primarily on the women's rights movement and the five sites in the Women's Rights Historic District, but the opportunities are far greater than what is presented by the resources that we traditionally call nationally significant. The opportunity exists for a creative partnership, with both public and private interests serving as catalysts to each other and each operating within its logical area of expertise. An urban cultural park concept is particularly well suited to Seneca Falls because it combines recreation, preservation, education, and revitalization.



If there were no preservation action by state or federal agencies, the Stanton house might be acquired and restored to some extent by the Stanton Foundation. The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and the other three houses in the district would probably continue in their current uses, or in the case of the Bloomer and McClintock houses, substantial changes or demolition might occur.



REAR OF STRUCTURE ON FALL STREET ALONGSIDE THE CANAL

## A S S E S S M E N T   O F   A L T E R N A T I V E S

### APPROACH TO ALTERNATIVES

The concepts discussed in this section present a range of alternatives for the protection of resources associated with the early women's rights movement. In each alternative the women's rights movement is the primary theme, and the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is the primary resource. The alternatives vary in scope from a single historic site to a historical park. The historical park includes sites directly associated with the women's rights movement and a broader preservation district.

Each of the alternatives was developed so as to incorporate the following objectives:

To preserve the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, the primary resource associated with the 1848 convention

To interpret the women's rights movement as reflected in Seneca Falls and the surrounding area

To support ongoing preservation, interpretation, and revitalization efforts and to encourage a cooperative approach to preservation in Seneca Falls

The alternatives are primarily concerned with a potential Park Service role but also discuss opportunities for cooperation and coordination with other governmental agencies and with private organizations.

### ALTERNATIVE 1: ONE SITE

Under this alternative, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is the primary resource used to tell the story of the women's rights movement. It would be acquired and developed as an interpretive center, using as much of the building's historic fabric as possible. Since preservation of the other sites is not addressed in this alternative, interpretation would rely heavily on exhibits and programs at the chapel.

The primary theme would be the women's rights movement, specifically the 1848 convention. The visitor experience would be relatively abstract and media oriented. The extent to which visitors would explore other parts of Seneca Falls would depend on their personal level of interest and on the town's orientation toward tourism. Certainly visitors would be informed about the Women's Hall of Fame, the Seneca Falls Historical Society Museum, and other attractions in the area.

Land acquisition would include the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and possibly the adjacent land that is currently used for parking and a movie theater. Additional parking needs could probably be met through use of public parking areas.

Development would be limited to converting the chapel to an appropriate interpretive facility. There are several approaches that could be taken to accomplish this. At one end of the spectrum, historic fabric would be respected, but interpretive needs would be given primary consideration in determining the architectural treatment of the structure. At the other end, both the interior and exterior of the chapel would be restored, and preservation of the structure would dictate treatment rather than interpretive needs. The latter treatment would be closer to the appearance of the chapel in 1848, but it would probably provide less space for interpretive needs. In either case, the Fall Street facade of the building would be altered to present a more appropriate appearance than the current laundromat. Contemporary materials used would be clearly distinguished from historic materials.

Operation of the site would be seven days per week in the summer, but the schedule would possibly be reduced during winter months when visitation would probably be lighter.

The Stanton house is not directly addressed as part of this alternative, but there are several possible options for compatible private use. The first option would be acquisition of the house by a private group such as the Stanton Foundation for use as an office and resource center. This option would probably involve some exterior restoration, but the inside would be adaptively used. Similarly, the house could be acquired and restored on the outside and then either sold with a preservation restriction or rented to someone sympathetic to its significance. Landmark status makes the Stanton house eligible for preservation grants.

Since this alternative presents the most limited park concept, it provides the opportunity for greatest flexibility and broadest involvement by others. The downtown area would not be an integral part of the park so there would be more freedom for it to develop independent of the goals of the park. Also, visitor use would be concentrated in downtown Seneca Falls, thus eliminating possible conflicts with the residential neighborhood in which the Stanton house is located. This alternative does not constrict or limit use of the other three houses since the story would be primarily told at the interpretive center. However, if the five sites are all on the National Register, they would be eligible for preservation funding through other programs. Technical assistance might be provided to local groups interested in interpreting the other sites in the Women's Rights Historic District.

Since only one structure is involved, development costs would be substantially less than in other alternatives, although interpretive costs might be higher due to the heavy reliance on exhibits. Staffing requirements would be relatively small because there would be only one site to operate, particularly if hours were limited during winter months.

Relocation of the occupants of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel might create some disruption; however, mitigating action is provided under the federal relocation law (P.L. 91-646). The residential occupants might be eligible for actual reasonable moving expenses plus a housing supplement of up to \$4,000. Actual reasonable moving expenses might also be available for the Strand Theater operation and the laundromat.

If the Park Service acquires the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, the property would be removed from the tax rolls. However, payments in-lieu-of taxes would be provided for the first five years; these payments are the lesser of the taxes previously assessed, or 1 percent of the acquisition price.

It is difficult to project visitation; however, it is safe to estimate an increase of 20,000 visitors to the town annually. The increased visitation should result in increased income for some local retail establishments and for the restaurants, hotels, and motels. Very substantial visitation could create pressure for increased development. This increased visitation could however cause some disruption to the local traffic patterns.

#### ALTERNATIVE 2: TWO SITES

The concept is broadened in this alternative to include two major themes interpreted at two separate locations. The 1848 convention and ensuing movement would be the primary themes at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel; the chapel would be acquired and developed as in the previous alternative. The life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her role in the women's rights movement would be interpreted at the Stanton house, which would be acquired and restored to the extent feasible.

The chapel would serve many of the same functions as it does in the previous alternative. It would probably be the first place that most people would visit and the place where they would gain a basic understanding of events that occurred in Seneca Falls. The primary difference would be that the life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton would be interpreted at the Stanton house instead of the chapel. The house would be accessible by car, or possibly by foot if an appropriate pedestrian route could be developed in cooperation with state and local authorities. A major attraction of the pedestrian

route would be the locks at the foot of Washington Street, very close to the Stanton house.

An important aspect of the events leading up to the 1848 convention was Stanton's boredom and discontent with her life in Seneca Falls after a much more intellectually stimulating life in Boston. This story and her later role in the women's rights movement could be graphically portrayed at the restored Stanton house.

Approximately 1 acre of property on which the Stanton house is located, the lot and mobile home to the south, and possibly the adjacent residence to the north would be acquired. Both adjacent lots were part of the property owned by the Stantons when they lived in the house; acquisition of adjacent properties would protect the historic scene and allow for future parking development if needed.

Development of the chapel would be the same as in the previous alternative. The Stanton house would be restored and the grounds relandscaped to the extent practical. It appears that there is sufficient evidence to do this. The amount of Stanton furniture available is uncertain.

One of the problems related to effective restoration of the Stanton house is that current Park Service policies prohibit conjectural furnishing of historic properties. An alternative to traditional Park Service management would be to provide technical assistance to a private group through a cooperative agreement. A private group would have more freedom to develop and furnish the Stanton house; however, private ownership or management under a cooperative agreement would depend largely on the capability and willingness of a group to undertake such a responsibility.

There would be a dual focus on the structures, although the chapel would probably be the site visitors would chose if they saw only one. Since two buildings would be involved, there would be more space for offices and a broader range of special activities and programs.

Visitation would undoubtedly be heaviest in the warmer months. Because there would be two sites to operate, either directly or indirectly, operation would be somewhat more expensive and would probably require more staff than alternative 1. There might be some impact on local traffic patterns because many visitors would drive to the Stanton house.

Impacts of relocation, tax loss, and increased tourism would be the same as alternative 1 except that relocation would be necessary from the two residences adjacent to the Stanton house.

### ALTERNATIVE 3: FIVE SITES

All five sites of the Women's Rights Historic District are included in this alternative. The chapel and the Stanton house would be acquired and developed as described under the previous alternative. The Hunt, McClintock, and Bloomer houses would be included in the boundary of the park but would probably not be acquired in fee. The Hunt and McClintock houses would be used to interpret the events leading up to the 1848 convention. The Bloomer house or another appropriate site would be used to interpret women's dress reform and other contributions of Amelia Bloomer.

This dispersed park concept would graphically portray the physical distribution of the events leading up to the convention. Visitor use would be less concentrated than in the two previous alternatives, and the interpretive themes would be much broader. The role of the chapel would be different because it would be only one of five sites in the park. It would serve as a place where visitors could come and learn the basic story and then proceed to the other sites. Since there would be fewer interpretive activities occurring at the chapel, there might be more space available for programs and special activities.

Land acquisition for the chapel and the Stanton house would be the same as in alternative 2. The Hunt and McClintock houses, although included in the park, would not be acquired in fee if a suitable less-than-fee arrangement could be worked out. Since the Hunt house has been extensively altered, it would probably be interpreted from the outside as would the McClintock house. A cooperative agreement might be arranged at these two sites.

There are several thoughts on how Amelia Bloomer's life might best be interpreted. The house currently known as the Bloomer house is one possibility; however, this site is questionable because she lived there for a short period, and the house has been extensively remodelled. The site is en route between the chapel and the Stanton house and could easily be pointed out on a tour or a map, but interior interpretation does not appear feasible or desirable.

A more abstract alternative would be to interpret the story of Amelia Bloomer at the site where The Lily was published on Fall Street in Seneca Falls. Although this site is currently occupied by a gas station, there is some possibility of archeological remains. A commemorative park might be developed on the site as part of the urban cultural park program or as part of the pending relocation of the Ovid Street bridge. Another possibility would be a museum of women's dress, which could be part of the interpretive center. This effort might be coordinated with the Seneca Falls Historical Society, which has an extensive costume collection.

Development of the chapel and the Stanton house would be the same as that discussed under alternative 2. Development of the Hunt and McClintock houses would depend on the terms of cooperative agreements worked out and the level of information available. Exterior signs or audio programs could be considered.

Operation would include the two sites as discussed in alternative 2, and there would be some involvement in the other three sites. Research, interpretive planning, training of interpreters, development of brochures, waysides, or audio tours might be involved. A transportation system/interpretive tour of the five sites might be operated at peak times.

Costs and staffing for this alternative would include all those associated with alternative 2 and some additional time and funds for the other three sites.

Impacts of relocation, tax loss, and increased tourism would not differ substantially from those discussed in alternative 2.

The closest analogy in the Park Service to this alternative is the eight separate sites that comprise Boston National Historical Park. Some of the sites are managed directly by the National Park Service while others are operated privately through cooperative agreement and are eligible for assistance from the Park Service. The sites are loosely tied together by the Freedom Trail, which also incorporates other points of interest having no direct affiliation with the park but which are of contemporary or historical interest. In this way, the Women's Hall of Fame, Elizabeth Blackwell House in Geneva, Harriet Tubman House in Auburn, and other thematically related sites might be tied together by a tour or interpretive trail. This approach broadens the concept to draw in the entire region. A trail such as this might be jointly undertaken with the urban cultural park program or with local historical groups.

#### ALTERNATIVE 4: HISTORICAL PARK

The historical park concept takes the broadest approach to establishing a park in Seneca Falls. It encompasses not only the sites of the Women's Rights Historic District but also includes a downtown preservation district, thus preserving the setting of the convention as well as specific structures. The five sites would be preserved and interpreted to varying degrees as in the previous alternative. In the preservation district, mechanisms would be developed to stimulate private preservation efforts.

This alternative differs from the previous alternative primarily in that it encompasses a downtown preservation district not included in alternative 3. The specific boundaries of the preservation district

would be determined after an inventory of the downtown area was completed. It would include most of Fall Street from the chapel down to the Fall Street/Trinity Lane Historic District, and might also include a segment of the canal, portions of Cayuga Street, and possibly portions of the proposed Sackett Historic District.

The purpose of the preservation district would be twofold; it would enhance the character and historic setting of Seneca Falls, and it would promote revitalization of the central business district.

Land acquisition and development would be the same as in alternative 3, but research and technical assistance on a much broader basis would also be included.

Impacts of relocation and tax loss would not differ substantially from those discussed under alternatives 2 and 3. Tourism combined with a preservation district should contribute to economic revitalization of the downtown area.

Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts is the model for the preservation district. The situation there is similar because not any one resource is outstanding; instead, an aggregation of a variety of buildings and sites are combined to tell a far greater story than any one of the component elements. The preservation district might be managed either by the Park Service or by the New York Urban Cultural Park Program.

## COST ESTIMATES

### Land Costs

A preliminary examination of land acquisition costs, including a study of current assessed valuations and a sampling of recent sales, indicates the following costs for the four alternatives.

Alternative 1 - acquisition of Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and Strand Theater - \$312,000.

Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 - acquisition of Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Strand Theater, Stanton House, and properties adjacent to the Stanton house - \$429,000.

It should be noted that none of the properties have been appraised. The above costs are for planning purposes only; they include allowances for relocation under P.L. 91-646 and nominal amounts for anticipated expenses associated with title search, appraisals, mapping, and surveys.



## Operation and Maintenance Costs

Operation and maintenance costs vary with each alternative. The following estimates have been derived from comparing the level of operation anticipated under the various alternatives with 1979 operating costs for comparable units of the National Park System.

Alternative 1: Operation and maintenance of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel as described under alternative 1 would be similar to the operation of Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence, Rhode Island. Roger Williams is a commemorative park with a small visitor center, which operates five days per week during the winter and seven days per week in the summer. Operating costs for Roger Williams in 1979 were approximately \$101,000; however, the Roger Williams memorial is still in planning. Upon full implementation of Roger Williams, operating costs would be at least 30 percent higher. Hence, a reasonable estimate for alternative 1 (using 1979 costs) would be approximately \$130,000.

Alternative 2: Operation and maintenance of the Stanton house and Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, as described under alternative 2, can be compared to Salem Maritime National Historic Site or Longfellow National Historic Site, both of which had operating budgets of approximately \$209,000 in FY 79.

Alternative 3: This alternative is similar to alternative 2 in that only two sites would be acquired and managed directly. However, there would be additional interpretive activities because the Hunt, McClintock, and Bloomer houses would also be interpreted. Based on the figures for alternative 2, \$230,000 could be considered a reasonable estimate for alternative 3.

Alternative 4: Under this alternative, direct operating costs would be similar to alternative 3, but there might be additional administrative and interpretive costs. A reasonable estimate for this alternative would be \$240,000.

## Development Costs

The primary development cost would be for research, rehabilitation, and interpretive development at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. This cost would remain constant for all four alternatives. The second major cost would be for research and restoration of the Stanton house, including furnishings and demolition of adjacent properties. This cost would remain constant for alternatives 2, 3, and 4. Alternatives 3 and 4 would involve some additional research and interpretive development, but this would be negligible compared to the costs of developing the chapel and the Stanton house.

Using 1979 prices, development costs for alternative 1 would be close to \$1,000,000 for a general management plan, historic structure report, construction drawings, demolition of the Strand Theater, extensive rehabilitation of the chapel, and interpretive development. Development costs for alternative 2 would be about \$1,400,000, which includes furnishings for the Stanton house and demolition of adjacent houses. Development costs for alternatives 3 and 4 would be about \$1,600,000.

## A P P E N D I X E S

### APPENDIX A: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

During the course of the study, meetings were held with the following groups:

- New York Office of Parks and Recreation
  - Deputy Commissioner
  - Division of Historic Preservation
  - Division of Technical Services
  - Urban Cultural Park Program, Staff and Consultants
- Town and Village Boards, Seneca Falls
- Seneca Falls Downtown Revitalization Committee
- Seneca Falls Historical Society, Board Members and Director
- County Planner
- Chamber of Commerce
- Young People's Committee for Historic Seneca Falls
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation, Board of Trustees
- Women's Hall of Fame, Officers
- Cornell University, Preservation Planning Staff
- Staff from Representative Lee's Office and Senator Moynihan's Office

Meetings were held also with historians, property owners, and citizens from Seneca Falls and the surrounding area.

APPENDIX B: NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FORMS

## **B** SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

### SPECIFIC DATES

### BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Women's Historic District is composed of those sites and structures in Seneca County, N.Y., associated with reform movements of the mid-nineteenth century, especially the birth and early life of the Women's Rights movement. The reform movements which were active in Seneca County during this period included Washingtonian Temperance, abolition, women's rights, dress reform, the underground railroad and the breaking away of the Wesleyan Methodists from the main body of the Methodist Church over the issue of slavery. The most important of these, in terms of later significance of local activity on American society, was women's rights.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the one individual most responsible for Seneca County's role in the early history of the women's rights movement. It was her involvement which brought about the birth of the movement, and it was her continued involvement, along with Susan B. Anthony, that provided the impetus which moved the women's rights movement until Stanton's death in 1902.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton was born in Johnstown, Fulton County, N. Y. on November 12, 1815, the daughter of Daniel Cady, a highly successful lawyer, judge and land speculator. Following the limited schooling available to females at Johnstown, she entered Emma Willard's Academy at Troy, N.Y., graduating in 1832.

Her interest in reform was heightened by her cousin, Gerrit Smith, of Peterboro, N.Y. Smith was an active and well-known abolitionist. It was at Smith's house that Elizabeth Cady met her future husband, Henry B. Stanton. They were married May 10, 1840 and Elizabeth, desiring complete equality in her marriage, deleted the work "obey" from the ceremony.

Immediately following their marriage the Stantons sailed to London, England, to attend the World Anti-Slavery Convention to which Henry was an elected delegate. The convention was thrown into controversy over the issue of whether or not women should be seated as delegates. The question was decided in the negative. Women would not be seated as delegates and would be required to sit in the gallery. At this time Elizabeth Cady Stanton met Lucretia Mott, a Quaker of Philadelphia, who was one of the women denied a seat. In their discussions concerning the status of women in America, they decided to someday hold a convention to discuss the inequities of society's treatment of women once they returned to America.

1. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as revealed in her letters, diary and reminiscences, ed. by Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (New York, Harper and Brothers, 1922), vol. 1, p. 68.

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Upon their return to America, it was concluded that Henry could not support a family as an anti-slavery lecturer, so he took up the practice of law in Boston.

Henry's health steadily deteriorated in the Boston climate. In 1846 the Stantons moved to Seneca Falls. Here, hopefully, Henry would be in better health. In addition, Elizabeth's sister, Tryphena Cady Bayard, lived in Seneca Falls and Elizabeth often visited her. Daniel Cady, Elizabeth's father, owned property in and around Seneca Falls and it was into a house owned by him that the Stantons moved.

Seneca Falls life provided an austere contrast to the intellectual activity of Boston. Mrs. Stanton became more and more immersed with her evergrowing family. Although she did retain an interest in the reform movements, her life became one of more domestic tranquility.

July of 1848 presented an opportunity for the fulfillment of the London plans of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott.

Lucretia Mott and her husband James were staying in Auburn at the home of Martha Wright, Mrs. Mott's sister, and attending the yearly meeting of Friends in Western New York. On the afternoon of Thursday, July 14, 1848, Mrs. Mott and Mrs. Stanton met at the home of a mutual friend, Jane C. Masters Hunt of Waterloo.

The Hunts were a family of prominent Friends. Richard P. Hunt was born in Westchester County, N. Y. on September 2, 1797. Before his death on November 7, 1856, he had become a man of considerable means. He was the first Secretary of the Waterloo Woolen Mills, one of the first directors of Seneca County's first bank and the builder of several of the commercial blocks in the Village of Waterloo. He and his wife were members of the activist branch of the Quaker Church which actively supported the abolitionist cause. The Hunts' carriage house contained a large room originally used by stranded travelers and later by runaway slaves escaping to Canada. Jane C. Masters Hunt was Richard Hunt's fourth wife.<sup>2</sup>

Also in attendance was Mary Ann M'Clintock. Her husband, Thomas M'Clintock, was a relative of Richard Hunt's third wife. He operated a drugstore in Waterloo from 1836 until 1859. He noted in his advertisements that his goods were "Free from the labor of slaves".<sup>3</sup>

2. John E. Becker, Some Waterloo Citizens of Yesterday, MS, 1950.
3. Ibid.

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By the time the day was ended, the women had decided to organize a convention to discuss the position of women in American society. A notice was drafted which appeared in the Seneca County Courier for the date July 14, 1848:

SENECA FALLS CONVENTION

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.<sup>4</sup>

The notice was indeed the "startling announcement" that Elizabeth Cady Stanton would categorize it some forty years later.<sup>5</sup> For the first time an attempt would be made to examine the position of woman in society and to question that position.

Three days later, on Sunday the 16th, the five women reassembled at the home of Mary Ann M'Clintock for the purpose of writing resolutions and speeches. The women had no experience in organizing conventions or preparing resolutions. Elizabeth Cady Stanton likened "the first attempt to frame a resolution; to crowd a complete thought, clearly and concisely, into three lines..." to being "asked to construct a steam engine".<sup>6</sup> With no other options open, they began to comb male-produced reports of temperance and anti-slavery conventions. They were in a difficult situation. They dismissed the temperance and anti-slavery convention actions as being "too tame and pacific for the inauguration of a rebellion such as the world had never seen before".<sup>7</sup>

One of the women evidently found a parallel between the grievances of women toward society and the American colonists toward King George.

The Declaration of Independence was paraphrased to become the Declaration of Sentiments. Following the phrase "We hold these truths to be self-evident:" the reference "that all men are created equal" became "all men and women are created equal". "Knowing that women must have more to complain of than men under any circumstances possible could, and seeing the Fathers had eighteen grievances", the women compiled what they felt to be the eighteen greatest injustices against women.

4. Quoted in Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage History of Woman Suffrage (New York, Fowler & Wells, Publishers, 1881), vol. 1, p.67.
5. Ibid, p. 67.
6. Ibid, p. 68.
7. Ibid, p. 68.

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Eleven resolutions were also drafted. Ten of them were concerned with bringing about female equality. The ninth resolution was included on the demand of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. It read: "Resolved, that it is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise".<sup>9</sup>

On such short notice, the organizers of the convention expected a poor attendance. The number that appeared was more than expected, enough to fill the Wesleyan Chapel. Those in attendance included the most noted reformers of Seneca County, Quakers of the area, local residents attending out of curiosity and such prominent individuals as James Mott of Philadelphia and abolitionists Frederick Douglass, Amy Post and Catherine F. Stebbins.<sup>10</sup>

Opposition to the women and their quest for equality began before the convention. Upon gathering at the Wesleyan Chapel at the appointed hour, the crowd found the door to be locked. A young relative of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's was hoisted through an open window and opened the door.

The original plan had been only to allow women to be in attendance the first day and to admit both sexes the second. As many men were included in the crowd which gathered on the first day, "it was decided, in a hasty council around the altar, that this was an occasion when men might make themselves pre-eminently useful". James Mott was then called upon to chair the convention, as none of the women felt they possessed sufficient command or presence to control such a meeting. Speakers on the first day, however, would be limited to females.

Opening the convention was an address by Lucretia Mott. The first order of business was consideration of the Declaration of Sentiments. The document was discussed point by point with a vote to come on the following day.

The afternoon session saw the insertion of a new section into the Declaration of Sentiments since the morning session. Upon ratification of the addition, the Declaration was passed to obtain signatures.<sup>12</sup> Sixty-eight women and thirty-two men signed their names to the Declaration.

The resolutions were taken up as the next order of business. After several short addresses, the convention adjourned to the following morning. That evening, Lucretia Mott spoke "to a large and intelligent audience on the subject of Reforms in general".<sup>13</sup>

9. Report of the Woman's Rights Convention, Held at Seneca Falls, N. Y., July 19th and 20th, 1848. (Rochester, N. Y., John Dick at the North Star Office, 1848), p.5.
10. Ibid., p. 10-11.
11. Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, p. 69.
12. Report, p. 4.
13. Ibid., p. 6.



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On Thursday, July 20th, the convention reconvened for the final consideration of the adoption of the Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions. This day men would also be allowed to take part in the discussions.

Two of Mrs. M'Clintock's daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave speeches. Samuel Tillman, a law student, spoke on the condition of women under the law. Ansel Bascom, active in legal reform and a member of the Constitutional Convention, spoke on the property bill for women which had just passed the legislature.

After approving the Declaration of Sentiments, the convention adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

The afternoon session was devoted to consideration of the resolutions. The convention report states that "Some, from their self-evident truth, elicited little remark; others, after some criticism, much debate and some slight alterations, were finally passed by a large majority".<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Cady Stanton, writing in The History of Women Suffrage, wrote, "The only resolution that was not unanimously adopted was the ninth, urging the women of the country to secure to themselves the elective franchise".<sup>15</sup>

The evening session was filled with more speeches, chiefly by Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Frederick Douglass. Before adjourning, a committee to publish the proceedings of the convention for publication was appointed and the following resolution adopted:

Resolved, That the speedy success of our cause depends upon the zealous and untiring efforts of both men and women, 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.<sup>16</sup>

The significance of the Seneca Falls convention lies not so much with the convention itself, though it did represent a milestone in the history of human rights, but with its cause-and-effect relationship to future events. The Seneca Falls convention marked the beginning of the struggle for equality on the basis of sex in the United States. The determination of the women who began the struggle is voiced in the closing of the Declaration of Sentiments:

14. Ibid, p. 11

15. Stanton, Anthony and Gage, p. 73.

16. Report, p. 12

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"In entering upon the great work before us, we anticipate no small amount of misconception, misrepresentation, and ridicule; but we shall use every instrumentality within our power to effect our object. We shall employ agents, circulate tracts, petition the state and national Legislatures, and endeavor to enlist the pulpit and press in our behalf. We hope this Convention will be followed by a series of Conventions, embracing every part of the country".<sup>17</sup>

Additional conventions soon occurred in Ohio, Massachusetts, Indiana, Pennsylvania and various places in New York.

On the following August 2nd, a convention was convened at the Unitarian Church. In attendance were Mrs. Mott, Mrs. Stanton and Mrs. M'Clintock. The Declaration of Sentiments and the Seneca Falls Convention's activity was discussed, and re-affirmed and additional signatures appended.

The hoped-for support of the press and pulpit did not appear. Although the Seneca Falls' convention attendees saw the righteousness of the cause of women's rights as being self-evident, the pulpit and press did not. Frederick Douglass and his abolitionist sheet, The North Star, along with other reform publications took up the cause, but criticism and negative response were more of the general rule. For the first time, however, the issue was receiving serious attention.

The committee entrusted with printing a report of the convention favorable completed its work. After coming from the press of the North Star at Rochester, the convention report circulated widely.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton carefully clipped reaction to the first convention. The Albany, N.Y., Mechanic's Advocate, the Worcester (MA) Telegraph, the Rochester Democrat, the Philadelphia Public Ledger and Daily Transcript and James Gordon Bennett's New York Herald were among the publications coming down against female agitation for equality. Possibly the only publication of general circulation to favor the cause was Horace Greeley's New York Tribune.<sup>18</sup>

Many of those who signed their names to the Declaration of Sentiments later withdrew them "as soon as the storm of ridicule began to break".<sup>19</sup>

In the same spirit of reform of the Seneca Falls Convention, another Seneca Falls woman stands out.

17. Ibid, p. 10

18. Stanton, Anthony, and Gage, p. 802-806.

19. Ibid, p. 73

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Amelia Jenks Bloomer was a Seneca Falls resident from 1840 through 1853. During that time, she founded The Lily, the first publication in America by, for and about women. It was also during this time period that she became associated with the movement she is more closely associated with, dress reform.

Amelia Jenks Bloomer came to Seneca Falls on April 16, 1840, following her marriage to Dexter Bloomer in her parents' community of Waterloo. Her husband had secured a job assisting Isaac Fuller with the publication of The Seneca County Courier. The publication had been founded shortly before that through the influence and support of Judge Gary V. Sackett. (Sackett is the central element in the Sackett National Register District.)

Upon their marriage, the Bloomers lived with the Fullers at the Fuller home. This house is most commonly referred to as the Bloomer House. The Bloomers' stay with the Fullers lasted until October, when the Bloomers moved to a house adjacent to the Courier office.

The Fuller/Bloomer house is the one extant Seneca Falls structure associated with her activities here. The Italianate section of the house was built by the firm of Latham Brothers, Builders and Contractors. Much of the firm's Seneca Falls work is to be found in the Sackett Historic District. As the Fullers were part of the reform movement in Seneca Falls and as such the house was involved with the activities of the Underground Railroad. The house maintains, to a great extent, its architectural integrity.

While Elizabeth Cady Stanton's activities in the area of women's rights were based in her involvement with the abolition movement, Amelia Bloomer's reform roots were with temperance. Dexter Bloomer described Mrs. Bloomer's deep temperance feelings in this anecdote:

Mr. Bloomer had very many friends in the town, and on the evening of his arrival with his bride, they filled Mr. Fuller's rooms to welcome the newly married couple to their new home and new life. Refreshments were of course served, and among them a plentiful supply of wine, for in those days this was the almost certain accompaniment of all social gatherings. All or nearly all partook of it: and just then occurred an incident which told most instructively as to the moral character and firmness of the young and happy bride. Glasses were filled with the sparkling beverage and one of them was presented to her by the bridegroom himself, but she firmly yet pleasantly declined to accept it. "What," he said with great earnestness, "will you not drink a glass of wine with me on this joyful occasion? Surely it can do you no harm." "No," she replied smilingly yet firmly, "I cannot-I must not."<sup>20</sup>

20. Dexter C. Bloomer, Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer (Boston, Arena Publishing Co., 1895). p. 15-16.

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In 1847 or 1848, the Washingtonian Temperance movement came to Seneca Falls. Mrs. Bloomer's description of the founding of The Lily described the status of women.

"Up to about 1848-49, women had almost no part in all this temperance work. They 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 to their having anything to say or do further than this was not thought of. They were fired with zeal after listening to the Washingtonian lecturers, and in some instances held little meetings of their own, organized societies, and passed resolutions expressive of their feelings on this great subject. It was at a meeting of this kind in Seneca Falls that the matter of publishing a little temperance paper was first introduced."<sup>21</sup>

Thus was born The Lily, the first American publication written for, edited, printed and financed by women. The first issue appeared January 1, 1849. It was printed at the office of the Courier.

In 1849, Dexter Bloomer was appointed postmaster of Seneca Falls, serving through the Taylor and Fillmore administrations. He appointed his wife as assistant postmaster. In this capacity Mrs. Bloomer maintained, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton described it, "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 that came to Mrs. Bloomer as editor of The Lily".<sup>22</sup>

Mrs. Bloomer had attended the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention, however she did not sign the Declaration of Sentiments. Under the powerful influence of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she and her publication moved closer and closer to the cause of women's rights.

Mrs. Bloomer is most noted for her involvement with dress reform. The name of the costume which her name became applied to was bloomers. Mrs. Bloomer had nothing to do with the development of the costume, which she referred to as being "Short dress". Her name became associated with the costume when she took up the defense of the style of dress after it was so ridiculed in the press.

Elizabeth Smith Miller of Geneva, Ontario Co., N. Y., is the person generally credited for introducing bloomers. Her outfit consisted of a blouse and a skirt reaching to the knees worn over Turkish trousers which gathered at the ankles. Elizabeth Stanton adopted the costume after seeing the ease of movement which it allowed her cousin, Elizabeth Smith Miller. Mrs. Bloomer then adopted the costume from Mrs. Stanton.

In 1853 the Bloomers moved to Mt. Vernon, Oh. Mrs. Bloomer took along with her The Lily.

21. Ibid, p. 40

22. Stanton and Blatch, p. 170

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