

A “Did You Know?” for Seneca Falls, NY

1. *Did you know that the first woman’s rights convention was held here?*

It was held on July 19-20, 1848, at the Wesleyan Chapel.

2. *Did you know that Seneca Falls about 40 years ago had the highest per capita level of industrialization of any place in New York State?*

This was when Seneca Falls had these thriving industries: Gould Pumps, Sylvania Electronics, the Seneca Knitting Mill, Seneca Falls Machine Shop, Guaranteed Parts, as well as several small businesses. It is also believed that Seneca Falls village at that time had the highest concentration of millionaires of any community in the United States

3. *Did you know that Seneca Falls was once the fire engine capital of the United States?*

Prior to 1915, many industries were located on islands—known as The Flats—in the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. There were several fire engine companies and several pump-making companies.

4. *Did you know that the person who formally nominated Abraham Lincoln as the Republican Party’s candidate for President of the United States in 1860 lived in Seneca Falls?*

The nominator was Judge Norman Judd, who was the grandfather of Norman J. Gould, the long-term president of Goulds Pumps.

5. *Did you know that a Seneca Falls company made all the socks for the National Hockey League, the National Basketball League and the first socks to go to the moon?*

They were made by the Seneca Knitting Mills.

6. *Did you know that the stars for the Hollywood Walk of Fame were made in Seneca Falls?*

They were made by the Knight Letter Works until about 1975.

7. *Did you know that Van Cleef Lake is just an artificial lake created in August 1915?*

The NYS Barge Canal System made improvements to the Cayuga-Seneca Canal branch and needed a larger water supply to operate locks 2, 3, and 4. Locks 2 and 3 here in Seneca Falls are connected so that boats go from one directly into the other, with a total lift of over 40 feet. The dam creating Van Cleef Lake is reported to be the second highest dam east of the Rocky Mountains.

Raising the water level of the canal some forty feet, the creation of Van Cleef Lake flooded out the various islands that were known as The Flats—the industrial heart of Seneca Falls. Over 116 industries and 76 houses in The Flats were moved or destroyed to widen and deepen the canal by creating the artificial Van Cleef Lake. The creation of Van Cleef eliminated the falls that had naturally existed on the Seneca River inside the village.

8. *Did you know that a President of the United States was an apprentice at one of the mills in Seneca Falls?*

Millard Fillmore is the President.

9. *Did you know that the mother-in-law to Frank L. Baum of Wizard of Oz fame often visited Seneca Falls?*

Matilda Goslyn Gage, often visited Elizabeth Cady Stanton, as both were very active in the woman's rights movement.

10. *Did you know that a Seneca Falls lady was sitting in the Presidential Box in Ford's Theatre the night that President Lincoln was shot?*

She was one of the Garnsey Girls. President Lincoln slumped into her lap when he was shot. Ms. Garnsey donated to the NYS Museum in Albany the dress she was wearing that night.