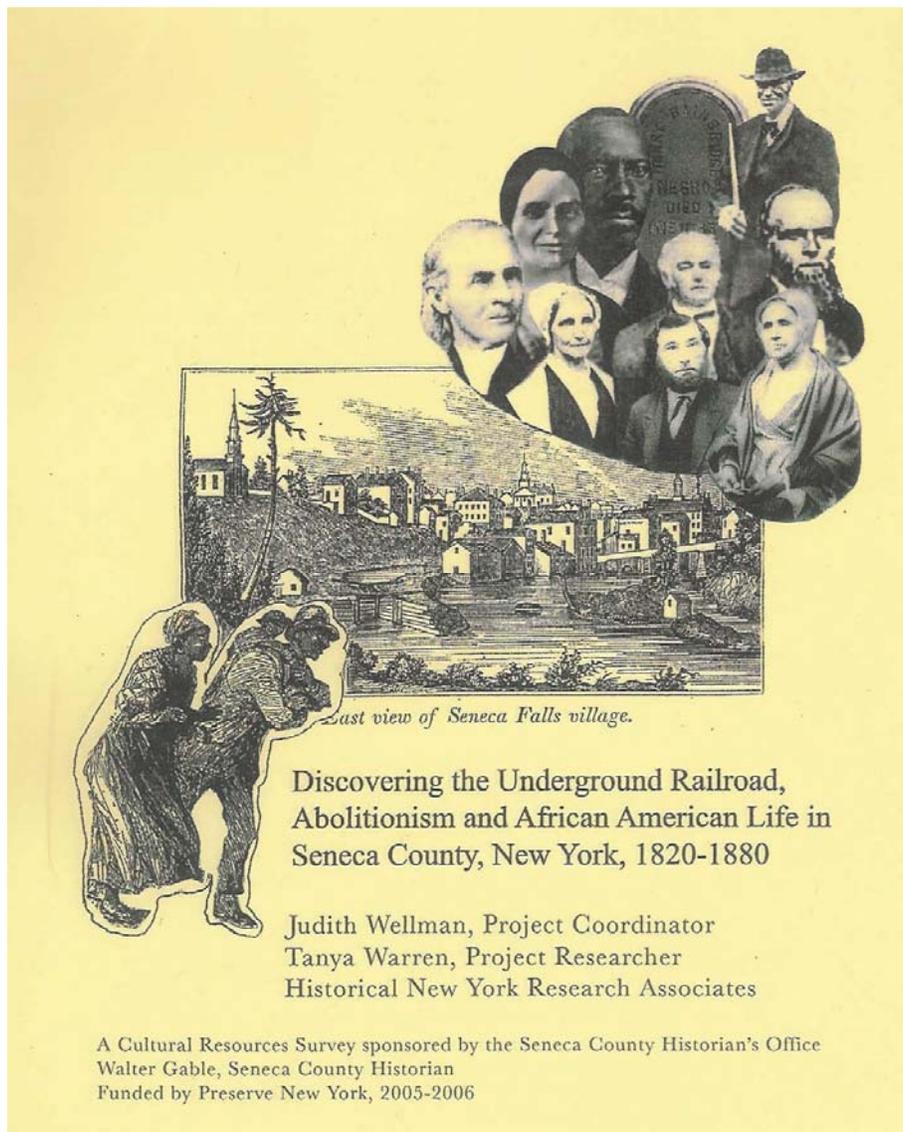


# Stories

From  
*Discovering the Underground Railroad,  
Abolitionism, and African American Life  
in  
Seneca County, 1820-1880*



# Introduction

The various stories I have compiled here are based upon the information found in the project report *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880* written by Dr. Judith Wellman of Historical New York Research Associates. This is the report of the research project funded in 2005-06 by a Preserve New York Grant from the Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council on the Arts. The grant made it possible to do an in-depth sites survey of places in Seneca County that were part of the Underground Railroad and/or abolitionist activity and/or homes of African Americans. This report was completed through the Seneca County Historian's Office.

The purpose of these compiled stories is to help the reader grasp more fully the wonderful insights that can be gleaned from making use of the information found in this report. In my stories I have tried to take the information found in the project report about a particular place or a particular person and put it into a narrative format and add some discussion of the historical significance about this person or place. While each story can "stand alone," when put together they help the reader to understand much of what was happening in Seneca County during these years. I sincerely thank Dr. Wellman for her wonderful wording that I have so extensively used and to which I have added some discussion of historical significance.

Walter Gable  
Seneca County Historian  
March 2007

## Table of Contents

<b><u>Pages</u></b>	<b><u>Title of Story</u></b>
<b>4-5</b>	<b>Charlotte Jackson</b>
<b>6-7</b>	<b>The Bonnel-Dell Homes Families</b>
<b>8-9</b>	<b>The Ferry Farm—the Home of Julius and Harriet Bull</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>The Peter Bannister Story</b>
<b>11-12</b>	<b>Henry Bainbridge</b>
<b>13-15</b>	<b>Ansel and Elizabeth Sherwood Bascom</b>
<b>16-19</b>	<b>Thomas James—Freedom Seeker Barber in Seneca Falls</b>
<b>20-26</b>	<b>The David Kinne House and Farm</b>
<b>27-28</b>	<b>The Silas Halsey House</b>
<b>29-32</b>	<b>Slavery at Rose Hill</b>
<b>33-35</b>	<b>The Metcalfs of Seneca Falls</b>
<b>36-38</b>	<b>Solomon Butler</b>
<b>39-41</b>	<b>The Seneca Woolen Mills and the Waterloo Woolen Mills</b>
<b>42-44</b>	<b>Joshua Wright</b>
<b>45-51</b>	<b>The Wesleyan Chapel Connection</b>
<b>52-54</b>	<b>Henry Brewster and Elizabeth Cady Stanton</b>
<b>55-56</b>	<b>Richard P. Hunt</b>
<b>57-60</b>	<b>The M’Clintocks</b>
<b>61-66</b>	<b>*A Possible Link Between Economic Growth and a Reforming Spirit in Northern Seneca County in the Antebellum Years</b>
<b>67-68</b>	<b>*Nature of the Burned-Over District</b>
<b>69-71</b>	<b>*The Link Between Quakers and Abolitionism in Seneca County</b>

\*This is an article that is **not** based directly upon a site or person found in *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*. These articles have been included to give the reader some important historical information to understand more fully the stories of people and sites found in the project report.

# Charlotte Jackson

The Charlotte Jackson house at 2101 Seneca Street in Ovid is a remarkable example of the home of a freed person of color, who survived slavery to live the rest of her life in freedom in Ovid, as a literate, property-owning woman, who also took a public stand as an abolitionist.

Charlotte Jackson was born in slavery in New Jersey and came to New York State enslaved by William Godley. Her name does not appear in a Seneca County census until 1870 when she was listed as 55 years old, keeping house, and owning property worth \$300.

In January 1849, Charlotte Jackson was the only known African American woman to sign a woman's antislavery petition sent by 86 women from Seneca County. This petition was from "Women of America," and was similar to others circulated throughout the north, addressed to Congress "on behalf of the claims of a million and a half of their sex, who are afforded no legal protection for a heart's dearest ties, a Woman's 'Sacred honor,' but with her husband, sons & brothers are the doomed victims that dwarfs the intellect, degrades the morals & debases the entire being." (The picture above shows the house as it looked in 2006.)



Charlotte Jackson died October 14, 1885, when she was at least 72 years old and perhaps much older. In 1874 she had made out a will, directing that her property be sold to pay her debts and to buy a monument to be erected over her grave and that of her adopted son, James (or Jerome) Jackson, who had predeceased her, in the new cemetery in Ovid. (The picture at left shows the gravestone in 2006.)

Charlotte Jackson died without heirs. Because she had worked for many years as a domestic for Belle Ayres, she directed that Belle Ayres be the executrix of her estate. Belle Ayres testified that the value of Charlotte Jackson's home did not exceed \$100, nor was her personal estate worth more than \$5.00. Her real property consisted "of a small village lot with a dilapidated shanty thereon, and said personal property only of old clothing and personal effects of little or no value." Belle Ayres also noted that "Said decedent was a colored woman who had

been formerly a slave,...and had been a domestic and employed in the family of your petitioner....”<sup>1</sup>

These are most of the details of Charlotte Jackson’s story as we know it from this recently completed study “The Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Seneca County, 1820-1880” What is the historical significance of her story? To begin to answer that question, early in our year-long study, we were told of reports that there had been several cabins just outside the village which were the homes for several different African American families. In our year of research we have not been able to document any such cabins, but we have documented that Charlotte Jackson and two other African American families—that of the Bryant family and the Van Horn family—lived for many years on Seneca Street in Ovid. (The details of the Bryant and Van Horn families are discussed in the Final Report of our year-long study.) This fact leads us to conclude that probably the Ovid village community provided an accepting neighborhood for these three African American families as well as job opportunities. While the bulk of the anti-slavery activity in Seneca County was taking place in the greater Seneca Falls-Waterloo communities, other parts of the county—such as Ovid—were also historically significant.

That she came to Seneca County as a slave underscores the fact that several African Americans who settled in this county came here as slaves or were descendents of those brought here as slaves. While many may see the focus of our year-long study as simply the Underground Railroad in which many freedom seekers passed through this county with some to settle here, it is a fact that many of the African Americans living in Seneca County did not come here as part of the Underground Railroad itself. Some of the others who settled in the southern parts of Seneca County and brought slaves with them include Silas Halsey, and Robert Selden Rose.

Another very interesting thing to note about the Charlotte Jackson story is that this information came from certain kinds of sources: census records, deeds research, probated wills. Although the Underground Railroad operated primarily in secrecy because it was an illegal activity, it is those kinds of sources mentioned, along with newspaper articles and personal diaries and letters, that enable us today to gain much reliable insight into the actual activities of various individuals of all social classes. Charlotte Jackson was clearly not one of the wealthiest individuals living in Ovid, but she personally experienced slavery and the adjustment to life as a free person. Though we do not know what year she actually received her freedom from slavery, we know that as early as 1849 she was an “activist” in the antislavery cause. Her actions may not receive as much attention as those of a Harriet Tubman or a Lucretia Mott, but she also had the courage and determination to do what she could.

---

<sup>1</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 59-60.

## The Bonnel-Dell Families

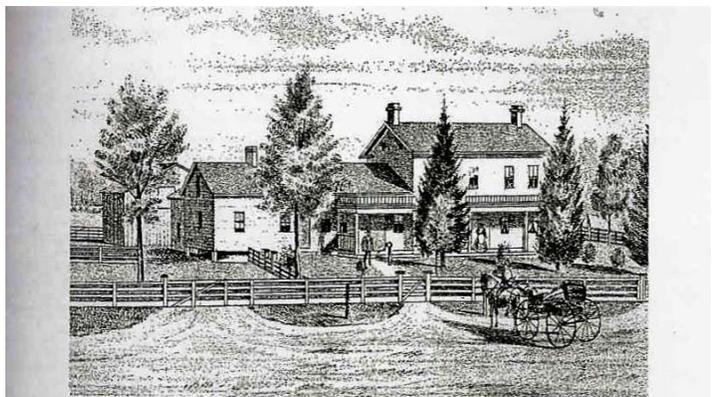
The actions of several different families are documented in the year-long study “Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African-American Life in Seneca County, 1820-1880.” This article tells about the actions of brothers and sisters of two different Quaker families—Bonnel and Dell—that intermarried and lived on both sides of the Waterloo-Canandaigua Road (now Route 96) northwest of Waterloo. Charles Bonnell married Deanna Dell. Charles’ brother Henry Bonnell married Deanna’s sister Mary Dell. Also, nearby lived William S. Dell, the brother of Mary and Deanna. (As a further point of clarification, Charles and Deanna spelled their last name “Bonnel,” while Henry and Mary spelled it “Bonnell.”) The Bonnel-Dells were an important core of the Junius Monthly Meeting of Friends (Quakers). In 1848, this Friends group reorganized as the Congregational Friends (Friends of Human Progress) and continued to be advocates of the equality of all peoples through the abolition of slavery, woman’s rights, temperance and peace. This group, with Richard P. Hunt, Henry Bonnell and Thomas M’Clintock as the mainstays, became the most important driving force of radical reform in western New York after 1848.



(The picture above shows the house as it looked in December 2006.)

Both male and females in these families were active in reform efforts. Because he was opposed to all war, Charles Bonnell refused to pay war taxes, which led him to be fined and imprisoned and his property impounded. Henry Bonnell and William S. Dell signed antislavery petitions. Rachel Dell Bonnell, the oldest child of Charles and Deanna Dell Bonnell, signed the Declaration of Sentiments adopted at the July 1848 Seneca Falls woman’s rights

The Bonnel-Dell families all prospered in their Waterloo homes. Charles Bonnell and Henry Bonnell became farmers, amassing many acres of land. William S. and Thomas Dell owned a large nursery and were leaders in the Seneca County Agricultural Society. At the county fair in 1848, William Dell won \$1 for the best “twenty kinds of apples” plus 25 cents for the best apple seedling and another 25 cents for the best



Charles and Deanna Bonnell Home  
*History of Seneca County, New York* (1876), reprint (Ovid: Morrison, 1976), Plate XXVII

convention, as did her uncle William S. Dell and cousin Thomas Dell.<sup>2</sup>

So, what is the historical significance of singling out these families for this article? Besides simply having this detailed information about these family members, we see in this story two other very noteworthy things. First, we see part of the story of the importance of the various Quaker families in the Waterloo area to the changes that were taking place within the Quaker groups in western New York. This led to the rise of Congregational Friends with a new statement of religious belief that was largely drafted by Thomas M'Clintock, another Waterloo Quaker. Second, we see the intimate intermingling of antislavery activism with that of woman's rights as well as other reform ideas such as temperance and peace. Dr. Judith Wellman goes so far as to say that there would have been no woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls had it not been for the Quakers. At least 23 Quakers signed the Declaration of Sentiments at the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention in 1848, the single largest religious body at the convention. Of course, the Quakers Lucretia Mott, Mary M'Clintock, Martha Wright and Jane Hunt, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were the key leaders in organizing this convention. Nine sites relating to these Congregational Friends are documented in the year-long project study focusing on the Underground Railroad and abolitionism. At least 42 people in the project database were connected with the Congregational Friends. In conjunction with the Presbyterians and Episcopalians in Waterloo, these Friends made Waterloo one of the two most active townships in the antislavery petition movement in the 1830s and early 1840s. These Quakers also made Waterloo a supportive place for free people of color and a major stop on the Underground Railroad. The Hunt and M'Clintock houses in Waterloo are documented Underground Railroad sites linked to the homes of other Quakers to the east, including the Fuller house in Skaneateles, the Wright house in Auburn, and the Howland house in Sherwood. Almost certainly they were connected to Underground Railroad sites to the west and north, including the Hathaway house in Farmington, the Smith and Doty houses in Macedon, the Cooper house in Williamson, and the Cuyler house in Pultneyville.

In the Summary portion of the project report *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, 1820-1880*, Dr. Wellman makes a judgment about the implications of that activism:

Seneca County was a remarkable crucible of nationally important debates about the great American experiment in democracy and about the meaning of the Declaration of Independence, "that all men [and women] are created equal." By 1848, local people came to some conclusions about these ideals of equality that the nation as a whole did not accept until after the Civil War.

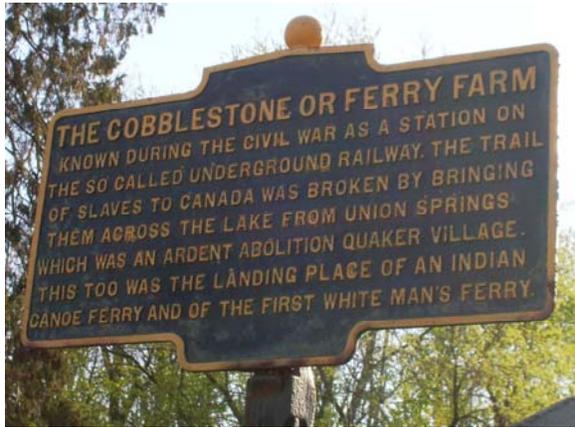
The Bonnel-Dells were one of several Quaker families in Seneca County that played a major role in the reforming activism that took place, acting on their religious beliefs in equality. The concentration of these Quaker families in the Waterloo area helps to explain why Waterloo, along with Seneca Falls, were the two key areas of activism in Seneca County in the years before the Civil War.

---

<sup>2</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 265-271.

# The Ferry Farm—the Home of Julius and Harriet Bull

Going into the year-long study of the Underground Railroad in Seneca County, there was hope that sufficient evidence would be found to verify the oral tradition about the cobblestone



house on Lower Lake Road in Seneca Falls that has become known as the Ferry Farm. In front of this house there is a New York State historic marker that says “Known during the Civil War as a station on the so-called Underground Railway. The trail of slaves to Canada was broken by bringing them across the lake from Union Springs which was an ardent abolition Quaker village...” The journalist Arch Merrill had expanded this idea in his 1963 book *The Underground Railroad (Freedom’s Road) and Other Upstate Tales* when he told of how Julius Bull had personally driven a Negro slave to the

train station in Seneca Falls and shoved this slave into the baggage car to avoid the slave catchers in a passenger car. There were also stories of former Seneca County Sheriff G. Kenneth Wayne, whose grandfather bought the Bull Farm in the mid-1870s, telling how as a child playing in the attic of this house he had seen the straw-covered wooden bunks on which the fugitive slaves supposedly slept.

These are wonderful oral tradition stories, but in our year-long study we were not able to find the documentation for these stories. While this may easily be looked upon as a major disappointment, there is still much wonderful history to associate with this house. First, people escaping from slavery did use Cayuga Lake as a major route north. In Sherwood, which is a little east of Union Springs, Slocum Howland, ran a store that



became an important station on the Underground Railroad. It is possible that he might well have dropped off freedom seekers at the Ferry Farm as he brought wheat, wool and pork from his port at Levanna to warehouses at the northern end of Cayuga Lake. (The picture above shows the house as it looked in 2006.)

Second, the story about escaping on the train also rings true. Freedom seekers (i.e., fugitive slaves) regularly went west on the train to Rochester and Canada. Owners of the New York Central Railroad in Syracuse gave free passes to freedom seekers. In Seneca Falls, Thomas James, a freedom seeker himself and a wealthy barber, and his wife Sarah Elizabeth lived in a house very near to the passenger station. The African American Solomon Butler operated a taxi

service, meeting the trains with his wagon and team of black horses. Presumably, all three of these people would have been in a position to give regular assistance to freedom seekers traveling through Seneca Falls.

Third, we need to look at what we know of Julius and Harriet Bull. Both were members of the biracial Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls, with Julius serving as trustee before April 1850. This church had been formed on antislavery principles with several members of this church involved in the Underground Railroad, and at least two of its members were freedom seekers. Julius signed his name to three notices for the new Free Soil Party in the *Seneca County Courier* in the summer of 1848. We know that in the Seneca Falls area the Free Soil Party was an extension of antislavery organizing. We also know that Julius Bull signed at least two antislavery petitions sent from Seneca Falls in May 1850 to Congress. Also, Julius and Harriet's son Edwin married Mary Bascom, the daughter of Ansel and Eliza Bascom. Ansel Bascom was a major reformer in Seneca Falls—involved in temperance, abolition, and woman's rights. It is very likely that these strong abolitionist connections are more than just a coincidence.

Finally, the house itself is of major architectural note. This cobblestone house was built about 1830 as a residence for Julius Bull. The cobble stones are sorted by size and there are one and one-half row of cobbles to each quoin. The main part of the house is a four-bay with a central doorway. There is a two-bay wing with one door and window to the south side. The road-side exterior of the house today is largely in tact except for the front porch. As part of our year-long grant project, application was successfully completed for the house to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 105-111.

## The Peter Bannister Story

[This story is quoted from the Preface portion of *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African-American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, written by Judith Wellman. The reader is encouraged to reflect on the way this story might well have been the main subject of “gossip” in Seneca Falls in the days following this event.]

As we strive with painstaking care to recreate the lives of nineteenth century residents of Seneca County, voices of African American men and women echo faintly through the pages of the past, like rustling leaves on the night wind or static signals on a radio with fading batteries. But those voices are there.

In the fall of 1844, when Peter Bannister, freedom seeker from Richmond, Virginia, spoke at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, he left us a rare account of an African American in Seneca County speaking about slavery. Although the recorded version includes language we would not use today, this account reflects the attempt of the English-born Wesleyan minister, Rev. George Pegler, to capture the quality of Peter Bannister’s speech and personality. While staying at the Pegler home, Peter Bannister spoke in the Wesleyan Church, where he “gave us an inside view of the institution, and the training received while in bondage, accompanied with some heavy thrusts at the morals of slave-holders,” wrote Pegler. After his talk, Bannister answered questions from the audience.

There was present a notable lawyer of that town, named Bascomb [Ansel Bascom], who wished to be esteemed an Abolitionist; and indeed he was one as far as his Whig principles would allow, for he must this once vote for Henry Clay. After Peter had finished his remarks Mr. B. said, “Why, Peter, you have been quite severe on some of our best men down South. You ought to make some allowance for their training. They have always been taught to believe slavery right, and don’t know any better.”

To this the slave replied just as though he had been a Yankee, and answered his question by asking another. “Well, mistah, don’t you suppose dat white men know as much as niggers?”

“Why, yes,” said Mr. B., “I would suppose they knew more.”

Peter replied, “Niggers know dat slavery is wrong; white men ought to know as much has dem.”<sup>4</sup>

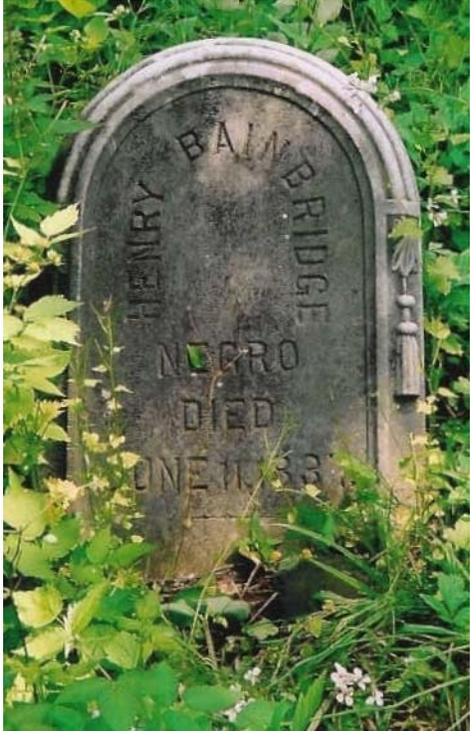
This story reminds us that neither abolitionists nor freedom seekers were mythological characters. They were real human beings, with unique personalities. Like Pegler, some were born in England. Like Bascom, some liked a good argument. Like Bannister, some were quick thinkers. Many, like Pegler, belonged to the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls. Others, like Bascom, joined the new Free Soil Party in 1848. Still others were members of the Congregational Friends in Waterloo. Some were African Americans. And yes, some of them even had a sense of humor.

---

<sup>4</sup> Rev. George Pegler, *Autobiography of the Life and Times of the Rev. George Pegler* (Syracuse, New York: Wesleyan Methodist Publishing House, 1875), 359-60. Thanks to Anne Drouisic for finding this book.

## Henry Bainbridge

Hidden in a mass of brambles, along with many other early graves, in the Rising Cemetery of Willard, stands the gravestone of Henry Bainbridge, marked “Henry Bainbridge, Negro, died June 11, 1836.” Henry Bainbridge has a remarkable story that challenges stereotypes about slavery and freedom in United States history.



Clues about Henry Bainbridge’s life are hard to find. He was not listed in any of the census records from 1800 to 1830 in Seneca County. In 1820, however, an African American man aged 26-45 was listed as living in the household of Elizabeth Bainbridge of Romulus, who was white. Elizabeth Bainbridge was the widow of Mahlon Bainbridge, born in 1771 in Frederick County, Maryland. Mahlon Bainbridge moved his family to the town of Romulus, along with his three brothers, Peter, John, and Absolom, in the early 1790s. They settled on Lot 66, where descendants remained until the Seneca Ordnance Depot claimed their land in 1941.

(The picture at left, courtesy of Kate Lynch, shows the Henry Bainbridge gravestone in the Rising Cemetery.)

The Bainbridge brothers and their families formed the core of the Romulus Baptist Church, formed June 17, 1795. Mahlon was the first person baptized in Seneca Lake. Absolom became its first pastor, until he and Peter left for Fayette County, Kentucky. John and Mahlon Bainbridge married sisters Polly and Elizabeth (Betsey) McMath, daughters of Alla McMath of Seneca County. Mahlon and Betsy were married on December 22, 1796, and had six children before Mahlon’s death in 1814.

Peter Mahlon had married in South Carolina. His wife inherited 65 people in slavery. Family tradition suggests that Peter and his wife, opposed to slavery, freed all but five of them. These five refused to leave the family, so Peter Bainbridge brought them to New York State, where Henry (the Henry Bainbridge that is the focus of this story) lived with Peter’s brother, Mahlon. When Mahlon died in 1814, he gave Henry his freedom but asked Henry to remain with his family until Mahlon’s youngest sons were old enough to work the farm. Henry remained with the Bainbridge family for about ten years, keeping one-third of the crops.

In 1825, Henry Bainbridge moved to Middlesex, in Yates County, where he bought 100 acres and lived until his death on June 11, 1836. He left his estate to three of Mahlon and Betsey Bainbridge’s children. In 1925, Henry Bainbridge’s body was brought back to Seneca County from Middlesex and was buried with the Bainbridge family in the Rising Cemetery. Joanna Bainbridge Folwell, daughter of one of the Bainbridge brothers, wrote down Henry Bainbridge’s

story in a notebook. The location of this notebook is not known, so we don't know the details of how Henry's remains were relocated.<sup>5</sup>

So, what is the significance of this story? One major comment to make is that we see how a person in slavery typically took on the last name of the family that owned the slave, in this case the Bainbridge family. There are several factors suggesting that there must have been an especially close friendship between slave master and slave. One of these factors is that Henry was one of the five slaves that wouldn't accept freedom and leave the master's household in South Carolina. Another factor is that Henry stayed with the Bainbridge family for ten years after getting his freedom from Mahlon. It is hard for us whites to imagine being enslaved, let alone choosing to remain with a family when you were granted freedom. Another factor suggesting a strong friendship bond is that the Bainbridge family had Peter's remains moved from Middlesex back to Willard to be buried with the Bainbridge family members. Lastly, erecting a marked (i.e., containing the actual name of the former slave) gravestone is not typical. Putting all this together, we perhaps need to have some sympathy for the southern whites who defended the institution of slavery in sharp contrast to the evil way slavery was portrayed in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

---

<sup>5</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 66-67.

## Ansel and Elizabeth Sherwood Bascom

What today is the Doran Funeral Home at 4 East Bayard Street is one of the oldest houses in the village. Built about 1828, the Ansel and Elizabeth Sherwood Bascom house stands high on the south bank of the Seneca River, overlooking the village, reflecting Bascom's status as the major land developer on the southeast side of the village. Originally a four-bay Federal house, a central gable with window was added on the second story façade after the Civil War. Just a few years ago, the funeral home made major renovations, including a south wing.



While the house itself is interesting itself in terms of architectural style and its physical location, it is the actions of its builders that is the focus of this story. Ansel Bascom, lawyer, politician, and reformer, was one of the best-known and most influential citizens of Seneca Falls. When he married Eliza Sherwood, daughter of Isaac Sherwood, who kept the stage and hotel in Skaneateles, New York, he and his new bride moved to Seneca Falls, where he became the first mayor of the village of Seneca Falls in 1828. He was also the major land developer of the south side of the village. Ansel Bascom's primary concern was not making money. Anybody, he said, could get rich if they were mean enough. His real goal was to make the community—defined as the village, the state, and the nation—a better place to live. He defined himself by his reform work—abolitionism, legal reform, and temperance.

Mary Bascom Bull, the daughter of Ansel and Eliza, remembered that Seneca Falls was filled with a “spirit of reform,” and her family was at the heart of it. Eliza Bascom was a quiet woman, who fed her family a vegetarian Grahamite diet (named after Sylvester Graham, the dietary reformer), using whole grain flour, fruits, nuts and cold water. When temperance reform swept Seneca Falls in the early 1840s, Eliza Bascom sewed temperance flags for community parades. When women organized antislavery fairs, she sewed goods for sale. Ansel Bascom played a more vocal and visible role in various reform efforts.

South of the Bascom house was an apple orchard, left over from trees planted by Cayuga Indians. The Bascoms used this apple orchard for community gatherings, including a large Fourth of July temperance celebration in 1842. In 1842-43, Ansel Bascom was probably the publisher of a temperance newspaper in Seneca Falls called *The Water Bucket*, whose motto was “Total abstinence from all that can intoxicate.” In August 1843, this apple orchard became the Seneca Falls site in which Abby Kelley, a famous abolitionist speaker, would speak. Abby Kelley was touring for the American Anti-Slavery Society and had gained a reputation for denouncing churches that promote slavery in any way. Not surprisingly, no Seneca Falls church

would let her speak in their facilities<sup>6</sup>, so Ansel Bascom offered his apple orchard. The program began at 5:00 p.m. with a reading from the book of Isaiah, an antislavery hymn led by Jabez Matthews, and “a season of silence,” as befitted Kelley’s Quaker background. In her remarks, Abby Kelley is reported to have said:

This nation is guilty of slavery. It is a sin. Your churches are connected with slavery, and they are guilty of that sin. They are not Christians if they are slaveholders, if they steal and sell men, women and children, if they rob cradles. Northern churches were as guilty, in fact, as southern slaveholders, since northerners had the majority population and could make things rights. That includes your Presbyterian Church, she went on. I happen to know something of your Mr. Bogue, the pastor of that church. Where is your Bogue today? Is he not connected with the South? Is he not in full fellowship with proslavery churchmen? These proslavery persecutions today follow the same spirit of persecution that existed in former ages. Mr. Bogue would see me burn at the stake, if he had it in his power, or murdered as abolitionists had been at the south.

These comments give us a good sense of how intensely Abby Kelley was denouncing any northern church that would not take a strong stand against slavery.



In November of 1843, Ansel Bascom attended a speech at the newly-built Wesleyan Chapel organized by the Rev. George Pegler and given by Peter Bannister, a freedom seeker from Richmond, Virginia. After Bannister had finished speaking, Ansel Bascom tried to be sympathetic to southern white slave-owners who “have always been taught to believe slavery right, and don’t know any better.” Peter Bannister then got Ansel Bascom to say that he thought that whites were more intelligent than “niggers.” In a crushing comment, Bannister then said, “Niggers know dat slavery is wrong; white men ought to know as much has dem.”

Several brief comments of fact can be made to illustrate his later reforming efforts. In April 1846, Ansel Bascom was a delegate to the New York State Constitutional Convention. In 1847, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her family moved to Seneca Falls to live. Mrs. Stanton and Ansel Bascom became good friends. In 1848, Bascom ran for Congress on the Free Soil Party ticket. He spoke at the Seneca Falls woman’s rights convention, but did not sign the Declaration of Sentiments. In 1850, he signed antislavery petitions from Seneca Falls, including one that asked for slavery and the slave trade to be banned from Washington, D.C., or that the national capital be removed “to some more suitable location.” In June 1855, he attended a convention of radical political abolitionists in Syracuse. The following month he published a lengthy essay in the *New York Tribune*, arguing that the U.S. Constitution did not promote slavery.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> The Wesleyan Chapel was being constructed at this time. Because the work was not sufficiently completed in August, this site could not be used by Abby Kelley. It may be safe to assume that had the Chapel been completed in August, she would have spoken there. Also, Rhoda Bement gets upset with the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Seneca Falls when he didn’t read from the pulpit her submitted announcement about Abby Kelley’s speaking that afternoon. This incident will lead to a trial out of which Rhoda Bement will be stripped of her membership in that church.

<sup>7</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 132-38

In all of this we see how Ansel Bascom, and his wife Eliza, were trying to promote reform efforts. As one of the leading persons in the Seneca Falls community, his contributions were immense and widely noted. Seneca Falls was a hotbed of reforming zeal in the 1840s and 1850s and Ansel Bascom was a major player in it.

## Thomas James Freedom Seeker Barber in Seneca Falls

Thomas James is the epitome of what the Underground Railroad was all about—a “freedom seeker” escaping from his enslavement somewhere in the south and taking advantage of the opportunities freedom offered in the North. He became a rather prosperous barber in Seneca Falls and was an abolitionist activist. His house has been placed on the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.



We surmise that Thomas James had been born in slavery in the mid-18-teens and escaped to the North in the 1830s. At some point, he went to Canada, where he probably married Sarah Elizabeth and where his daughter Martha was born about 1837. He then returned to the United States, arriving

in Seneca Falls sometime before 1840, where his name appeared in the 1840 census.

Thomas James’ birthplace, as reported in U.S. census data, gave the first clue that he might be a freedom seeker. In 1850, he listed his birthplace as “unknown.” James most likely knew where he was born but he was also very aware of national politics. On September 18, 1850, three months after the official 1850 census, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law, putting the full power of the federal government behind returning freedom seekers to slavery. As a practical strategy, James chose to avoid possible recapture by not revealing his birth in slavery to a federal official. James did report that his wife Sarah Elizabeth had been born in Pennsylvania, and his thirteen-year-old daughter Martha had been born in Canada. In 1860, James reported his birthplace as New York. Reported patterns of birth such as this—both the use of “unknown” and reporting different places of birth in different census years—are a good indication that such a person was a possible freedom seeker.

Thomas’ wife, Sarah Elizabeth James, may also have been a freedom seeker. We can piece together Sarah Elizabeth James’ biography from various sources. According to the 1880 census, her father was born in Virginia, and her mother was born in Maryland. She was born either in Pennsylvania or a slave state, sometime between 1802 and 1814. (According to Seneca County poorhouse records, she was born in November 1814. Her obituary noted that she was between 93 and 102 years old when she died in 1904.) Although every census entry (including 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1900) listed Sarah James’ birthplace as Pennsylvania, her obituary

noted that she was born in slavery, escaped with her parents to Canada, and then came to Seneca Falls, where she lived for 50 years.

From his position as a free person of color in a northern city, Thomas James took an active part in the fight against slavery. In 1840, he subscribed to the *Colored American*. In August 1840, he attended the “Convention for Colored Inhabitants of the State of New York,” held at Albany, August 1840. There he was appointed head of the Seneca County committee along with Thomas Jackson and D. W. Keeler. He continued to be active in state conventions. In 1853, he was appointed at Geneva in November to serve (with Rev. David Blake, Rev. William Cromwell, Perry B. Lee, Henry Highland Garnet, and J. W. Duffin) on a committee to help organize “a society auxiliary to the state council of colored people; and to further consider the proceedings of the National Convention held in Rochester in July last, and to take measures to carry out the same.” He signed an announcement for Democratic League Convention in Seneca Falls, and he agreed (along with George Jackson) to take a census of colored people in his district. He joined the antislavery Wesleyan Methodist Church when it was organized in 1843 and became one of its first trustees. He signed a call for a Free Soil meeting, published in the *Seneca County Courier* in June 1848. In 1850, he signed the first extant antislavery petition sent from Seneca Falls. In the early 1850s (and quite likely longer), he subscribed to *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* and the *National Era*.

As an African American in a predominately European American region, even in a community whose citizens knew and respected him, James’ life was not easy. An article in the *Seneca Falls Democrat*, August 14, 1845, noted that:

OUTRAGE: Mr. Thomas James, colored barber of this village, on Tuesday evening of last week, had occasion to go on business to a house near Geneva. While there he was set upon by four or five whites, who stopped on passing by, and was by them severely beaten—so much so that he was left insensible. On reviving, he made his way home, his wounds bleeding profusely during the whole journey. Mr. James is a good citizen, and we are at a loss to account for this assault. We understand the offenders have mostly been arrested and identified. This case shows an evil in the criminal law of last winter. Mrs. James, under that law, was compelled to go *from home* to the town in which the offense was committed, to institute proceedings against the criminals. He was put to the trouble and expense of going among *strangers*, to prosecute the defendants at *their homes*. We can easily imagine cases in which the delay, &c., attendant upon this would enable offenders to escape, or otherwise defeat the ends of justice.

Thomas James did exceedingly well economically in Seneca Falls. As a barber, he attracted a steady business, both from local people and railroad passengers. One of his most famous customers was Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In 1852, inspired by movements for the short dress (or the Bloomer costume), homeopathic medicine, and health reform, Stanton and several other women paid James a shilling apiece for a shampoo and haircut. "It would delight all physiologists and lovers of comfort, to see the heaps of beautiful curls and rich braids that have fallen beneath James' magic touch, from the over heated aching heads of about one dozen of our fair ones," Stanton reported in the *Lily*.

James' wealth increased dramatically in the 1850s. The census listed the value of his real property in 1850 as \$700. The 1851 assessment record noted that he owned a house on State Street worth \$700, a shop on Fall Street worth \$500, and another house on Cayuga Street worth \$300. By 1860, the census listed his real property as worth \$6000.

The 1863 directory listed the address of Thomas James' shop as 86 Fall Street. By 1863, he had enough money to consider a major real estate investment. In that year, he and Sarah Elizabeth mortgaged all three of their existing properties to the First National Bank of Seneca Falls for \$3500 and began to build a brick business block at the corner of Fall and Cayuga Streets. This three-story building is the Bank of America building today.



By any measure, Thomas James was an economic success. But wealth could not bring him a long life. His daughter Martha had died in childbirth when she was only eighteen years old on July 22, 1855. On February 2, 1864, just as he completed his new business block, he made out his own will. Without children, he left all his property, after the death of his wife Sarah Elizabeth, to be invested for "educating colored children forever." (A codicil, written in January 1867, rescinded this provision.)

Thomas James died of consumption (according to cemetery records) on December 16, 1867. He is buried in Restvale Cemetery in Seneca Falls, as is his wife and daughter. He left an estate worth many thousands of dollars. The 1870 census listed Sarah Elizabeth James as owning property worth \$17,000.

James appointed as executors his wife Sarah Elizabeth James and two friends, Jacob Corl and Henry Henion. Administrative papers prepared by Corl and Henion made it very clear that Thomas James had been born in slavery, noting that "Elizabeth James, his widow, and the said Thomas James had no other relatives known to the deponents or either of them-**he having formerly been a slave** and made, during his lifetime, diligent enquiry for his relatives without effect."

Sarah Elizabeth James was listed in the 1870 census as sixty years old, born in Pennsylvania, living with Mary James, four years old, born in New York. In 1874-5, she was listed in the directory as widow, still living on State Street. In January 1880, Peter Van Cleef, Under Sheriff of Seneca County, sold the State Street house at auction. By 1880, according to the census, Sarah Elizabeth James was living as a boarder with Catherine Hall in Elmira. By 1896, she had returned to Seneca Falls, where she was a member of the Seneca Falls Congregational

Church. In 1900, she was living in the county home (1900 census). When she died, Sarah James was buried next to her husband in Restvale Cemetery.

When Sarah James died, her obituary appeared in a local paper:

Sarah E. James: widow of Thomas, died October 6, 1904 at the County Home. She was born in slavery, escaped with her parents to Canada. Had lived in Seneca Falls for 50 years. Her husband was a barber. They owned considerable property which was lost through the years. After his death she worked for others. Had lived in the County Home for 2 years. She was a devout Congregationalist all her life. A long time friend of Rev. William Bourse Clarke, she often expressed her fears of being buried in a pauper's grave. When she died, he conducted the burial and she was put next to her husband in Restvale Cemetery, Seneca Falls. Prominent men of the village were the bearers. She was from 93 to 102 years old.

We may never know where Thomas James had been born, when and under what circumstances he escaped from slavery, or why he chose to settle in Seneca Falls. We do know, however, that his was a remarkable story of one freedom seeker who, against all odds, found stability, respect, and wealth in one small city in upstate New York.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 179-84

## David and Mary Kinne House and Farmstead

The David and Mary Kinne house and farmstead at 6858 Kinne Road, town of Romulus, has been the focus of much research in the year-long project “The Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, 1820-1880.” There has been a strong oral tradition about the house’s being an Underground Railroad station with a secret hiding room in the attic. In all the research conducted in the project, only circumstantial evidence has been uncovered to support this oral tradition. Nevertheless, the house and farmstead has been successfully nominated for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. The house and farmstead represents (1) the national importance of Seneca County in abolitionism; (2) the national importance of Seneca County and the Genesee Country as a bread basket of the nation in the mid-nineteenth century; and (3) the importance of Greek Revival architecture in antebellum central and western New York, symbolizing the connection of citizens in the new American Republic to the democracy of Athens in the fifth century B.C.

In 1796 Elijah Kinne, Sr., purchased 100 acres of this farm, on the southeast corner of Lot 95 for 130 English pounds. In 1810, his son, Elijah Kinne, Jr., purchased another 100 acres

on the southeast just west of this Jr.’s son, David married Mary L. 1834. They lived south of their sometime between when they moved is believed that the built between 1846 contractor Isaac A.



corner of lot 95, farm. Elijah Kinne, Wisner Kinne, Stone Kinne in on Lot 88, just parents’ farm until 1850 and 1855 into this house. It house itself was and 1849 by Bun and carpenter

Henry A. Burton. As show in the photo taken in 2006, the house is a frame gable-and-wing Greek Revival house with wide frieze, Doric columns, clapboards and a cobblestone foundation. On the south side of the house, a driveway leads from the street, separating the house from a small outhouse and machine shed, before it crosses a creek to reach four barns and scale house where David Kinne weighed grain from surrounding farms. The setting has changed very little since it was created in the nineteenth century. The farm remained in the Kinne family from 1796 until 2003, when Wisner Kinne, the last Kinne family member to live here, died.

David Wisner Kinne (March 26, 1814-May 2, 1891) married Mary L. Stone Kinne (d. March 4, 1872) on October 11, 1837. They represent families who came to Seneca County from New England and eastern New York in the 1790s and created extremely prosperous farms on former Cayuga Indian homelands, in the famous Genesee Country, one of the major pre-Civil War grain-producing areas of the nation. David Wisner Kinne’s grandfather, Elijah Kinne, Sr., purchased this land, 100 acres, on the southeast corner of Lot 95 in 1796 for 130 English pounds. In 1810, his son, Elijah Kinne, Jr., purchased another 100 acres on the southeast corner of lot 95, just west of this farm. There, Elijah Kinne, Jr., and his new wife Mehitable Hester Wisner Kinne built a house in 1812. It was a long house with four rooms downstairs and an upstairs loft. The

Kitchen and family room were located at either end of the house, with a fireplace in each room, while the two middle rooms were used as bedrooms. In 1822, Elijah Kinne, Jr., and Hester Kinne bought the southeast corner of lot 95, Elijah Kinne, Sr.'s original farm, from his father and stepmother, for \$1000. They remained on this farm through 1840. After 1840, Elijah Kinne, Jr., and Elizabeth Leake Kinne moved elsewhere. Elijah Kinne, Jr.'s son, David W. Kinne, married Mary L. Stone Kinne in 1834. They lived on Lot 88, just south of their parents' farm. After Elijah Kinne, Jr., moved to Ovid, David W. Kinne may have farmed both his own land and that of his parents.

### **Agricultural Importance**

The Kinne farmstead has great importance in terms of Seneca County agricultural history. Seneca County's prosperity was based primarily on agricultural production. By 1840, more than three-quarters of the adult males in Seneca County were farmers, and in 1845, 72 percent of the land in the county was improved acreage. Much of this production was wheat and other grains. The Kinne Farmstead is an excellent example of the prime importance of grain production in Seneca County. Seneca County was part of the Genesee Country, a major breadbasket of the nation before the Civil War. In Seneca County, farmers increased their production per acre through the 1840s. Between 1840 and 1848, Seneca County farmers almost doubled the number of bushels of wheat they sent to market. In 1850, farm families in Seneca County sowed one-quarter of their acres to wheat, far surpassing the production of oats, corn, and potatoes (which suffered from the same blight that attacked potato crops in Ireland). Farmers continued to raise cattle and sheep for meat, milk, butter, cheese, and wool, but these were of secondary importance to wheat in terms of farm income. When Charles Eliot Norton addressed the Seneca County Agricultural Society in 1850, he captured the enthusiasm of local farmers in one brief sentence: "This is a wheat county."

In the 1850s, Seneca County, along with much of western New York, experienced a decline in wheat production, exacerbated by a wheat fly blight, that lasted for about a decade. By 1860, Seneca County again began to produce wheat in large quantities until, by the early twenty-first century, the county produced about as much wheat as it did in 1850.

In 1850, David W. Kinne was ahead of the local trend for the 1850s in moving away from wheat production toward the production of oats and corn. According to the 1850 agricultural census, David Kinne was farming 214 improved acres, probably including both his own farm and that of his father. The Kinne farm produced 1500 bushels of oats, 1100 bushels of corn, and 400 bushels of wheat in 1850. For another project, Anne Derosie analyzed the 1850 U.S. agricultural census for 619 farms in five towns in northern Seneca County (Fayette, Seneca Falls, Waterloo, Tyre, and Junius). Comparing the Kinne farm to this existing database, Derosie reported that David W. Kinne was the largest producer of oats of these 619 farmers and the fourth largest producer of corn. Although he produced less wheat than either oats or corn, David W. Kinne still produced more wheat than did most farmers in the county.

Kinne also had seven horses, eight pigs, and 80 sheep, but only two oxen, no milk cows, and no cattle. David Kinne's 80 sheep produced more than three times the amount of wool that the average farmer in these towns produced in 1850. Most likely, David Kinne sold this wool to the Waterloo Woolen Mill. Notably, Elijah Kinne had been President of the Waterloo Woolen mill. After his death, Mehitable Kinne continued to hold shares in the mill.

Grain and wool production made the Kinnes exceedingly prosperous. In 1850, according to the census of that year, David W. Kinne owned property valued at \$16,700. Tanya Warren has shown that, by 1860, the value of David Kinne's farm real estate increased to \$20,000 (with \$2500 in personal property) and \$26,480 in 1870 (with \$10,000 in personal property).

A carriage house and horse barn, just west of the house and creek on the Kinne farm, date from the earliest period. The large gambrel-roofed barn farther west probably replaced an early grain barn and attests to the continued prosperity of this farm in the late nineteenth century. A scale house with a scale, marked with the name "Osgood," reflects the size of David W. Kinne's operations. Wagons could be driven onto the scale, so that goods could be weighed before they were sent to market.

Kinne sent his grain and wool (and perhaps that of other local farmers, many of whom were his brothers or brothers-in-law) by wagon and/or horse-drawn railroad to ports on Seneca Lake. He built a warehouse at Ovid Point (once called Lancaster or Baly Town, now located on the site of Willard Hospital), where his brother Morris Kinne had a farm. He may also have sent grain and wool to a warehouse and dock operated by his brother-in-law Garret W. Freligh, now on the site of Sampson State Park. From these docks and warehouses, farmers would transport their grain and wool north, where Seneca Lake connected to the Seneca and Cayuga Canal and then to the Erie Canal, which gave them direct access to urban markets.

### **Abolitionist Importance**

A small number of enslaved people provided some of the earliest labor force in Seneca County. David W. Kinne's grandparents Elijah Kinne (August 7, 1743-February 6, 1830) and Jerusha Burton Kinne (January 9, 1743-December 9, 1803), both from Connecticut, were the first of the Kinne family to arrive in Seneca County. Local tradition, so far unsubstantiated, suggests that they may have brought people in slavery with them. They arrived in Ovid about 1789, when Elijah Kinne became the first militia officer commissioned between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. In the late eighteenth century, Elijah Kinne built a house, mill, and hotel (all still standing) in Ovid.

A strong family tradition connects the Kinne family to the Underground Railroad. Circumstantial evidence lends some support to this. Mary L. Kinne signed a women's antislavery petition sent to Congress on January 1, 1849, and, beginning in 1849, David Wisner Kinne also appeared in records as an abolitionist. The family oral tradition includes the idea of the house having been built by the famous abolitionist John Brown and that the house included an attic hideaway for the runaway slaves. The abolitionist John Brown almost certainly did not build the Kinne house, based on the Underground Railroad project research.

Project research documentation does confirm that David W. Kinne was an abolitionist, and written evidence suggests at least some involvement with the Underground Railroad. In 1849, he contributed \$5.00 to the New York State Vigilance Committee. Vigilance Committees were formed to assist people escaping from slavery. In other words, they were made up of people who were Underground Railroad supporters. In addition, other contributors noted on the same list included known local Underground Railroad activists such as Ithaca resident B.S. Halsey. "S.

Howland, D. Thomas, B. Gould, and C. Howland, Aurora, each 5.00,” were all names of Quakers affiliated with North Street Quaker Meeting in Sherwood, New York, “a storm center of reform,” as Emily Howland, Slocum Howland’s daughter, later called it, and a known hotbed of Underground Railroad activity. “Other friends” in Aurora gave \$30.00. Several African Americans lived in Aurora, many of them freedom seekers, many of them owners of property. “S. Grigg and others, Levanna, 6.00” were Sherburne Grigg and probably his father, Jerome Griger, a known freedom seeker, associated with Slocum Howland at Levanna, Howland’s port on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake. Howland also had a port on the western shore of Cayuga Lake, very near the Kinne farm. M. Hamblin, Penn Yan, gave \$10.00. W.M. Clarke, of Syracuse, contributed \$5.00. This list almost outlines an Underground Railroad route, with David W. Kinne and Mary Kinne forming a crucial link. Without any specific event relating to a freedom seeker, this is the closest documentation we have to the participation of David and Mary Kinne in the Underground Railroad. Many of those on this list were Quakers. Mary Stone Kinne may also have been of Quaker background. John Stone, Mary Stone Kinne’s father, originally came west with followers of Jemima Wilkinson, the Publick Universal Friend who established a utopian community near Penn Yan. Most of Wilkinson’s followers were Quakers. Stone himself settled at Ovid Landing in 1797.

David W. Kinne’s identification as an abolitionist is supported by considerable other evidence. He subscribed to *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*. He was nominated as a member of the Assembly on the Liberty Party ticket from Seneca County in 1851. In 1852, he served as president of the Seneca County Liberty Party convention meeting at the Wesleyan Chapel in Seneca Falls, where he was elected a delegate to the Liberty Party Convention at Canastota.

David W. Kinne’s older brother, William A. Kinne was also involved with abolitionism, subscribing both to *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* in 1852 and the *Liberty Party Paper* from at least 1849 to 1852.

Abolitionist lecturers were active in Ovid, beginning in 1840, when William O. Duvall spoke in the Seneca County Courthouse in the village. A local mob stormed the meeting. "The courthouse...was surrounded early in the evening by a furious mob, pelting the clapboards with stones and clubs and the windows with shot. To cap the climax, sulphur was put on the stove," reported Duvall. "This is a place where the most respectable citizens regard a pro-slavery minister as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ!"

Twelve years later, local citizens greeted antislavery agent J.R. Johnson with more respect when he spoke in the First Dutch Reformed Church of Ovid. “In a Dutch Reformed Church, situated in a rural district, we had some refreshing meetings,” he reported to *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*. “The locality is about equal distance from the villages of Farmer, Lodi, and Ovid; and . . . my labors were introduced and sustained in that place by the influence of members of three denominational organizations, which, in their ecclesiastical fixtures are pro-slavery. My position is, unite my efforts with such persons all I can, while I protest against all church organizations, which fellowship slavery.”

The next generation of the Kinne family was strongly associated with the Romulus Presbyterian Church. Extant records of this church reveal no formal antislavery resolutions, but it

may well have been one of those ostensibly proslavery denominations with local antislavery sympathies whose members went to hear J.R. Johnson.

Antislavery efforts made progress in Ovid and Romulus in other ways, as well. Mary L. Kinne signed an antislavery petition sent to Congress by 86 women from Seneca County and received by the Judiciary Committee on January 29, 1849. This petition was from “Women of America,” and was similar to others circulated throughout the north, addressed to Congress on behalf of the claims of a million and a half of their sex, who are afforded no legal protection for a heart’s dearest ties, a Woman’s ‘Sacred honor,’ but with her husband, sons & brothers are the doomed victims of a system that dwarfs the intellect, degrades the morals & debases the entire being.

At least thirty-five women from Ovid and Romulus signed this petition (twenty-one from Ovid and fourteen from Romulus). They were the wives and daughters of local farmers, mechanics, blacksmiths, doctors, and laborers. One worked as a domestic, one as a teacher. All were white except Charlotte Jackson, born in slavery in New Jersey in 1785, brought to New York State and manumitted by William Godley. Charlotte Jackson became a landowner with real estate worth \$300 in 1870. Her house, much changed, still stands in Ovid. She died in 1885, age 90 to 100, and was buried in Ovid Cemetery.

Further circumstantial evidence suggests that more research might uncover further information about the participation of the Kinne family in the Underground Railroad. Local tradition carries stories about a maze that connected the Kinne farm to Seneca Lake. In the “Administration Documents of Elijah Kinne, Jr.,” Garret W. Freligh (Elijah Kinne, Jr.’s son-in-law (and David W. Kinne’s brother-in-law) submitted a claim against the estate for work done on a house, barns, warehouse, and railroad. George Swarthout, Sr., attested that “the warehouse stands on the lake—built on dock—F. built it and moved it—also the railroad from the land of the farm to warehouse. The warehouse was built in 1833 or 1834. He commenced building it before he moved there.” Later, Swarthout noted that brother D.W. Kinne’s brother, Morris Kinne, had a farm that abutted that lake and that “D.W. Kinne built the warehouse erected on it.” Could a railroad from the David W. and Mary Kinne farm to these warehouses and docks on Seneca Lake have been the source of stories about a “maze” that connected freedom seekers with Seneca Lake and routes toward freedom?

### **Architectural Importance**

The David W. Kinne and Mary Kinne House is a fine example of the way that local contractors--in this case perhaps Isaac A. Bunn of Romulus and Henry E. Burton of Fayette--used standard Greek Revival vocabulary in creative ways to develop their own unique version of a classical building, designed to reflect universal values of democracy, stability, and the paramount importance of citizenship and public virtue in the new Republic. Reflecting Greek temples in their form and details, these structures recalled the democracy of ancient Athens, reminding Americans that they, too, were a democratic nation state, the first since Athens in the fifth century B.C. The Kinne house, constructed sometime between 1846 and 1855, is a frame Greek Revival house with wide frieze, Doric features, clapboards, and cobblestone foundation. The builders almost certainly relied on guides such as that published by Asher Benjamin or Minard Lafever, but no specific models have so far been located. With the exception of the removal of plaster walls on the interior of the west wing, the addition of windows on the rear

wing, and a small shed added to the south in the twentieth century, the house has experienced very few changes, inside or out, since its original construction.

A wing to the rear (west) of the main structure houses a kitchen and current family room in the first floor, where plaster walls have been removed to reveal original posts and beams. This may originally have been a woodshed. A large open room over this west wing, with plastered ceiling, light gray painted walls and floor, and a tan wooden chair railing, has apparently received very little use since its original construction. This may once have been used as a laundry room.

The main block of the house is Greek Revival. It faces east, with its gable end to the street. It stands on a cobblestone foundation and features a wide entablature with a broken pediment over three bays. The doorway is surrounded by sidelights, each with three narrow panes, and a transom, with Doric pilasters and entablature. The screen door is twentieth century, but the solid main doorway appears to be original, with two long panels at the top and four small panels at the bottom. This six-panel door design is common throughout the house.

What appears to be a three-bay wing to the south actually is part of the main block of the house. It has two frieze windows, a porch across its full width, with an original central door and one window on either side. Four Doric pillars support the porch roof. A large chimney still stands at the south end of the roof of this wing. A small rectangular addition on the south end, now used as an entryway, was added in the twentieth century.

Six-over-six double hung window sashes remain throughout most of the building, although two windows on the second floor of the south wing are narrow four-over-four sashes.

Inside, the south part of the house contains the largest parlor, with a fireplace jutting about two feet into the room from the south wall. The fireplace has a large mantelpiece with Doric pilasters, with a small cupboard opening into the area behind the fireplace on the west wall. A cubbyhole off the room leading to the front parlor is about five feet wide by three feet deep by five feet tall. Double parlors in the main section of the house have large double Greek moldings. Six-panel doors in all parlors are original, as are window moldings, but ceilings were covered with fiberboard, and floors are twentieth century hardwood.

Upstairs, an unusual delicate turned stair rail and newel post form a partial S-shape around steep-stairs leading down to the first floor hall. Wide floorboards are probably original, as are four-panel doors and window surrounds in the bedrooms. A hall closet has another small door in its back wall, leading to an attic storage space.

## **Conclusion**

The David W. and Mary Kinne Farmstead is an outstanding example of a Greek Revival house, built sometime between 1846 and 1855, perhaps by contractor Isaac A. Bunn of Romulus and carpenter Henry E. Burton of Varick, with a farmstead consisting of six contributing buildings, including an outhouse, tool shed, four barns, and a scale house. David W. Kinne's reputation as an abolitionist and possible Underground Railroad supporter is substantiated through newspaper references to his participation in political parties (including his presidency of

a county-wide meeting), his financial contribution to the New York State Vigilance Committee (formed to help people escape from slavery), and his subscriptions to the *North Star* and *Frederick Douglass' Paper*. The integrity of this site is remarkable, with little change in form, setting, feeling, association, materials, and workmanship, it from its mid-nineteenth century origins.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 68-80.

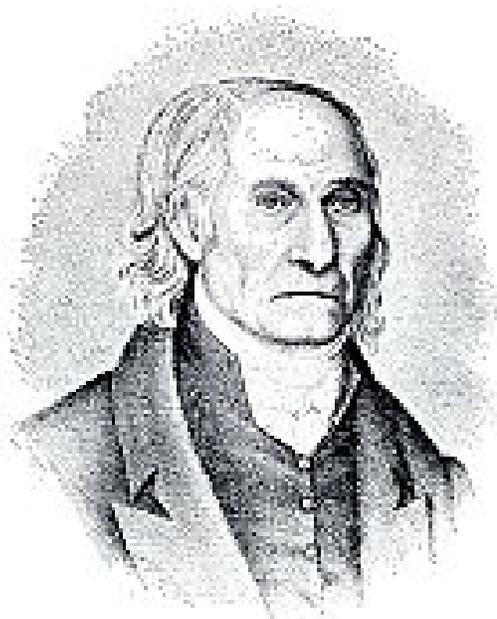
## The Silas Halsey House

The Silas Halsey house illustrates the kinds of European Americans—farmers and



professional people of substance—who brought African Americans in slavery into central New York in the 1790s. It also illustrates the personal and familial nature of the slave system. As slavery was disappearing in New York State, individuals often worked closely together, and people in slavery could often negotiate terms of their own freedom.

Silas Halsey was born in Southampton, Long Island, in 1742. Educated as a doctor in New Jersey, he returned to Long Island in 1764, before he was exiled to Connecticut for his revolutionary views in 1776. In 1778, his wife died and he was left with four children. His mother claimed a mother and two sons, Harry and Prime, in slavery. When Halsey came to Lodi in 1793, Prime came with him, and together they cleared land and built a small log house at Cooley's Point (Lodi Landing), where they planted six acres of wheat and a small apple orchard with seeds obtained from a nearby Indian orchard. The following year, Prime and Halsey returned with the rest of the Halsey family, and Prime probably helped construct this three-bay Federal house with wing on Lot 37. Local tradition suggests that Henry Montgomery may also have helped build this house.



JAMES STUART HALSEY

According to Frances H. Barto, one of the Halsey grandchildren, Prime, like his brother Harry, was a sailor.

Having had been on one whaling voyage," Barto recounted at age 96, Prime soon became homesick, and wished to return to Southampton and be a sailor. Grandfather told him, he had depended upon him for help and did not know how to do without him, but would let him go if he would pay him \$80, to be left with a Mr. Gillson, in New York, at the end of the first voyage. He had nothing but Prime's promise, but the money was duly paid. Prime afterwards lived in New York, but we have no further knowledge of him.

Silas Halsey went on to become a member of the Assembly and Senate of the State of

New York, a member of the House of Representatives during President Jefferson's administration, and a judge, justice of the peace, town supervisor, and county clerk. He served in public office for almost forty years. After he bought his freedom, Prime lived in New York city, but the Halsey family had "no further knowledge of him."

Silas Halsey died on November 19, 1832, at age 90. The house then passed into the hands of William Nevius, Col. Garrit Nevius, Harry C. Farr, and Richard and Sybil Farr, who left it to their daughter, Linda Farr Lucas, the current owner. It is now a bed and breakfast, the Crystal Springs Tourist Home.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 49-51.

## Slavery at Rose Hill

The Rose Hill estate, located in the town of Fayette and overlooking Seneca Lake, is famous for its beautiful Greek Revival mansion. It was the site of one of the largest concentrations of people held in slavery in upstate New York.

### Alexander Coventry

In 1792, Alexander Coventry, a doctor from Claverack in Columbia County, purchased 900 acres on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake, settling with his family



and two people in slavery in the low area at the northeast corner of the lake. This is the first family to bring people in slavery to this area. Hudson Valley farmers often incorporated the labor of people in slavery. Twelve to fifteen percent of New York's colonial population was enslaved. African Americans usually lived in relatively small groups, often part of the household of European Americans, isolated from other people of color. When Alexander and Elizabeth Coventry migrated from eastern New York, they represented this pattern of slave-holding. They brought with them two people in slavery, Betty and Cuffe, husband and wife. He named the property, located on Military Lot 17, "Fairhill" after his ancestral lands in Scotland. Coventry left this area in 1796, but no structure remains to mark this family's location.

The relationship between Cuff and Coventry suggests both the power an enslaver might wield and the limits of that power. Cuff used his considerable strength of will to negotiate basic terms of his work and life. First, he refused to leave without his wife, Bett, who belonged to a neighboring farmer. So early in 1792, Coventry paid about \$130 dollars for the "negro wench named Bett, also her youngest two children, the elder named Ann, and the youngest Jean, together with all their wearing apparel and half their bedding." Cuff worked on Coventry's new farm, but he also worked for himself, Bett, and their children. He raised crops, cut wood, burned ashes, and trapped animals for fur. Coventry let him keep the profits from these enterprises.

Coventry kept a detailed journal. On November 3, 1793, he noted that he "sent Cuff over the Lake for the flour, and he stayed all day. I spoke pretty sharp to him; He said he was getting his pay from Jackson for his ashes. He got 2 yards of red broadcloth at 30/-pr. yard. He took it so hard that I scolded him, he said he wanted another master. I told him to find another master for himself and wife, and I would sell them."

On June 19, 1793, Coventry recorded the death of Bett, who died at his farm of consumption. Coventry noted that he and his family "tenderly cared for" Bett. They placed her remains in a shroud and a coffin, and buried her on the farm.

The Coventry family moved to Utica, New York, in 1796. Elizabeth Butler Coventry died February 7, 1828, and Alexander Coventry died in 1831.

Cuff may have moved to Utica with the Coventry family. He may also have been sold to Tunis Rappleye of Ovid. On July 21, 1809, Tunis Rappleye called the overseers of Ovid “to examine his negro man Cuff Vandike, who he wishes to manumit.” They found him to be “hail, hearty & sound, about age 28.”

### **Robert Selden Rose**

In 1802, Robert Selden Rose, Virginia planter, purchased this land with his brother-in-law Judge John Nicholas. In 1803, when twenty-eight-year-old Robert and Jane Rose moved their family and thirty-seven people in slavery from Stafford County, Virginia, to Rose Hill, they were part of a migration of landed families who poured into upstate New York after the Revolution. Those who came into the Genesee Country—including Bath, Geneva, and Sodus—included many people from Maryland and Virginia, who established plantations based on a southern model, operated by people in slavery. Encouraged by Charles Williamson, land agent for Sir William Pultney’s land company, the Rose family came as an extended family group with the Maryland-born Fitzhughs, Robert Rose’s cousins, and his brother-in-law John Nicholas. The Fitzhughs were also related to Ann Carroll Fitzhugh, who later married abolitionist Gerrit Smith of Peterboro, Madison County, New York. More than seventy-five enslaved people came with this extended family group.



About 1809, Rose constructed a plain rectangular frame house with a small rear kitchen wing. The old house still stands just west of the new Greek Revival mansion. It became a carriage house and is now used as a visitors’ center. The old kitchen continued to be used as the kitchen for the new mansion.

It appears that the attempt to transplant plantation type agriculture from Virginia to the Finger Lakes was not a financial success. Robert Rose manumitted many of his enslaved people, beginning in 1809. In 1820, however, he still held nine people in slavery—six men and three women—more than any other single person in Seneca County. He did not always treat even good workers with dignity. An 1893 county history contained an account of Rose striking a man named Peter with a cane. An 1828 newspaper story noted that he shot and wounded “one of his slaves, of the name of Henry” (probably Henry Douglass, Sr.) for refusing to work in the brickyard on Sunday.



Henry Douglass was born in Maryland about 1776. He married Phillis Kenny, born in Maryland about 1780, who worked as a nurse for the Rose children. Henry and Phillis Douglass

had at least eight children of their own. Rose manumitted Henry Douglass on October 10, 1816. Henry and Phillis Douglass later moved to Geneva, where Henry died May 22, 1849. As a widow, Phillis lived with her children, Emily and Charles, in 1850 and by herself at 21 High Street in 1860 until her death sometime before 1870.

A Whig and later an Anti-Mason in politics, Rose served in the New York State legislature in 1811, 1820, and 1821, and as a member of Congress from 1823-27. He was a founder of the New York State Agricultural Society, a member of the board of the Seneca Lock Navigation Company, and a trustee of Hobart College.

### **William K. Strong**

After Rose died in 1835, William K. Strong, a young retired New York City wool merchant, purchased the property in 1837. Strong was a retired (although only age 32) wool merchant from New York City. Since wool was one of Seneca County's most important products, it is possible that he became familiar with Rose Hill as he traveled through the region, collecting wool for his business. In 1839, William and Sarah Strong constructed an elegant 12,000 square-foot double-wing Greek Revival mansion with Ionic columns and cupola on the site of Rose's simple rectangular dwelling. They kept the Rose family's original kitchen on the back. The Greek Revival house had a full pediment facing the street, six slender Ionic columns, a center doorway with sidelights and transom, and a cupola. Matching wings also had Ionic columns. Interior details reflected Minard Lafever patterns. The Strongs finished their new house just in time to welcome President Martin Van Buren to their "splendid mansion."

William K. and Sarah Strong lived at Rose Hill until her death in 1843. In the household were a total of seventeen people, including one free woman of color. Nearby lived the Johnson family, the only African American family in the neighborhood, with eight people. After leaving Rose Hill, William Strong lived in New York City the rest of his life. Active in Whig politics, he was a friend of William Henry Seward. He became a brigadier general in the Civil War. He resigned his commission for ill-health in 1863, but then organized the Union League Club in New York City and responsible for recruiting many African American troops in New York State. He died in 1867, age 62.

### **Robert J. Swan**

In 1850, Robert J. Swan, born in 1826, bought Rose Hill. Sent to live with the Johnston family for his health, he fell in love with Margaret Johnston and married her. As a wedding present, his parents gave the young couple Rose Hill. In August 1850, twenty-four-year-old Robert Swan, farmer, lived there with his wife, M.A. aged twenty-two; Irish-born Bridget Griffen, aged 27, and Eliza Robertson, aged 23, and Edward Evans, aged 21, born in Wales. The property, noted the census, was worth \$40,000.

Two doors away, perhaps still on the Rose Hill estate, lived the African American family of R.S. Johnson, aged 42, cook, with Lucina Johnson, his wife, aged 42, born in Vermont; Stephen A., 20, a laborer; Prince, 13; William R., 11; Sarah M., 7; George W., 4; C.M., six months; Annie E., 16; Fistus, 14; and Levi Ray, 20, born in Vermont and a fiddler by trade.

Robert Swan made Rose Hill into a model New York State farm. Following the lead of his mentor and neighbor, John Johnston, Swan installed drainage tiles throughout his farm to remove spring water from the clayey-loam soil. His first year on the farm, Swan laid 16,000 tiles. Eventually, his 344-acre farm was interlaced with 61 miles of tiles, raising his wheat production from five to fifty bushels per acre. He won a silver pitcher from the New York State Agricultural Society in 1858, became president of the society in 1881, and that same year succeeded in his efforts to have a New York State Agricultural Experiment Station established at Geneva. He died in 1890 in New York City

### **Conclusion**

Today the Greek Revival mansion, the original house built by Robert Rose, and a small portion of the original estate are owned by the Geneva Historical Society and is open to the public. A decedent of the Swan family had purchased the house after it had deteriorated from neglect and financed a major restoration effort. The mansion is listed on the National Register. It is widely known as one of the best examples of a Greek Revival residence in the eastern United States. Hopefully, this article gives the reader greater insight into its important story in terms of slavery and antislavery activism.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup>Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 91-98.

# The Metcalf Family

On Gravel Road in the town of Seneca Falls we have the homes of two Metcalf brothers—Joseph and Jonathan—who were among the earliest, most outspoken and most important abolitionist leaders in Seneca Falls.

John Metcalf (a Revolutionary War veteran) and his wife Sybil came to Seneca Falls with their children in 1811. They settled north of the village, probably very near the current houses of sons Joseph and Jonathan. About 1825, Joseph married Harriet Pitney and they had six children. After Harriet's death in 1857, Joseph married Sarah. Jonathan married Elizabeth Miller about 1812. After his wife's death, Jonathan moved to Michigan with his father-in-law Peter Miller who had been an innkeeper in Seneca Falls.

## Jonathan Metcalf

Jonathan Metcalf was active in local politics as constable, town clerk, coroner, and justice of the peace in the late 1820s and 1830s and as supervisor of the Town of Seneca Falls in 1830. In October 1837, both Joseph and Jonathan Metcalf (along with Richard P. Hunt, Quaker from Waterloo and D.W. Forman, Presbyterian from Seneca Falls) signed a call for the organizing convention of the Seneca County Anti-Slavery Society, held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Seneca Falls on October 25, 1837. Richard P. Hunt became President of this meeting, with Jonathan Metcalf, Thomas M'Clintock, and Azaliah Schooley (the latter both Quakers from Waterloo) as vice-presidents. In 1840, Jonathan Metcalf, president of the Seneca County Anti-slavery Society, ran for Justice of the Peace on the Whig ticket. Unlike Joseph, however, Jonathan Metcalf did not become a Wesleyan Methodist. He did, however, sign the Declaration of Sentiments at the Seneca Falls women's rights convention. Jonathan had married Elizabeth Miller about 1812. After his wife's death, Jonathan moved to Michigan with his father-in-law Peter Miller who had been an innkeeper in Seneca Falls.



## Joseph Metcalf



About 1825, Joseph married Harriet Pitney and they had six children. After Harriet's death in 1857, Joseph married Sarah.

On October 21, 1835, Joseph attended the organizing meeting of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, where 400 delegates, driven out of the Bleeker Street Church in Utica by an anti-abolitionist mob made up of "gentlemen of property and standing," trekked over the hills to Peterboro at the invitation of Gerrit Smith. In October 1837, both Joseph and Jonathan Metcalf signed the call for

the organizing convention of the Seneca County Anti-Slavery Society, held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Seneca Falls.

Joseph was very much involved in the early years of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls. In 1838, Joseph Metcalf began vigorously to promote antislavery resolutions in the Seneca Falls Methodist Episcopal Church. By 1843, it became clear that the Methodist Church nationally would not repudiate its slave-holding members. Joseph Metcalf and many of his fellow Methodists chose to leave their beloved church to found an entirely new denomination, the antislavery Wesleyan Methodist Church. He became the leading member and major donor of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, and his brothers Willard and Augustus also became Wesleyans.

On February 11, 1843, three-and-a-half months before the national organizing conference in Utica, Wesleyan Methodists first met formally in Seneca Falls. Joseph Metcalf announced in a letter to the *True Wesleyan* on March 4, 1843, that twenty-six people in Seneca Falls, "wishing to begin the world anew," had left the local Methodist Episcopal Church to organize themselves into a Wesleyan Church. At a meeting in the schoolhouse in district number one on March 27, 1843, they officially organized the "First Wesleyan Methodist Society of Seneca Falls."

Joseph Metcalf gave the largest donation toward the new meetinghouse (with \$500). As one observer noted, "His hands more than those of any other man have built the meetinghouse." The summer of 1848 was a difficult one for him. His mother died in June, and his barn burned in September 1848, along with his seed wheat and his farm tools. But he never faltered in his support for the church. As he reported to George Pegler, the new minister, "It is alright, Brother Pegler. Perhaps the Lord has taken this method to show me the uncertainty [sic] of my possessions. I must be more liberal with my property while I have it at my command. I have just heard that now my barn is burned the 'Scottie' meeting house will not be finished. Tell Brother Moyer to push the work, and I will foot the bill."

Joseph Metcalf expressed his abolitionism in other ways, too. In the summer of 1848, Joseph Metcalf signed three calls for the new Free Soil Party, published in the *Seneca County Courier*. Joseph Metcalf subscribed to *The North Star* and *Frederick Douglass' Paper* from 1849-55. He signed an announcement in *Frederick Douglass' Paper* for a Democratic League Convention meeting at the Wesleyan Chapel in 1851, and the Free Democracy of Seneca County nominated him for County Sheriff in 1852.

Metcalf's obituary reflected his absolute commitment both to the Wesleyan Church and to abolitionism:

for many years he was one of the most active and prosperous farmers in this vicinity. He contributed liberally of his means toward the church to which he belonged, and in the erection of the first Methodist church edifice in Seneca Falls was one of the most liberal patrons. The early agitation of the slavery question led him to sever his connection with the Methodist church and to assist in the formation of the Wesleyan society. The first Wesleyan church edifice was built mostly through his efforts and by his means. He also contributed generously toward every good work of the church and in his religious convictions was uncompromising and enthusiastic. In the every day affairs of life he was stern and unyielding. His life was one of toil and self-denial, and he belonged to that sturdy

race that give character and life to every community. Few men could endure more and his record is that of patient sacrifice to the welfare of others, many of whom had but little claim upon his friendship or generosity.

Joseph, his wife Harriet, and several other members of the Metcalf family are buried in Springbrook Cemetery just southwest of the Joseph Metcalf home. Many other abolitionist members of the Wesleyan Church are buried there.

The two Metcalf brothers played a very important role in the early abolitionist efforts in Seneca Falls, especially in the formation of the Seneca County Anti-Slavery Society. Joseph Metcalf was perhaps the key person in making for a viable Wesleyan Church in Seneca Falls. This Church played a major role in anti-slavery efforts.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 115-124.

# Solomon Butler

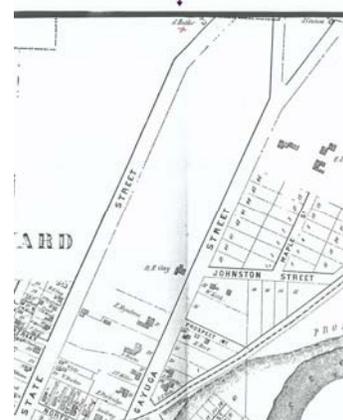
From the 1840s through the early 1880s, Solomon Butler, with his team of black horses, provided the main form of public transportation in Seneca Falls. He met trains regularly and took people wherever they wanted to go around the village. Everyone knew him, and most people liked him. He was, in fact, such a prominent public figure that village people named a street after him. Today, Butler Avenue marks the location on the west side of State Street where his house once stood. In 1912, Stephen Monroe, recalling village characters of the nineteenth century, remembered Solomon Butler “with white teeth, driving a black team, and what was the use of going to church as long as you could see the steeple from home.”

Born February 26, 1819, in New York State, Solomon Butler was the third of at least five children born to Solomon and Sarah Butler. They emigrated from Maryland to New York State sometime before 1816, when their daughter, Helen, was born. Mary was born in 1818, Solomon in 1819, Betsey in 1830, and Julia in 1831. By 1830, Sarah Butler was living Seneca Falls. On January 1, 1834, she purchased lot 118 on the east side of State Street in Seneca Falls from Wilhemus Mynderse. She died in Seneca Falls on December 10, 1847, leaving a will drawn up by Dexter Bloomer.

In 1847, Solomon Butler was living in Skaneateles, New York. By 1850, he had returned to Seneca Falls. He was living with a young girl named Jane Butler, aged 15, in 1850. Solomon Butler reported his occupation as teamster in 1850. With Solomon and Jane lived Sarah Buckley, aged 8.

On March 24, 1849, Solomon and Jane Butler purchased lot 118 on the east side of State Street, about halfway between Fall Street and South Park Street, for \$210.00. The mortgage was signed by Solomon Butler, with the mark of Jane Butler. The house was next to that of Ferris Moody, boatman, age 27, who headed another one of the four independent African American households in Seneca Falls. This household may have held combinations of two or three other nuclear families. J.A. Dillsworth, aged 38, lived there with her daughter Angelina. Hannah Lewis, aged 18; Samuel Lewis, boatman, aged 28; and Alfred Lewis, aged 1, also lived with Ferris Moody, next to the Butlers.

Solomon and Jane Butler paid off their mortgage on May 19, 1854. Perhaps Jane Butler died within the next few months, for on July 27, 1854, Solomon alone mortgaged the property for \$400 to David and Catherine Deming of Seneca Falls. Two years later, on May 1, 1856, Solomon Butler (with no mention of Jane) purchased about three acres of land from David and Amanda Stanford on the west side of State Street, close to the north edge of the village, for \$400. Here he lived, on the northwest corner of what became Butler Avenue and State Street (where Mynderse Academy now has its tennis courts) for the rest of his life.



By the early 1860s, Solomon Butler had married again, but his second marriage was not a happy one. In spite of his reputation for geniality and integrity in the larger community, at home, if we are to believe Harriet Freeman, he abused his wife. In 1863, two notices appeared in the local newspaper that offered a glimpse of their domestic problems. In the first, on September 9, 1863, Solomon Butler warned the community not to harbor his wife, as he would not pay any debts on her behalf.

Harriet A. Butler lost no time in explaining the situation. On September 15, she replied: NOTICE. SOLOMON BUTLER, my husband, having advertise me, I will return the compliment. It is true I have left his house and board, but not as he says without any just cause or provocation. He beat and choked me brutally. If that is just and right, then I own I am wrong. He did this because I took the trifling sum of twenty-four cents from his pocket—he had not given me one cent since in May last. The bed I did not leave; It was mine and I took it.

HARRIET A. BUTLER

Seneca Falls, Sept. 15, 1863

After she left Solomon, Harriet Freeman Butler remarried a man named Duboise and moved to St. Catherine's, Ontario.

Solomon Butler's name appeared as a supporter of the Free Soil party in the *Seneca County Courier* on August 16, 1848. It is quite likely that he was also involved with the Underground Railroad in Seneca Falls. As a teamster working regularly with passengers who came to the village by train, he would certainly have been aware of freedom seekers who came through Seneca Falls. He was also related by marriage and birth to people who were active in the Underground Railroad in Auburn.

According to the New York State census of 1855, his sister, Betsey Butler, had several unrelated individuals living in her house on Genesee Street in Auburn, Betsey Butler also told the census taker that year that her own birthplace was Canada. His sister, Helen, married Isaac White, born in Alabama, and they bought a house at 62 Garrow Street, next to Harriet Tubman's nephew, William Henry Stewart, in a neighborhood of freedom seekers on the south side of Auburn. His wife, Harriet Freeman, was the daughter of Morgan Freeman and Catherine of Auburn, New York. Morgan Freeman was born in slavery in Auburn in 1803. When he died in April 9, 1863, his obituary noted that

Luke had become almost 'an institution' in Auburn, not only on account of his general cleverness and usefulness, but as the leading sympathizer with his race yet in bondage. For more than 29 years his house was a refuge of the fleeing fugitive, derisively called 'The Underground Railroad Depot.' His practical sympathy for those unfortunates won him the esteem of all those who were cognizant of his labors.

Solomon Butler died March 28, 1886, in Seneca Falls. His obituary noted that "he had for years been a familiar figure in Seneca Falls." There were "very few who lived here during this time who did not know him. He was an honest and industrious man, of pleasant ways and inoffensive manners, and kind-hearted in the highest degree." He is buried in Restvale Cemetery.

Although no evidence of his involvement in Underground Railroad activities was found in the project research, it is possible to speculate on his involvement. He was the teamster in town and could have easily conspired with Thomas James, a prosperous freedom seeker, who lived next to the train station. Solomon's sisters in Auburn had connections with the Underground Railroad. Even if he wasn't involved in actual Underground Railroad activism, his story is significant. In Solomon Butler we see a free man of color who came to Seneca Falls and established himself as a respected contributing member of the Seneca Falls community.<sup>13</sup>

---

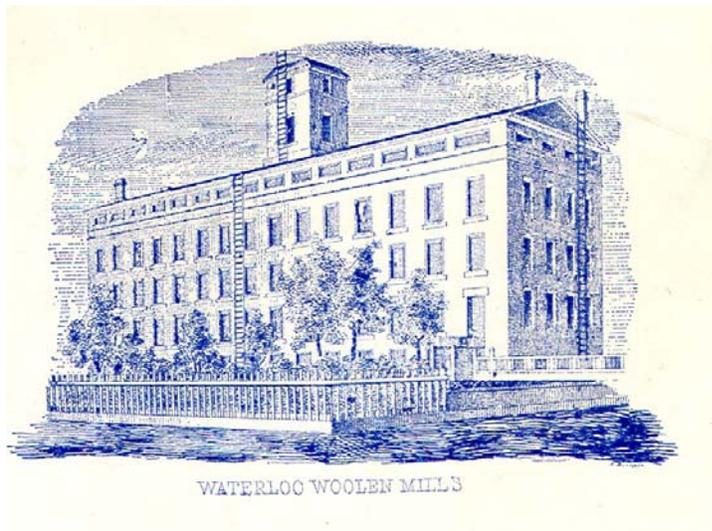
<sup>13</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 152-160.

# The Waterloo Woolen Mills and the Seneca Woolen Mills

Providing assistance on the Underground Railroad is a well-known form of anti-slavery activism. Other common forms are the signing of anti-slavery petitions and subscribing to various anti-slavery publications. The woolen mills in both Seneca Falls and Waterloo illustrate another important way in which to provide the anti-slavery cause—creating woolen cloth rather than the textiles made of slave-produced cotton. Both Seneca Falls and Waterloo were flourishing industrial communities in the decades preceding the Civil War, making use of the water power and convenient transportation on the Seneca River and its canal locks. (The picture at right shows the Seneca Falls mill about 1850. Note the waterfalls which would provide power for many of the various industries located in the Flats region of the village of Seneca Falls.) Abolitionists were instrumental in the founding and early operation of woolen mills in both of these communities. These woolen mills provided an important market for local wool production.



The Waterloo Woolen Mill was first constructed in 1836-7. It consisted of five buildings—a main five-story limestone building which was 45 feet by 100 feet, plus four 2-story brick buildings. These buildings were demolished in the 1950s and 1960s. The current limestone



structure, 150 feet by 45 feet, is the oldest building on this site, built in 1844. (The original building is shown at left. The picture is courtesy of Wayne Morrison..) Richard P. Hunt, the Quaker abolitionist in Waterloo, was one of the original investors in getting this operation started. He served as secretary of the mill from its beginning until his death in 1856. Elijah Kinne, who, along with his son, David Kinne, was major wool producers in Ovid and Romulus, was president of the Waterloo Woolen mills for many years until his death in

1850. David Kinne was also an active abolitionist. The company originally manufactured cassimere and broadcloth. From 1848-1875, the company made shawls almost exclusively. In

1867, the company employed about 300 people, and used about 400,000 pounds of wool a year, making between 60,000 and 70,000 wool shawls.

In 1840, William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the *Liberator*, received a special gift from Richard P. Hunt, secretary of the Waterloo Woolen Mills, and Thomas M'Clintock, both Quaker abolitionists of Waterloo: four yards of "super olive missed" woolen cloth, made in the Waterloo Woolen Mills, "free from the taint of slavery." Garrison was about to go to London, England, as a delegate to the World Anti-Slavery convention, and he planned to wear his new "free suit" on his trip. In thanks, he wrote to M'Clintock:

You have a soul capable of embracing the largest idea of humanity. . . .I regard you as one of those whose countrymen are all the rational creatures of God, whether they are found on 'Greenland's icy mountains,' or on 'India's coral strand'-whether their complexion be white, red, or any other color--whether they are civilized or savage, christians or heathens, elevated in point of intelligence and power, or sunken in degradation and helplessness. When this spirit shall universally prevail among men, there will be no more wars, no more slavery, no more injustice. Then will be held the jubilee of the human race; and every thing that hath breath shall praise the name of the Lord.

The mill was the most important industry in Waterloo. As John Becker noted in *History of Waterloo* (1949),

for many years after the factory commenced operations, it was no uncommon sight for to see fifty teams at a time standing around the grounds of the company, waiting for their turn to be served. People came from Monroe, Genesee, Ontario, Wayne, Yates, Cayuga, and other counties, as well as our own, with wool.



The Waterloo Woolen Mills closed in 1936. Evans Chemetics opened in these buildings in 1942. Today the business is Evans Chemetics-Hampshire Chemical Corporation. (The complex as it looks today is shown in the above picture on this page.)

The Seneca Woolen Mills were built in 1844 of gray limestone, a five-story building 110 feet long and 50 feet wide. The mill's machinery cost \$65,000. Founded by Charles Hoskins and Jacob Chamberlain, the mill carried on extensive business until 1854, when it was reorganized as the Phoenix Company, with Jacob Chamberlain as President; William Johnson, Treasurer; and Harrison Chamberlain, Secretary. By the 1860s, according to Henry Stowell, *History of Seneca Falls*, "the principal goods manufactured by the Company, are plain and fancy cassimeres, of a superior quality, which find a ready sale in the New York market. During a part of the past

season, the Mill has been running on Army and Navy goods. Constant employment is furnished to something over a hundred operatives, both men and women.” The mill used 200,000 pounds of wool annually, most of it likely provided by area farmers, at a cost of \$80,000. Owners paid \$2000 a month in wages.

That Charles Hoskins and Jacob Chamberlain were the main owners of this mill is especially noteworthy. As antislavery advocates, they used raw materials available from local sheep farmers, waterpower in Seneca Falls, capital from local investors, and



labor from local working people to create an alternative to the cotton textiles produced in Lowell, Massachusetts, and elsewhere. It was probably not a coincidence, as it was not for Quaker Richard P. Hunt, Secretary of the Waterloo Woolen Mills in Waterloo, that wool textiles could also be produced without the labor of people in slavery. Notably, the mill was not operated on the Lowell model of labor, using women workers alone. Rather, men and women both worked in the mill.<sup>14</sup>

The Seneca Falls mills later became the Seneca Knitting Mill. Currently it is owned by the Seneca Knit Development Corporation. Plans are proceeding for the National Women’s Hall of Fame to renovate the structure and use it as its facility.

Both of these mills contributed greatly to the anti-slavery efforts taking place in both Waterloo and Seneca Falls. One can easily imagine how their economic success helped to encourage many local people to be more sympathetic to abolitionist ideas.

---

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 215-16 and 332-33.

## Joshua W. Wright

Joshua W. Wright was of one of two freedom seekers who became a prosperous barber in Seneca Falls. Born about 1814, most likely in Maryland, Joshua W. Wright came to Seneca Falls sometime after 1840 as a freedom seeker from slavery. In 1844, he advertised himself as “a Fashionable Barber and Hair Dresser” who offered shaves “on the true philosophical principles.” “Instead of horrible associations and frightful contortions of visage,” he guaranteed that “shaving, by the light of science, has been rendered an agreeable pastime.”

In 1846, he purchased a barbershop at 10 Bridge Street for \$350.00. There, Wright served all classes of people on the south side of the river, including Irish mill workers, most likely the Latham brothers—carpenters and builders—and Gary V. Sackett himself.

Joshua W. Wright lived for several years at 61 Bridge Street. The house had probably



been constructed before 1845, because in that year, Joel Troutman purchased this property for \$61.82 at a sheriff’s sale, with “buildings and improvements thereon.” On September 1, 1853, Wright purchased this house for himself and his wife Samantha for \$450, with \$100 payable in June 1854, \$200 payable in June 1855, and the remainder payable in June 1856 with interest. The Wrights stayed in this house until 1858,

when they sold it to Charles W. Powell for \$550. Meanwhile, Wright purchased property on Fall Street, on the north side of the Seneca River, in 1855. (In 1868, after Samantha’s death and his marriage to Mary Jackson, he purchased a house on State Street, and in 1868, he purchased another house on Troy Street.) This five-bay Federal house stands in a residential area in one of the oldest sections of Seneca Falls, developed on the south side of the river near a small commercial area at the end of the Bridge Street bridge beginning in 1828 by Gary V. Sackett. The porch and eight-sided window are new. The six-over-six windows replace original six-over-six windows. The sidelights replace original narrow sidelights with wavy glass (according to owners description), with a similar transom. It retains its original setting, form, feeling, and association. The basement includes original post-and-beam hand-hewn maple timbers about 18 inches on a side. The house once had two chimneys, one on either end of the house. When current owners bought the house in 1976, fireplaces were boarded up, but some of the mantels remained.

Evidence that Wright was a freedom seeker comes from two sources, one indirect and the other direct. First, Wright listed his birthplace in the 1850 and 1860 census records as New Jersey and in the 1870 census as Maryland. A discrepancy in reporting place of birth is a strong clue that someone may have been a freedom seeker. Freedom seekers who settled in New York State often told census takers that they were born in a free state or Canada or that their birthplaces were unknown. Wright's fellow barber in Seneca Falls, Thomas James, whose status as a freedom seeker was locally well-known, told the census taker in 1850 that his birthplace was "unknown." In 1870, after the Civil War, when he could no longer be returned to slavery, Wright told the census taker that he was born in Maryland.

Direct evidence to confirm this hypothesis comes from an early twentieth century memoir, published in the *Seneca Falls Reveille*. Stephen Monroe presented short vignettes of several of his mid-nineteenth century neighbors. "The sound of six church bells ringing together Sunday mornings gladdened the hearts of the refugees Barber James and Barber Wright," he remembered.

Wright received a land grant in Hamilton County, New York, from Gerrit Smith in 1848. He was also an active abolitionist. He subscribed to the *Liberty Party Paper* and *The True Wesleyan* and signed a notice for the Free Soil Party in the *Seneca County Courier*, August 16, 1848.

Wright joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church by 1848 and was still an active member in 1868. A trustee and major donor, he took an active part in church affairs for many years. Records on March 10, 1862, noted that "Brother Wright made some excellent remarks."

Wright's first wife was named Samantha, born in New York State about 1818. She died November 4, 1861, and was buried in Spring Brook Cemetery, Gravel Road, Town of Seneca Falls.

In 1863, Wright married Mary E. Jackson, and placed the following notice in the newspaper:

At Waterloo, on the 24th instant at the residence of the bride's father, by the Rev. W. S. Bell, Mr. JOSHUA W. WRIGHT, of this Village to Miss MARY E. JACKSON, of Waterloo.

The editor added a note:

The above notice was accompanied by a very liberal fee for its publication, an indication that our respected townsman believes he has drawn a high prize in the connubial lottery. We offer our congratulations to the happy pair, who have gone east to spend the honeymoon.

Wright owned \$400 worth of real property by 1850, \$1200 by 1860, and \$4000 (with \$500 personal property) by 1870.

About 1873, he moved to Syracuse, where he died on March 31, 1882, aged 61. The *Seneca Falls Reveille* noted that "he was a worthy citizen, honest, intelligent and upright in his deal with all men. No one ever doubted his integrity, or called in question his sincerity as an

earnest Christian man. . . . All who knew him respected him for his many good qualities of heart and mind.

Wright was buried in Spring Brook Cemetery, Gravel Road, Seneca Falls, next to his first wife Samantha, along with many other members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Seneca Falls.

Joshua Wright's story is, like that of Thomas James, a story of a freedom seeker who takes advantage of economic opportunities in Seneca Falls—the epitome of what the Underground Railroad was all about. Not forgetting his slavery background, he does what he can to promote the abolitionist cause. As a result of the research project, the Joshua W. Wright house has been placed on the National Park Service Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 257-59.

# The Wesleyan Chapel Connection

As the site of the country's first woman's rights convention on July 19-20, 1848, the Wesleyan Chapel is a major cornerstone of Women's Rights National Historical Park, created in 1980. What has been too easily overlooked about this Chapel is that it played a major role in abolitionism in Seneca County.

Churches in many northern communities were struggling with the issue of slavery in the 1830s and 1840s. Abolitionist members of congregations were becoming increasingly impatient with the failure of their national church organization to take a strong stand against slavery. When dissatisfaction became intense enough, abolitionist members were ready to leave their church denomination. Nationally, about three thousand people met at the Bleecker Street Church in Utica on May 31, 1843, to organize formally into a Wesleyan Methodist Church, dedicated to carrying out Biblical ideals in all areas of life, including the abolition of slavery. Luther Lee, one of the most influential early Wesleyan ministers, argued that "the Gospel is so radically reformatory, that to preach it fully and clearly, is to attack and condemn all wrong, and to assert and defend all righteousness." Abolitionists left at least ten denominations, including the Methodist Episcopal Church, to form a new church based explicitly on antislavery principles. Douglass called Wesleyan Methodists "radically Antislavery."

Forty-seven communities in upstate New York organized Wesleyan churches in the next few years. One of the earliest of these was in Seneca Falls. On March 27, 1843, two months before the national organizing convention, twenty-six people formally organized the "First Wesleyan Methodist Society of Seneca Falls." Most of them, including its major financial donor,



Joseph Metcalf, came from the Methodist Episcopal Church, which had experienced dissension over slavery for many years. A few others, such as D.W. Forman, left the Presbyterian Church to join the Wesleyans.

By 1845, according to Rev. Samuel Salisbury, the second minister, the congregation counted more than 70 people, about nine percent of the adult population of the entire township. By the mid-1860s, approximately two hundred people had joined the church. Because some of them stayed for only a few years, probably only about one hundred people were active members at any one time. Commonly, many people attended a church who never officially joined, so the impact of the Wesleyans on the Seneca Falls community was far larger than the actual number of members.

By their very definition, all Wesleyans were abolitionists. Beginning in the 1830s, many of them took leadership roles in the emerging abolitionist movement. Abolitionists consistently

used this church for reform meetings. Five of the early ministers were abolitionist organizers, and three of those were Underground Railroad activists. At least five members of this congregation were African American, and two of those (both trustees) were freedom seekers.

Joseph Metcalf, D.W. Forman, and Whiting Race (mayor of Seneca Falls in 1848) helped organize the first Seneca County Anti-Slavery Society in 1837. This organizational meeting was held at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Seneca Falls; this was the congregation from which many dissatisfied abolitionists would later leave to form the new Wesleyan Church.

#### **Site of Reform Meetings**

From the beginning, Wesleyans used their meetinghouse to promote reform, including abolitionism, temperance, and woman's rights. The Seneca Falls Wesleyan Church became the one place in the village where reformers, whether Wesleyan Church members or not, could hold meetings. The chapel was "a free discussion house," noted abolitionist Abby Kelley.

In 1844 and 1845, trustees refused to open the building for partisan political speeches, but they changed their minds to allow abolitionist parties to hold meetings here. On August 10, 1852, the local Liberty Party held a convention in the Chapel to choose delegates to the national convention in Buffalo. Darius Skidmore (who had given money to support the Chapel's construction) and Aaron R. Lareclere (probably Dr. Aaron R. Larzelere, Wesleyan trustee in 1856, signer of two Free Soil lists in the summer of 1848, and member of the Executive Committee of the Friends of Righteous Civil Government in 1851) signed the notice.

Many abolitionists and freedom seekers spoke in this meetinghouse. In November 1844, Virginia-born Peter Bannister gave the earliest documented lecture by a freedom seeker anywhere in Seneca County in the Wesleyan Church. Rev. George Pegler, the English-born first minister of the Seneca Falls Wesleyan Church, told the story in his *Autobiography*:

While living at Seneca Falls, in the State of New York, a fugitive slave from Richmond, Virginia, came to my house to rest awhile and obtain a little assistance for his journey to Canada. Being rather more intelligent than ordinary slaves, I proposed to get up a meeting in the Wesleyan church of which I was pastor at that time, for the purpose of permitting him to relate some of his experience with the patriarchal institution. His name was "Peter," and his master's name was Bannister, and as slaves are too poor to have more than one name he called himself Peter Bannister. Well, Peter gave us an inside view of the institution, and the training received while in bondage, accompanied with some heavy thrusts at the morals of slave-holders.

There was present a notable lawyer of that town, named Bascomb [Ansel Bascom], who wished to be esteemed an Abolitionist; and indeed he was one as far as his Whig principles would allow, for he must this once vote for Henry Clay. After Peter had finished his remarks Mr. B. said, "Why, Peter, you have been quite severe on some of our best men down South. You ought to make some allowance for their training. They have always been taught to believe slavery right, and don't know any better."

To this the slave replied just as though he had been a Yankee, and answered his question by asking another. "Well, mistah, don't you suppose dat white men know as much as niggers?"

"Why, yes," said Mr. B., "I would suppose they knew more."

Peter replied, "Niggers know dat slavery is wrong; white men ought to know as much has dem."

Bannister was the first of many freedom seekers and Underground Railroad activists to speak in the Wesleyan Chapel. In 1846, J.C. Hathaway, European American Quaker abolitionist and Underground Railroad activist from Farmington, New York, spoke there with Charles Remond, an African American abolitionist from Boston. In March 1848, John S. Jacobs, a "self-emancipated slave" from North Carolina spoke in Seneca Falls with Jonathan Walker, "the man with the branded hand," from Florida. On May 4, 1848, Frederick Douglass spoke in Seneca Falls. Almost certainly, these freedom seekers and white abolitionists spoke in the Wesleyan Chapel.

In this context, the small notice for a woman's rights convention that appeared first in the *Seneca County Courier* on July 11, 1848, announced one of many reform meetings:

A Convention to discuss the Social, Civil and Religious Condition and Rights of Woman, will be held in the Wesleyan Chapel at Seneca Falls, New York, on Wednesday and Thursday, the 19th and 20th of July instant.

During the first day, the meetings will be exclusively for women, which all are earnestly invited to attend. The public generally are invited to be present on the second day, when Lucretia Mott, of Philadelphia, and others, both ladies and gentlemen, will address the Convention.

Unlike abolitionist and temperance gatherings, however, this woman's rights convention catapulted Seneca Falls onto the national stage and made "Seneca Falls" a household word into the twenty-first century.

In January 1849, freedom seeker Henry Bibb gave several lectures in Seneca Falls, almost certainly in the Wesleyan Church, on "sending the Bible to the Slave." S. Phillips, likely the Rev. Samuel Phillips, Wesleyan minister, sent a letter to the *Free Soil Union*, transmitting the resolution "of a large portion of the citizens of this village":

That this meeting, without regard to sect, name, or parties, recommend Henry Bibb to the confidence and hospitality of the Christian public in every State in which he may travel. And we bid him God speed in the cause of suffering humanity, and in his noble effort to induce the Christian public to send the Bible to the slave.

In April 1849, Frederick Douglass spoke in the Wesleyan Church in Seneca Falls and reported that "the house was crowded with a very respectable audience, all apparently anxious to hear, and to be instructed. With such an audience, and such a subject, it was impossible to be cold and lifeless. The meeting continued for more than two hours. At the close I obtained eight subscribers to the North Star."

In June 1849, Lucretia Mott spoke in Seneca Falls, almost certainly in the Chapel, on woman's rights.

In the 1850s, members of the Wesleyan Church actively promoted third party abolitionist politics and used the Chapel to hold political meetings. On October 24, 1851, they held a meeting of the Seneca County Democratic League Convention, a successor to the old Liberty Party, supporting Gerrit Smith (cousin of Elizabeth Cady Stanton) for President. They invited both men and women to meet. Of the fifteen men who signed the call to this meeting, ten of them (Darius Skidmore, David McCoy, Joshua Martin, William Day, William Lewis, N.E. Hood, Joel Bonker, Joseph Metcalf, Thomas James, B.F. Bradford) were affiliated with the Wesleyan Methodist church, and one of them (Thomas James) was a freedom seeker. Joshua Martin served as Chair, and B.F. Bradford as Secretary. Both were members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and Bradford later served as minister. The convention took a strong stand against the Fugitive Slave Act:

Resolved, That the Fugitive Slave Bill contains none of the attributes of law, and conveys no authority to those who act under it; and hence all who do act under it are, in the eye of God and all true law, naked Kidnappers, and are only less guilty than the political demons who enacted it, and the clerical demons who sanctify it.

It also strongly supported those who resisted re-enslavement in Christiania, Pennsylvania, in a case that resulted in the death of enslaver Edward Gorsuch. The convention also endorsed those who had participated in the rescue of William "Jerry" Henry in Syracuse, New York, on October 1, 1851. After supporting land reform, temperance, the absence of standing armies, delegates also came down firmly in support of woman's rights.

In March and April 1852, J. R. Johnson, an African American antislavery agent from Syracuse, employed by the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, lectured in central New York. On April 27, he gave a talk for the Rochester Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, meeting in Seneca Falls. Reporting on his tour in general, he concluded that "the Rescue cases, and the effort to purchase lands in Canada for fugitive slaves, and other departments of anti-slavery effort, demand so much cash, that our income for the present will not be encouraging . . . . Some will give ten dollars to help a fugitive flee to Canada, who suppose they do well to give twenty-five cents to sustain that sort of lecturing which is designed to abolish that system of tyranny which causes our fellow-man to flee from this 'land of liberty.'"

In June 1852, Frederick Douglass gave another lecture in the Wesleyan Church, "Although I have frequently spoken in that place, I do not remember to have ever been heard on the subject of slavery with more fixed attention, nor when I felt my humble endeavor more successful in awakening an interest in the cause of my bleeding brethren," he reported.

A Liberty Party meeting held in the Chapel in August 1852 elected five delegates to the state-wide convention held in Canastota. Two of them, Joseph Metcalf and B.F. Bradford, were Wesleyans. The convention focused its whole attention on the Fugitive Slave Act and resolved, That we have no language to express our unmeasured contempt and scorn of that infamous Fugitive Slave Bill; that we regard it as palpably unconstitutional; that we not honor it with the holy appellation of law, but call it by its appropriate name - a stupendous system of piracy; and can conscientiously, as Christians,

regard it no farther, than to trample its hellish claims in the dust.

On October 14, 1852, the Chapel hosted a state-wide woman's temperance convention. Susan B. Anthony was one of the secretaries, and Amelia Bloomer, Lucy Stone, and others served on the Business Committee. William Allen, African American professor at New York Central College, gave a speech, as did Lucy Stone, who proposed, in opposition to those who advocated total abolition of the sale of liquor, that individuals should take responsibility for their actions and "that every reform movement is best forwarded by cultivation; that sense of individual responsibility which never excuses from duty; and that independence of character which, without stopping to count consequence, boldly demand that justice be done though the heavens fall." Delegates debated issues of divorce, religion, and woman suffrage before agreeing to petition the legislature on behalf of the Maine law, i.e. abolition of liquor sales within the state. Letters from Frances Dana Gage of Ohio; J.R. Johnson, African American antislavery agent from Syracuse; and Lydia Fowler, phrenologist from New York City, as well as participation by E.W. Capron and George W. Pryor, signers of the Declaration of Sentiments at the first woman's rights convention, revealed the extent to which this temperance convention intersected with movements for both abolitionism and woman's rights.

In October 1852, the Free Democracy of Seneca County met in the Chapel to propose candidates for county offices. Among them was Joseph Metcalf for Sheriff. The mission of the Free Democracy, they argued, was "no other than to re-instate and to re-establish in our National and State administrations the principles of the Declaration of Independence, and carry out the avowed purposes of the Constitution, to wit, "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity;" and hence that our measures are not sectional, but national - are not destructive, but in the true sense conservative." Both Whigs and Democrats "completely yielded themselves to the slave power" and were "unfaithful to the constitution, unfaithful to humanity, and unfaithful to God." Since they both declared that they will "maintain and execute the Fugitive Slave Law, they bind themselves to a purpose of unequalled tyranny and baseness." Therefore, "we, freemen of Seneca County, here renew our unalterable purpose to continue the defence of man's inalienable rights, to continue pleading for mercy and justice till liberty shall be proclaimed thro' all the land to all the inhabitants thereof."

After 1852, newspaper reports of reform meetings in the Wesleyan Chapel were not consistently found. This may reflect a change in reporting. It may also reflect changes in ministers in the mid-1850s.

### **Abolitionist Pastors**

Major reform efforts from 1843 to 1852 and again from 1858 to 1864 were sustained by five ministers: George Pegler (1843-45), Samuel Salisbury (1845-47), Samuel Phillips (1847-49), Benjamin Bradford (1849-53), and Horace B. Knight (1858-62, 1863-64). At least three of these (Pegler, Salisbury, and Knight) had documented connections to the Underground Railroad.

In his autobiography, Rev. George Pegler noted his lengthy experience with fugitive slaves, beginning in St. Lawrence county in the mid-1830s, his attendance at the organizing convention of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society in Utica in 1835, and his desire to go as a missionary to Liberia (or perhaps Texas) for the American Colonization Society until he

discovered that its goal was not really equality and the end of slavery. "Myself and wife, and many others, exerted ourselves to the utmost, in behalf of the fugitive slaves in Canada, a missionary field most appropriate for us as Wesleyans, as we were sure our donations would not mingle with those of slave-holders," he noted.

Two obituaries reflect the intensity of Rev. Salisbury's antislavery and Underground Railroad activism. *The Manual of the Churches of Seneca County with Sketches of Their Pastors*, stated that "he was a strong abolitionist and very earnest in his warfare against sin of any kind." The *Portrait and Biographical Record of Seneca and Schuyler Counties* noted that "one of the early agitators for the abolition of slavery, in fact, so strong was his opposition to this institution that he incurred the enmity of many Southern sympathizers and his life was, at times, in great danger. He was actively connected to 'the Underground railroad' and assisted slaves who were fleeing to Canada.

Available primary sources document Salisbury's work after he left Seneca Falls. He gave the opening prayer at the New York State Liberty Party convention in Syracuse on October 1, 1851, the same convention that supported the rescue of William "Jerry" Henry when the federal government arrested him under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Act. Salisbury subscribed to *Frederick Douglass' Paper* in 1852. He served on the Business Committee of National Abolition Convention meeting at Syracuse in May 1856.

The clearest statement of his own personal opposition to the Fugitive Slave Law appeared in *Frederick Douglass Paper* in October 1855. Salisbury wrote a letter, printed under the heading "Is the Fugitive Slave Bill a Law? Should It Be Obeyed?" His answer was a resounding "No!" The Fugitive Slave Bill "is unreasonable, inhuman, unmerciful and ungodly hence cannot be law," he declared.

God's law requires me to do unto others, as I would have others do unto me. The Fugitive Slave Bill forbids my doing so. . . . We say, unhesitatingly, that it should not be obeyed. We believe fully in the old maxim, that maxim that nerved our Revolutionary fathers in their noble struggle for freedom, that "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God." And we give Frank Pierce, and the thousands of other godless officers that cluster around him, to understand, that we serve Daniel's God, and it will not do for us to obey the Fugitive Slave Bill.

Although *Minutes* of the Seneca Falls woman's rights convention printed Rev. Phillips' name as Saron Phillips, this was most likely Rev. Samuel Phillips, as noted in the record of the Rochester Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Rev. Phillips was not only a signer of the Declaration of Sentiments at the woman's rights convention but an abolitionist, as well. Phillips sponsored lectures by freedom seekers Henry Bibb and Frederick Douglass. During his visit in 1849, Frederick Douglass noted that "I found Mr. Phillips the minister, as usual on hand, warmly interested, and ardently laboring to promote the cause."

During the years he served as Wesleyan minister, Bradford was also an active leader of the Liberty Party in Seneca County. He was secretary of the meeting of Friends of Righteous Civil Government (Liberty Party), which held its convention at the Wesleyan Chapel on October 24, 1851, and again in August 1852. He was appointed chairman of the "Free Democracy of Seneca County," organized October 19, 1852, at Seneca Falls. In the early 1850s, he subscribed

to: the *Juvenile Wesleyan*, *True Wesleyan*, and the *Liberty Party Paper*. In 1854, he attended the annual meeting of the Friends of Human Progress at Waterloo and was Secretary of the "Colored Fair" (sponsored by the Union Council) at Geneva in October. He later led the Congregational Church movement in Seneca Falls. In 1852, Bradford was noted as "of Canoga, Town of Fayette."

Oral tradition suggests that Horace B. Knight ran an UGRR station in Seneca Falls, and some documentary evidence supports this. *Manual of the Churches of Seneca County with Sketches of their Pastors* noted that "during this time [1858-when H. B. Knight took over the pastorate] anti-slavery feeling was at its height and many of the members aided in the UGRR." On March 4, 1858, just before Horace B. Knight left his work with the Wesleyan Church in Syracuse to move to Seneca Falls, he and six other Underground Railroad activists in Syracuse (including William E. Abbott, Joseph A. Allen, James Fuller, Jermain Wesley Loguen, Samuel J. May, and Lucius J. Ormsbee) signed a "Circular Letter, Underground Rail Road Depot, To the Friends of the Fugitives from Slavery," published in the *Syracuse Standard*. This circular announced the dissolution of the Syracuse Fugitive Aid Society and directed all people interested in such assistance in the future to contact Rev. J. W. Loguen of that place who would assume "the entire care of the Fugitives who may stop at Syracuse." Part of Loguen's strategy in providing aid to freedom seekers involved identifying safe houses in key villages outside Syracuse. It is possible, even likely, that Horace B. Knight provided such a safe house in Seneca Falls when he moved there in the summer of 1858.

### **African Americans Members of the Wesleyan Church**

At least six people affiliated with the Wesleyan Methodist Church were African American, and two of these, Joshua W. Wright and Thomas James, were trustees. Both Wright and James were also freedom seekers. Joshua Wright joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church by 1848 and was still an active member in 1868. Samantha Wright, his first wife, and Mary Jackson Wright, his second wife, were both active members of the Wesleyan Church. Susan Jackson was a cook for the John Rumsey family. Harriet Freeman Butler was the wife of Solomon Butler who ran a livery service in Seneca Falls. Harriet was the daughter of Morgan "Luke" Freeman, barber in Auburn, New York, who operated a major Underground Railroad station. Thomas James was an early member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and a trustee in 1850.

### **Conclusion**

Founded as an antislavery church, Wesleyan Methodists in Seneca Falls proved true to their abolitionist principles, hosting antislavery speakers, organizing abolitionist conventions, and supporting the Underground Railroad. At least three of their ministers—George Pegler (1843-45), Samuel Salisbury (1845-47), and Horace B. Knight (1858-61, 1863-64) were documented Underground Railroad activists, and Samuel Phillips sponsored lectures by freedom seekers. Many freedom seekers (including Frederick Douglass, John S. Jacobs, Henry Bibb, and Peter Bannister) spoke in the Wesleyan Church. At least six African Americans were affiliated with this church, including two freedom seekers, Joshua W. Wright and Thomas James, who were trustees of the church.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 232-43.

## Henry Brewster and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Between 1847 and 1862, Henry Brewster and Elizabeth Cady Stanton lived at 32 Washington Street in Seneca Falls with their children. Elizabeth's efforts to promote woman's rights are well-known. Less well-known is that she was an abolitionist. Henry had a national reputation as an abolitionist.



The house itself had been built about 1836/7 by William Bayard. William and his brother Samuel owned the Lower Red Mills in the Flats area in the Seneca River. The Bayard brothers went bankrupt in the Panic of 1837. They were forced to sell their property at auction to Elisha Foote and Edward Bayard, Daniel Cady's former law students. (Bayard was also Cady's son-in-law.) Daniel Cady acquired this house and deeded it to his daughter Elizabeth on June

22, 1847, "in consideration of the love and affection which I have for my daughter."

Daniel Cady gave his daughter a check to fix up her new dwelling, noting, recalled Stanton, that she believed in "woman's capacity to do and dare; now go ahead and put your place in order." In her autobiography, Stanton wrote that she consulted with "one or two sons of Adam," bought "brick, timber, and paint," "set the carpenters, painters, paperhangers, and gardeners at work, built a new kitchen and wood house, and in one month took possession."

When the house was complete, it was a simple gable-and-wing vernacular adaptation of a Greek Revival dwelling, reminiscent of thousands of others in upstate New York, reflecting ideals of democracy in the new Republic. The curved staircase, sidelights, grained woodwork, piazzas, and three acres of lawns, trees, and flower and vegetable gardens gave it touches of elegance. Its many wings led son Gerrit Smith Stanton to call the house a "mansion."

Acquired through a gift of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation, the National Park Service restored the extant section of the Stanton House, which is now open to the public.

Henry B. Stanton was a major abolitionist orator, editor, politician, and lobbyist, important not only in Seneca Falls but nationally. Elizabeth Cady Stanton once called him "the most eloquent and impassioned orator on the anti-slavery platform." "He was not so smooth and eloquent as [Wendell] Phillips, but he could make his audience both laugh and cry; the latter, Phillips himself said he never could do." An organizer of the national Liberty Party in 1840, by 1848 Henry B. Stanton was one of the creators of the new Free Soil Party. In the summer of 1848, he traveled throughout New York State, urging people



to vote for the Free Soil ticket, with Martin Van Buren for President, and his name appeared in all five Free Soil articles in Seneca Falls newspapers.

In June and July 1848, Henry Stanton devoted himself to making sure that New York State would support the Free Soil Party in the national elections. On June 22, he met with the radical wing of the Democratic Party, the Barnburners, at their state convention in Utica. They nominated Martin Van Buren for President and proclaimed that slavery was "a great moral, social and political evil--a relic of barbarism which must necessarily be swept away in the progress of Christian civilization." While Elizabeth Cady Stanton was organizing what would become the first woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls, Henry Stanton spoke with "great power and eloquence" before 2000 people at a Free Soil meeting in Warsaw, New York, on July 12. A few days later, he spoke in Canandaigua. On August 3, he and neighbor Ansel Bascom spoke in Seneca Falls. The following week, he lectured to huge audiences all along the Hudson Valley.

Along with her husband, Elizabeth Cady Stanton was an abolitionist. "The anti-slavery platform was the best school the American people ever had on which to learn republican principles and ethics," she wrote in her autobiography. More sympathetic to the antipolitical American Anti-Slavery Society than was her husband, she subscribed to the *Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison's newspaper, from 1840 on, and she counted William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, and Lucretia Mott among her friends.



In October 1839, when she was twenty-five years old, Elizabeth Cady Stanton saw her first Underground Railroad passenger. While visiting her cousin Gerrit Smith at his house in Peterboro, New York, she met Harriet Powell, an eighteen-year-old woman. Powell had escaped from the Syracuse House in Syracuse, New York, with the help of Thomas Leonard, African American waiter, and a small group of white abolitionists. Hiding on the third-floor of the Smith mansion, she told the story of her life. "We needed no further education to make us earnest abolitionists," recorded Stanton. The next day, Smith's clerk took Harriet Powell, dressed in Quaker clothes, to Lake Ontario, where she crossed into Canada.

Elizabeth Cady and Henry Stanton married on May 1, 1840, at her parents' home in Johnstown, New York. They traveled on their honeymoon to attend the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London, England, where Stanton met Lucretia Mott, William Lloyd Garrison, Elizabeth Pease, and other noted abolitionists from both sides of the Atlantic. Returning home, the Stantons lived first in Johnstown before moving to Boston, where Henry began his law practice, edited the antislavery *Emancipator*, and continued his antislavery political career. Through Mott and Garrison, Stanton gained an appreciation for women's rights and radical abolitionism. Through Henry, she recognized the value of voting as a means to an end. She would use both insights well when she helped draft the Declaration of Sentiments for the first woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton had grown up in a household with three African American men, enslaved. She taught a Sunday school class of African American children in Johnstown, New York, in the early 1840s, but we have no indication that she played any role in the Underground Railroad prior to her arrival in Seneca Falls in June 1847.

While she was in Seneca Falls, Elizabeth Cady Stanton had regular contact with the small African American community in the village. She regularly attended the Episcopal Church with Abby Gay, whom she used as an example in *History of Woman Suffrage* of an African American who could not vote even though she paid taxes on a considerable amount of real estate. She hired African Americans to work for her, noting once that “a white man is blackening my stove, while a black man is whitewashing my woodshed.” In 1852, while experimenting with the Bloomer costume or the “short dress,” she had “James the barber” cut her hair. Along with several other Seneca Falls women, she paid Thomas James a shilling (about twenty-five cents) for a shampoo and haircut. This Thomas James was a freedom seeker, although Elizabeth did not state that in her autobiography.

Although Stanton regularly attended Trinity Episcopal Church in Seneca Falls, she never joined this church. By the early 1850s, she counted herself a member of the Congregational Friends of Waterloo. When Martha Wright reported a rumor that Stanton had become an Episcopalian, Stanton was indignant. “I am a member of Junius meeting and not of the Episcopal Church,” she retorted. “I have heard that infamous report and feel about it very much as if I had been accused of petty larceny. . . .If my theology could not keep me out of any church my deep and abiding reverence for the dignity of womanhood would be all sufficient.”

Local tradition tied Stanton to an Underground Railroad network connected to the Tear family, beginning in 1857, operating an Underground Railroad line between Seneca Falls and Orange County, Virginia. No evidence in the project research was found to substantiate this claim.

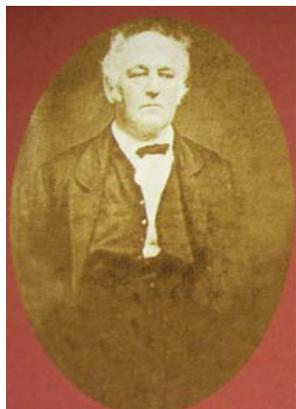
In Elizabeth Cady and Henry Brewster Stanton we see real insight into the intense mingling of abolitionism with politics and abolitionism with woman’s rights. Both were tireless workers for their causes.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 217-21.

## Richard P. Hunt

A very important person in terms of abolitionist activity in Waterloo is Richard P. Hunt. Many Seneca County residents recognize the house shown at right as the Hunt House, site of the July 9, 1848, “tea” at which five ladies decided to call the first woman’s rights convention in Seneca Falls. What most people don’t know is that this house was also very important to the Underground Railroad and abolitionist movement in Seneca County. The house had been built in 1829 by the Quaker businessman named Richard P. Hunt. He had come to Waterloo from Pelham in Westchester County, New York, in 1821. He had invested in land, commercial properties, and—with the Waterloo Woolen Mill—industrial assets. By mid-century, he was the richest man in Waterloo. At the time of his death in 1856, Dun and Bradstreet credit ratings listed his worth as \$100,000.



Richard P. Hunt had married four times. His third wife, Sarah M’Clintock, and his fourth wife, Jane Master, linked him to the network of Quaker abolitionists in Philadelphia. Sarah M’Clintock had married Richard in September 1837. When she died in 1842, she explicitly requested that her body not be wrapped in slave-grown cotton but in “tow cloth” (i.e., linen). In November 1845, Richard Hunt married Jane Clothier Master from Philadelphia. With Sarah and Jane, Richard and his wives became a key part of the knot of local Quaker families affiliated with the Junius Monthly Meeting of Friends in Waterloo. Elizabeth Cady Stanton remembered the Hunts, the Thomas M’Clintocks, and the Henry Bonnells as the trio of families that “were the life” of the annual meetings of the Congregational Friends (also known as the Friends of Human Progress). Sarah and Richard P. Hunt attended the Anti-Slavery convention of Western New York, held in Penn Yan in 1839. Jane Hunt, with her strong Philadelphia ties, did a great deal more than simply carry on what Sarah Hunt had been doing.



Local tradition, recounted by John E. Becker in his 1949 *History of Waterloo*, maintained that the Hunt family used the carriage house attached to the back of their home as a stop on the Underground Railroad. This is what Becker said in his book:

The upper floor of his carriage house, which was attached to his residence, was fitted up with beds, “for needy persons journeying along the road.” When the Abolitionist cause became developed and runaway slaves were being helped north into Canada, Mr. Hunt turned his carriage house into a station of the underground railroad and gave safety and a comfortable lodging place to many a colored person and to groups of them who were being helped under cover of darkness to freedom a few miles to the north.

Of course, it would be the lady of the Hunt house who would be primarily responsible for overseeing the food and lodging needed for these freedom seekers.<sup>18</sup>

Being the wife of one of the wealthiest persons in Waterloo meant that the wife had important social standing and responsibilities. Given the Quaker beliefs and abolitionist sentiments of both husband and wife, we undoubtedly have in at least the last two of Richard P. Hunt’s wives—Sarah M’Clintock Hunt and Jane Clothier Master Hunt—doing virtually everything they could to aid the abolitionist efforts in Waterloo. We also have activists for reform within the Junius Monthly Meeting of Quakers and, of course, the woman’s rights movement. As a result, it is not at all surprising that the Hunt House at 401 East Main Street in Waterloo is currently owned by the Women’s Rights National Historical Park, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the National Park Service’s Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

Richard P. Hunt used his position of wealth and influence, coupled with his strong Quaker beliefs, to advance the anti-slavery cause in Waterloo. It is perhaps unfortunate that he died in 1856 without being able to experience the end of slavery in the United States with the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in December 1865.

---

<sup>18</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 296-299.

## The M'Clintocks

The Quakers Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock and their four daughters and one son moved from Philadelphia to Waterloo, New York, sometime late in 1836. They settled in a house that had recently been built by Richard P. Hunt, one of Waterloo's richest landowners and also a



prominent Quaker, soon to marry Thomas M'Clintock's ward, Sarah. (This house facing Williams Street is shown in the picture at left.) While the M'Clintock family lived in Waterloo (1836-56), Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock and their two oldest daughters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann, were active Quaker abolitionists and supporters of the Underground Railroad. They were also major organizers of the first woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls, NY, in July 1848. As abolitionists, they signed antislavery petitions; served as officers in local, regional, and national antislavery societies; wrote letters to

national antislavery newspapers; organized antislavery fairs; hosted major antislavery lectures; and used their home as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Thomas M'Clintock personally threw himself wholeheartedly into antislavery activity. He put his talents to work in Waterloo as soon as he arrived. In December 1836, the very month that Thomas M'Clintock purchased his first drugstore from Samuel Lundy, twenty Waterloo residents formed an antislavery society. Thomas M'Clintock became an agent for the *Liberator*, sold antislavery almanacs, lectured on abolitionism, wrote abolitionist articles, and organized local antislavery meetings. He became a vice-president of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society. In 1843, he joined the Board of Managers of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and in 1848, he became a vice-president of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

Such work did not endear him to many of his neighbors. Opponents did not appreciate either his religious views or his abolitionist ideas, and they hung an effigy on his sign. Sympathizers approached him "as friends, to warn you that your bold preaching and your open association with these heretics and fanatics will greatly hurt your business. We have no objection to your having what opinions you please, but your course is very distasteful to many people, and will injure you." M'Clintock was firm: "I was trained up to obey the monitions of the spirit, and be true to my best light . . . I must speak the truth, and abide the consequences."

Much of the reforming work on the M'Clintocks took place in the M'Clintock Drugstore which was located starting in 1839 in No. 1 Hunt Block. The M'Clintocks' home on Williams Street was just north of their drugstore on Main Street. (The picture at right shows their drugstore—at the very right end of the block of stores—as it looked in July 2006.) In their drugstore, the family sold only products "free from the labor of slaves." The



M'Clintock daughters worked as clerks in the store. In the early years of antislavery organizing, it was one of the few places that reformers could meet in the village. In the room above their store, Elizabeth M'Clintock opened a select school for girls. Each student paid \$3 to \$5 for a twelve-week session of chemistry, philosophy, botany, geography, grammar, astronomy, reading, writing, and arithmetic, taught by Elizabeth M'Clintock and fellow teacher Ruth Southwick. Then the M'Clintocks opened up this room for temperance and abolitionist meetings. There were meetings of the Waterloo Female Temperance Society. Several dozen local women belonged, including the African Americans Maria Jackson and her oldest daughter Mary. Abolitionists used this room, also. The biracial Disciples of Christ Church met here regularly after 1853. Several African Americans belonged to this church, including Thomas and Maria Jackson and their two daughters, Mary and Cornelia.

Waterloo sent more antislavery petitions to Congress than all but one other township in upstate New York, and the M'Clintocks participated fully in this campaign by encouraging customers in their drugstore to sign a petition. In 1839, for example, Waterloo sent twelve antislavery petitions, and the M'Clintocks generated two of them. Mary Ann M'Clintock and Elizabeth W. M'Clintock signed first. Farther down the list daughters Mary Ann and Sarah M'Clintock signed, noting their ages (sixteen and fourteen).



The M'Clintock ladies were extensively involved in other antislavery activities. In the fall of 1842, for example, Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock and their daughter Mary Ann attended the meeting at which the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society was organized. In November 1842, five Quaker women, including Mary Ann M'Clintock, organized an antislavery fair. The M'Clintocks organized antislavery fairs for many years. It was this group that helped to convince Frederick Douglass to move to Rochester in 1847 to publish the *North Star*. (Shown is a picture of Mary M'Clintock.)

Perhaps because of the presence of the M'Clintocks and other sympathetic Quaker families, the town of Waterloo attracted a significant population of African Americans, many of them probably freedom seekers themselves. According to the 1850 federal census, the M'Clintock household included two African Americans, eight-year-old S.L. Freeman and seventeen-year-old Mary Jackson. Mary Jackson was most likely the daughter of Thomas Jackson—most likely a freedom seeker from Maryland—and Maria Jackson of Waterloo. In 1850, 6 of the 63 African Americans in Waterloo may have been formerly enslaved, based on census listing of their birthplaces as Maryland, Virginia, or unknown. Almost one-third of Waterloo's African Americans were directly connected with these possible fugitives. It is easy to surmise the role that the M'Clintock ladies—mother Mary Ann and her daughters—contributed to this accepting climate for African Americans in Waterloo. (Shown above right is a picture of Thomas M'Clintock.)



The M'Clintocks connected local organizing with regional and national antislavery activity. In spring 1840, Thomas M'Clintock and his brother-in-law, Richard P. Hunt, sent William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the antislavery newspaper, The Liberator, a practical gift, four yards of "super olive mixed" woolen cloth, made in the Waterloo Woolen Mills, "free from the taint of slavery." Garrison planned to wear his new "free suit" on his forthcoming trip to the World Anti-slavery Convention in London, and he praised M'Clintock lavishly: "You have a soul capable of embracing the largest idea of humanity. . . .I regard you as one of those whose countrymen are all the rational creatures of God, whether they are found on 'Greenland's icy mountains,' or on 'India's coral strand'--whether their complexion be white, red, or any other color--whether they are civilized or savage, christians or heathens, elevated in point of intelligence and power, or sunken in degradation and helplessness. When this spirit shall universally prevail among men, there will be no more wars, no more slavery, no more injustice. Then will be held the jubilee of the human race; and every thing that hath breath shall praise the name of the Lord.

In the 1840s, the M'Clintocks threw themselves wholeheartedly into antislavery activities. In August 1842, Thomas M'Clintock accompanied noted Garrisonian abolitionist lecturers Abby Kelley and Frederick Douglass on a speaking tour across New York State. In the fall, at a meeting attended by Thomas, Mary Ann, and daughter Mary Ann M'Clintock, Western New York members of the American Anti-Slavery Society organized the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society, and Thomas M'Clintock was elected to the Executive Committee. In November 1842, five Quaker women, including Mary Ann M'Clintock, organized an antislavery fair. The M'Clintocks organized antislavery fairs for many years. It was this group that helped to convince Frederick Douglass to move to Rochester in 1847 to publish the *North Star*.

Work in upstate New York drew them into national antislavery activities. In May 1843, the M'Clintocks attended the anniversary meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in New York City. Thomas M'Clintock joined the Board of Managers of the American Anti-Slavery Society, a position he retained for five years; in 1848, he became a Vice-President.

The M'Clintock house became a regional center of abolitionism, woman's rights, and spiritualism, hosting reformers such as William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, William C. Nell, James C. Jackson, Jermain Loguen, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Former critic Thomas Mumford, born into a slave-owning Episcopalian family in Beaufort, North Carolina, recalled that

once admitted to the privileges of such a refined and cordial home, there was no possibility of giving them up. Nowhere else could we find such fresh literature, or such intelligent interest in vital questions of the day.... That house was our gateway into the widest realms of thought and the richest fields of duty. The family were the teachers to whom we owe the best part of our education....Such hospitality is seldom witnessed. There was seldom an empty bed, or a vacant seat at the table. Famous and friendless guests often sat together there, and colors and creeds were alike forgotten.

After the rescue of William "Jerry" Henry in Syracuse in October 1851, Rev. Jermain Loguen, AME Zion minister, long-time Syracuse resident, outspoken opponent of the Fugitive Slave Act, and a freedom seeker himself, fled to Canada to escape prosecution. On the way, he stayed with the M'Clintocks. One visitor, probably Thomas Mumford, former editor of the *Seneca County*

*Courier*, reported that Loguen “was a man of noble countenance and gigantic stature, well armed, and determined to die rather than be re-enslaved. He was apprehensive and wakeful, walking in his room during most of the night, and if his pursuers had come, the house of a man of peace would have been the scene of a deadly struggle.”

In terms of the July 1848, Seneca Falls woman’s rights convention, the M’Clintock ladies as well as Thomas M’Clintock were actively involved. Mrs. Mary Ann M’Clintock was one of the four ladies who gathered in the home of Jane and Richard P. Hunt on July 9<sup>th</sup> and decided to call this first woman’s rights convention. As none of these five ladies had organized a full convention before, they had to draw upon their prior individual experiences. Mary Ann M’Clintock and her husband Thomas had organized Quaker meetings and antislavery conventions and fairs, so the M’Clintock ladies’ organizational skills would be utilized for the woman’s rights convention. It was to the M’Clintock house that Elizabeth Cady Stanton came on July 16<sup>th</sup> with her draft declaration for the convention so that the M’Clintocks, especially Elizabeth (then the 27-year-old daughter of Thomas and Mary) could review it. At this same gathering, the group would write appropriate resolutions and consider topics for speeches. At the Seneca Falls woman’s rights convention, Mary Ann M’Clintock served as the secretary. She took clear notes for both days of this convention. The M’Clintock daughter Mary Ann spoke at the evening session of the second day. Five ladies—including Mary Ann M’Clintock and daughter Elizabeth—were appointed to prepare the proceedings of the Convention for publication. Signers of the Declaration of Sentiments included Mary M’Clintock and daughters Elizabeth W. and Mary Ann.

In every way, the M’Clintock family organized their lives around ideals of equality. They worked not only to end slavery but to create a world where people would be respected no matter what their race, sex, or condition. Thomas M’Clintock advertised that all the goods he sold in his store were “free from the labor of slaves.” One visitor remembered that “famous and friendless guests often sat together there, and colors and creeds were alike forgotten. In 1840, in an article in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, M’Clintock explained his own vision. “Religion,” he argued, “has been emphatically embodied, not in speculative theories, but in practical righteousness, in active virtues, in reverence to God, in benevolence to man--the latter being the only sure test of the former.” “Where much is given,” he advised, “much is required. We are all stewards of the grace of God. We must use our talents for “the renovation of the world.”<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Judith Wellman, *Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880*, pp 317-24.

# **A Possible Link Between Economic Growth and a Reforming Spirit in Northern Seneca County in the Antebellum Years**

The Seneca Falls-Waterloo area was a hotbed of reforming zeal in the years preceding the Civil War. An examination of some basic facts regarding the economic and transportation developments of this time period and the people living here at that time help greatly to explain why there was so much reforming activity in this area at this time.

When Seneca County was created out of the western portion of Cayuga County in March 1804, Seneca County was not an industrial area. People knew of the agricultural potential of this area and they knew about the falls/rapids on the Seneca River at what would become later the community of Seneca Falls and Waterloo. It was not easy for potential settlers, however, to reach Seneca County. It could easily take as much as six weeks for a person to come from New York City whether he chose the “southern” route up the Susquehanna River and then overland or the “northern” route of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and then basically overland.

A series of important transportation developments “opened up” Seneca County for settlement and economic development. As early as 1789 the State of New York had begun development of the Genesee Road westward from Utica. Basically using old Indian trails and widening them a little by cutting down trees, people moving west could use this turnpike and travel by their own wagon or by stagecoach. This usually meant stopping about every ten miles so that the horses could be rested, watered and fed, as well as the people. Typically there was a toll house every ten miles. Travel was fairly easy but slow until one got to our county area. Then a major obstacle arose—getting across Cayuga Lake or through the Montezuma marsh. It was easier to cross the lake by ferry boat but that was no easy task. As early as 1789 James Bennett and John Harris were operating a ferry between what is today Cayuga and Bridgeport. This was a pretty rudimentary facility—a rough boat propelled sometimes by oar and sometimes by sail. One can easily understand its limited capacity—be it passenger or cargo—and how it slowed down westward movement because of the need to transfer from stage coach or loaded wagon to the ferry and then reloading again on the other side of the lake. It was the only real option, however, for about eleven years.

In 1800 the first bridge across Cayuga Lake was completed to avoid use of the existing ferry service. At a reported cost of \$150,000, this Cayuga Lake Bridge was one mile and eight rods in length—the longest wooden bridge at the time in the entire western hemisphere. It was wide enough for three carts to pass at a time. The tolls were as much as \$1 for a four-wheeled pleasure carriage with two horses; 37.5 cents for a sled and horses; 25 cents for a man and horse; 6 cents for a cow and 1.5 cents for a hog, sheep or calf. All persons living within one mile were to pass over on foot free at all times. All persons going to or from public worship on the Sabbath were exempt from payment. Until the advent of the railroad after 1841, this Cayuga Lake Bridge was a major link in the westward movement of people.

Economic development in the Seneca Falls-Waterloo area was greatly stimulated by the waterfalls/rapids on the Seneca River. These waterfalls, however, were an obstacle to transportation on the river. Businessmen realized the need for canal locks to get around the existing waterfalls in both Seneca Falls and Waterloo. The Seneca Lock Navigation Company opened portions of the first Cayuga-Seneca Canal in 1818. The first loaded boat passed through the locks at Seneca Falls on June 14. It came from Schenectady and carried a cargo of 16 tons. The lockage toll was fifty cents. The entire canal between the lakes, which was completed in 1821, made use of 8 stone locks and 1.72 miles of dug canal in addition to sections of the river. Through Seneca Falls there was a lock for every important mill site, raising or lowering the boats through Seneca Falls a total of 42 feet.

The Erie Canal was completed in 1825 and passed through the northeast corner of Seneca County. The State of New York quickly realized the economic importance of connecting the existing Cayuga-Seneca Canal with the Erie Canal. New York State paid the Seneca Lock Navigation Company \$53,603.53 for the rights to the existing Cayuga-Seneca Canal and paid out \$160,396.78 in new construction costs to make this link. In this twenty-one mile distance from Seneca Lake, there were a total of eleven locks providing a total lifting and lowering of 83.5 feet between Seneca Lake and the Erie Canal at Montezuma.

This new Cayuga-Seneca Canal had momentous economic impact upon Seneca County. The Waterloo and Seneca Falls areas were now connected with the outside world by a very practical and improved transportation system. The towpath constructed along the canal route meant that now boats were towed by mules and horses rather than polled by man power. Fleets of canal boats bearing farm produce and merchant goods floated to and through the villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls. Rates on the Erie Canal (5 mills per ton-mile) were much less than the nearby competing Cayuga Lake Bridge (30 cents per ton-mile). Packet boats carrying people for business or pleasure were competing with the stage coach. One can hardly emphasize enough the economic impact of this. Now it was possible for Pennsylvania coal to be brought north via the Chemung River and Seneca Lake to Geneva and then via the Cayuga-Seneca Canal to the Erie Canal and then to Albany and New York City. Imagine!

The Erie Canal stimulated the economic growth and population growth of New York State, making it truly the Empire State. The counties surrounding the Erie Canal in Western New York were the fastest growing portion of the entire United States in the years 1825-1835. The success of the Erie Canal stimulated the building of many other canals throughout the country. The so-called Canal Era, however, was short-lived because of the advent of railroads. Unlike the seasonal nature of canals, railroads could operate year-round. The first railroad came through Seneca Falls on Monday, July 5, 1841. It wasn't until September 1841 that the long railroad bridge over Cayuga Lake was completed—the last piece in the train route from Syracuse to Auburn to Geneva to Rochester. One must remember that these early trains were not very comfortable. The first trains operating in our area were a train of two passenger cars carrying fifteen to sixteen passengers plus an engine. It ran about ten miles per hour and stopped often. It ran on wooden rails that had iron strips (known as “snake heads”). On many occasions, one end of a snake head would come loose and would come up through the bottoms of the car and hurt passengers.

Trains quickly became the major means of transporting goods and people. From 1841 to about mid-1853, the route of all trains going west from Albany to Buffalo went through Seneca Falls. (It was on April 2, 1853, that the New York State legislature consolidated the various railroad lines to form the New York Central Railroad and its main line was routed through Lyons, several miles north of Seneca County.) One cannot emphasize enough the implications of the fact that Seneca Falls was on the main route west—at a time in our nation’s history when we seemed obsessed with “manifest destiny.” Obviously, Seneca Falls and Waterloo suffered a great loss when the New York Central Railroad main line was relocated about 1853 through Lyons. But, for a full decade, however, Seneca Falls was a bustling train stop—bringing goods and people. This also meant that new ideas were coming into our area in the process.

Having discussed the key transportation developments that would lay the basis for economic growth in the Seneca Falls-Waterloo area, attention can now be turned to the key economic developments taking place. The existing waterfalls/rapids on the Seneca River were important potential sources of water power for mills and later other industries. As early as 1793, Samuel Bear had built a grist mill at the rapids at Skoi-Yase (today the southern part of the village of Waterloo). In 1795, the first sawmill was built on The Flats (one large island and a few small islands in the Seneca River) in what is today the village of Seneca Falls. It was built by Wilhelmus Mynderse, who the next year built a flouring mill and a second flouring mill in 1807. Prior to the Civil War, many industries making use of existing water power would develop in The Flats. These include the Downs & Co. that in 1824 took over a fulling mill for manufacturing purposes, the first knitting mill in 1830, the first pump-making company in 1840, the Seneca Woolen Mill in 1840, and the first hand-held fire engine company in Seneca Falls in 1849.

This economic growth had a significant impact upon population growth. Laborers and stone masons had come to help build the Cayuga-Seneca Canal and the Erie Canal. Many of them stayed here to work in the new industries developing and many other immigrants came also to work in these industries. The existing canals and railroads made for easy and cheap transportation from New York City to Seneca Falls and Waterloo. The influx of different peoples and the movement of goods helped to bring about an infusion of new ideas, helping to create a climate for reform movements. Individuals were being drawn to Seneca Falls and Waterloo because of the opportunities for personal gain. For example, Henry Stanton, husband of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, moved his family from Boston to Seneca Falls in 1847 because of the economic opportunities he saw in this growing community. Some residents were becoming quite well-off. They built homes reflecting their wealth. These homes would become places for relatives and friends to visit. An example of this is the July 8, 1848, ladies’ tea at the home of Richard and Jane Hunt which was to be a reunion with Lucretia Mott, a Philadelphia resident. It turned out to be a gathering of five ladies who would decide to call the first woman’s rights convention in Seneca Falls on July 19-20, 1848.

Hopefully, so far the case has been built that we had the key transportation and industrial developments, the resulting population growth and the generation of income, and the influx of goods as well as ideas. Now the focus needs to be turned to the reforming zeal of the so-called Burned-Over District of which Seneca Falls and Waterloo was so much a part. In the decades of the 1820s and 1830s a revivalist zeal swept throughout the United States. This movement was

known as the Second Great Awakening. One historian has estimated that only about 10% of the nation's people in 1800 were church members. So, we can safely say there was a need for a religious reawakening. Much of the nation-wide Second Great Awakening took place in central and western New York. So many people were converted to Protestant religions in this area at this time that the area became known as the Burned-Over District. It got this name because it was felt that there were no more people left to be converted. Between 1825 and 1835, there were at least 1343 "revivals" in New York State, most of them in the Burned-Over District. A key preacher was the Rev. Charles Grandison Finney who preached extensively at revivals in the Auburn to Rochester area. Finney stressed that humans have free will and can choose for God. Those embracing this belief—and there were many who did—will logically begin to think that they should help to improve society. They will look at various evils in society and will want to weed out those evils. In other words, the new religious zeal of the Burned-Over District is going to lead to a reforming spirit. The reform movements spawned included abolitionism, woman's rights, woman's dress reform, education, advocacy of peace, asylum building, and religious reform. We will have the rise of the Millerites and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (more commonly called the Mormon Church). Differences in opinions about the need of their church to become an anti-slavery advocate led to splits within the Methodist Church (creating to Wesleyan Methodist Church) and the Quakers, leading to the formation of the so-called Hicksite Quakers. Interestingly, given the strong anti-slavery sentiment of Quaker groups in the Burned-Over District, as well as the growing economic opportunities of the area, we have the movement from Philadelphia of some key Quaker families such as Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock to Waterloo to be a part of the local Hicksite community known as the Junius Monthly Meeting. In 1833, Mary Ann M'Clintock was a founding member, with Lucretia Mott, of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. In 1842, Thomas and Mary Ann M'Clintock became founding members of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Association when it organized in Rochester. In October 1848, they will be officers in the newly-formed Hicksite community called the Progressive Friends. These Quakers are strongly committed to anti-slavery activism.

It can hardly be emphasized enough that there is a strong link between the anti-slavery reform movement and the woman's rights movement that will be born in northern Seneca County in July 1848. This can be shown in various ways. One way is to simply point out examples of individuals who were close relatives of other key individuals who were anti-slavery activists. Elizabeth Cady Stanton is the cousin of the ardent abolitionist Gerrit Smith. Elizabeth Smith Miller, the advocate of women's dress reform (i.e., "bloomers") is the daughter of Gerrit Smith and, therefore, a cousin of Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Martha Coffin Wright of Auburn is the sister of Lucretia Mott of Philadelphia. (Mott comes to Auburn in the summer of 1848 to help her sister Martha with her birth of a new child. While in the area, she will be the honored guest at the ladies' tea at the Hunt home in Waterloo on July 9, 1848. It will be a "reunion" of female anti-slavery activists.) Susan B. Anthony is the cousin of Amelia Jenks Bloomer.

An important second link between anti-slavery activism and woman's rights can be understood by pointing out that through their involvement in the anti-slavery movement, several women had a heightened consciousness of their inferior status as women. A good example of this is what happened at the world anti-slavery convention in London in 1840. Lucretia Mott and Henry Stanton were delegates from the American Anti-Slavery Society to this convention.

Because Henry Stanton and Elizabeth Cady had recently married, Elizabeth accompanied her husband to London as part of their “honeymoon.” At the London world anti-slavery convention, the seven female delegates from the United States could not be seated as delegates simply because they were females. Elizabeth Cady Stanton meets Lucretia Mott in the visitors’ gallery and they talk. They vow they will call a meeting to talk about that problem—the inferior status of women—when they get settled-in back in the United States. It won’t happen, however, until the famous ladies’ tea on July 9, 1848.

Another important factor in the link between anti-slavery activism and the woman’s rights movement is the acquiring of important leadership skills. Anti-slavery activism meant attending meetings—organizing, publicizing, preparing resolutions to be presented and conducting these meetings became important aspects of this. This meant the learning of important leadership skills that could be used in their own woman’s rights movement.

A last factor illustrating the link between anti-slavery activism and the woman’s rights movement is to talk specifically about another aspect of the ladies who met for tea at the home of Richard and Jane Hunt on July 9, 1848. All five of the ladies were abolitionists. All but Elizabeth Cady Stanton were Quakers—Quakers tended to believe in the equality of all. Elizabeth Cady Stanton was not born a Quaker, but she herself said that she was Quaker in her beliefs. Undoubtedly this meant her strong anti-slavery beliefs as well as how she will express it as woman’s rights.

There are also some other brief comments that need to be made about other aspects of the involvement of Seneca Falls and Waterloo people in various reform movements. First, there is the intriguing story of the so-called Tear Underground Railroad Route. Allegedly this operation was organized, funded and run exclusively by current and former Seneca Falls residents. Second, we have many anti-slavery petitions being signed by Waterloo residents and sent to Congress. Third, we have many Seneca Falls area residents intimately involved in the Free Soil Party and later the Republican Party. Amelia Jenks Bloomer started publishing *The Lily* as a temperance society newspaper in January 1849, but Mrs. Stanton seized upon the opportunity to use the publication as a voice for woman’s rights. Lastly, we have individuals such as Ansel Bascom, the first president of Seneca Falls, who was actively involved in a variety of reform movements.

All in all, it appears that there is a logical link between the economic growth of the Seneca Falls-Waterloo area of Seneca County and the reforming zeal of the Burned-Over District. The key points in this link appear to be as follows:

1. There was a great deal of industrial growth taking place in the Seneca Falls-Waterloo area in the Antebellum years.
2. People (both individuals and ethnic groups) are going to be drawn to the Seneca Falls-Waterloo area because of the potential economic gain.
3. The wealth being generated from the economic growth is creating a rather prosperous class that has the leisure time to be involved in the “hot issues” of the day. These people also have relatives and friends living elsewhere who are in many cases actively involved in these hot issues.
4. Seneca Falls and Waterloo are at the eastern end of the so-called Burned-Over District of Western New York during the Second Great Awakening. Out of this Burned-Over

District revivalism will come a strong religious and moral fervor that will spread over into other areas and crusades—such as anti-slavery and temperance. Significantly, many women will be involved. In this Burned-Over District of Western New York will arise new religions, such as the Mormon Church, and various political parties, such as the Liberty Party, the Free Soil Party and perhaps even the Republican Party.

5. There is an interesting inter-twining of the anti-slavery reform movement and other reform movements. This includes the continued interactions of various relatives and close friends.

This is a very important part of the history of Seneca County. Perhaps it was the County's "Golden Age."

[This article was written by Walter Gable, the Seneca County Historian, on May 4, 2005. The article is an outgrowth of a talk he was asked to give to the Seneca Falls Rotary Club on January 11, 2005.]

## Nature of the Burned-Over District

In 1800 only about 10% of the nation's population were church members. Between 1825 and 1835 at least 1343 "revivals" take place in New York State as part of the so-called Second Great Awakening of the 1820s and 1830s. A key preacher in New York State was the Rev. Charles Grandison Finney. He broke with the traditional Calvinist doctrine (such as predestination) and stressed that humans have free will and can choose for God.

In the Second Great Awakening, the three largest denominations were the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians. Methodism became especially popular among the common folk because of its simplified doctrines, spiritual preaching and emphasis on personal religious experiences. Methodist membership also grew greatly because it had an efficient organization.

This Burned-Over District or North Star Country spawned many important reforming movements. In terms of religion, there were the brand-new denominations such as Mormonism. Because of the intense belief that evil needed to be weeded out wherever it existed, there came such reforms as abolitionism, women's rights, dress reform, education reform, peace advocates, asylum builders, the Millerites, etc.

A split came in the Methodist church over the issue of slavery. For many years the Methodist elders had tried to suppress northern abolitionist preachers because the elders wanted to ensure the continued success of the Methodist church as a nation-wide church movement and organization. At the 1840 General Conference, the formal split occurred in the Methodist church. On May 31, 1843, the Wesleyan Methodist Church was organized at Utica. It was the first specifically abolitionist denomination in the U.S. We experienced that split in Methodism here in Seneca Falls. A similar split happened in the Presbyterian church over the issue of slavery. The Congregationalists and the Baptists don't have an ecclesiastical hierarchy so local churches could join in on the abolitionist crusade if they so wished without having to worry about interference from higher authorities.

In the mid-1840's we have the highwater of anti-slavery church secession in the North Star Country. There were 317 comeouter congregations in NYS by 1845. Of the 781 towns in upper New York, 261 had at least 1 abolition church or a significant element of church-based abolitionism. Interestingly these abolitionist churches were clustered along an axis formed by the Erie Canal.

There had been a split within the abolitionist movement. While all abolitions were coming around to favoring the immediate emancipation of all slaves, there was disagreement about the use of the political process to achieve that goal. William Lloyd Garrison and his Boston colleagues had opposed the idea of forming an anti-slavery political party. Many abolitionists in the Burned-Over District, however, were willing to form a political party based on the single issue of doing away with slavery. This became a reality with the formation of the Liberty Party in Warsaw, NY in November 1839. They nominate James G. Birney as the Liberty Party candidate for President in the 1840 presidential election. He was the ideal candidate for this Liberty Party, for he was a reformed slaveholder (from Kentucky) whose conversion to

immediatism epitomized the redemptive power of evangelism. I mention this because once again we see a clear example of the activist moralistic anti-evil fervor coming out of the Second Great Awakening in the Burned-Over District.

[This article was written by Walter Gable, the Seneca County Historian, in January 2005.]

## **Reforming Spirit in the Burned-Over District**

### **A. Events**

1836—Geneva’s Colored Anti-Slavery Society established  
Nov. 1839—establishment of the Liberty Party in Warsaw  
1842—establishment of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Society  
July 1848—first women’s rights convention held in Seneca Falls  
Aug. 1848—Free Soil Party organized in Buffalo  
October 1, 1851—the Jerry Rescue in Syracuse  
1852—Women’s State Temperance Convention organized in Rochester

### **B. Quotes**

#### **Marjory Allen Perez (historian) on the nature of Seneca Falls and Waterloo in the mid-1800s**

“The villages of Seneca Falls and Waterloo sit side-by-side at a critical axis of east-west and south-north travel patterns. In the mid 1800s these communities were fertile breeding grounds for the social reform movements of the day, especially women’s rights....”

#### **Milton Sernett (historian) characterization of the North Star and the North Star Country (“burned-over district”)**

- “In its most literal sense, the North Star was the astronomical reference point used by freedom-seekers on the Underground Railroad. But the North Star was also emblematic of the struggle itself, a moral enterprise which began in the wake of Upstate New York’s evangelical awakening during the 1820s and did not cease until passing away of the abolitionist generation during the 1870s.”
- “For those in the Burned-Over District who had pledged to seek good and shun evil, it was a small step from thinking in terms of individual regeneration to concluding that there needed to be a national conversion on the question of slavery.”

## The Link Between Quakers and Abolitionism in Seneca County

There appears to be a very strong link between Quakers and abolitionist activity in Seneca County. Because of the basic Quaker belief in equality of people, it is not surprising that many Quakers became abolitionists in the years leading up to the Civil War.

The Society of Friends is a Protestant sect that originated in seventeenth-century England by the lay preacher George Fox. He proclaimed that divine revelation could be experienced directly by the individual without the intervention of church or clergy. Fox spoke of knowing “Christ within” and of an “inner light.” Because of persecutions in England, many Quakers settled in the colonies of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. Committed to personal salvation and justice, the Quakers tried to relate to Native Americans as friends, advocated prison reform and improved care for the mentally ill, and vigorously protested against slavery. They believed that slaveholding contradicted their belief in spiritual equality. Philadelphia Quakers organized the nation’s first abolitionist or anti-slavery society in 1787. By 1790, not a single Quaker owned slaves. Between 1790 and 1860, no voice spoke louder in England and the United States for the peaceful abolition of slavery than the Quaker voice. No group of people worked harder to end slavery by organizing abolitionist societies, supporting antislavery newspapers and speakers, and aiding escaped slaves.<sup>1</sup>

Within Seneca County, especially in the Waterloo area, there were numerous Quakers in the 1840s and 1850s. Their movement into this Upstate New York area had been extensively motivated by the great economic opportunities of this area and the reform activism of this area that was an outgrowth of the Second Great Awakening. Much social, political and economic change was occurring in Upstate New York and this contributed directly to tensions within the Society of Friends. By 1828, Quakers had separated into Hicksite and Orthodox branches. The Orthodox Quakers adhered to a literal reading of the Bible while the Hicksite Quakers championed the Inner Light and an individual relationship with God.<sup>2</sup> Most Quakers in the Waterloo area belonged to the Hicksite branch and met in the Junius Monthly Meeting, northwest of the village of Waterloo. Quakers from western New York, Canada, and Michigan gathered at a larger Yearly Meeting in Farmington, New York. In the summer of 1848, another break occurred within the Hicksite Quakers. Approximately two hundred Hicksites separated and formed an even more radical offshoot of Quakers, known as the Yearly Meeting of Congregational Friends, or Progressive Friends.<sup>3</sup> These Progressive Friends were especially committed to abolitionist causes.

Historians note that African American settlements in the North were often located close to Quaker communities. Reasons for this include that Quakers established schools for blacks, supported orphanages, and set up safe houses for freedom seekers migrating to the North and to Canada.<sup>4</sup> This is clearly illustrated in Waterloo, where census data showed there were 63 African Americans living in 1850. There were two prominent Quaker families in Waterloo that could provide assistance to these African Americans living in Waterloo as well as aiding freedom seekers. These two Quaker families were the Richard and Jane Hunt family and the Thomas and Mary Ann M’Clintock family.

Richard Hunt had moved to Waterloo in 1821. He made his wealth through a combination of real estate investments, manufacturing, and agriculture. By 1852, he had

purchased 140 village residential and commercial lots and 990 acres of farmland. His third wife was Jane C. Master, a Quaker from Philadelphia, who had developed a working relationship and friendship with Lucretia Mott, the renowned Quaker speaker and reformer. Both Hunts were active members of the Junius Monthly Meeting. The Hunts were involved in abolitionist activities. They contributed \$100 to the chapel construction fund of the abolition-minded Wesleyan Methodist congregation of Seneca Falls. There are strong oral traditions that the Hunts made the carriage house available to fugitive slaves in need of lodging. They donated wool cloth, manufactured in the Waterloo Woolen Mill, to radical abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison for a suit of clothes to wear at the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. It was at their house on July 9, 1848, that Jane Hunt hosted four ladies—Lucretia Mott, Martha Coffin Wright, Mary Ann M’Clintock, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton—for a tea at which the decision was made to hold the first Women’s Rights Convention.<sup>5</sup>

In 1836, Mary Ann and Thomas M’Clintock left Philadelphia where they had been active members of the Philadelphia Quaker community and moved to Waterloo. They joined other Hicksite Quakers in the Junius Monthly Meeting. Thomas opened a drugstore and bookstore. In 1839, they moved their store to Richard Hunt’s new commercial building on Main Street. They rented a home owned by Richard Hunt that was near the store. They advertised in the newspaper that no merchandise produced by slave labor was sold in the store. They used the store as a setting to obtain signatures on many anti-slavery petitions they sent to Congress. Only one Upstate New York community sent more antislavery petitions to Congress than did Waterloo. The M’Clintocks used their home to plan antislavery fund-raising fairs and draft public documents of social and religious importance. Many well-known reformers including Frederick Douglass, Abby Kelley, William Lloyd Garrison, and Lucretia Mott passed through the M’Clintocks’ home. It was in the parlor of their home that Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Mary Ann M’Clintock and daughter Elizabeth worked on finalizing the draft Declaration of Sentiments and resolutions to be presented to the First Women’s Rights Convention. There is some speculation that they might have actually harbored freedom seekers in their home, but no documentation of this has been found. Mary Ann M’Clintock had been a founding member of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Both Thomas and Mary Ann M’Clintock were founding members of the Western New York Anti-Slavery Association in 1842.<sup>6</sup>

There are likely other links between Quakers and abolitionist activity in Seneca County. There are many oral traditions of Quakers using their homes as safe houses for freedom seekers. This is especially true in the more southern parts of the county, and appears to be linked with the numerous Quaker safe houses in the Perry City area. The historic marker for the Ferry Farm on Lower Lake Road in Seneca Falls makes explicit reference to the oral tradition that freedom seekers were brought by ferry from the Quaker activists in Union Springs. These strong oral traditions have not as yet been documented.

Clearly not all abolitionist activity in Seneca County was undertaken by Quakers. Nevertheless, the Quaker activism played a very key role, something that we only recently beginning to describe fully.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/scripts/jimcrow/glossary.cgl?term=q&letter=yes>

<sup>2</sup> “Antebellum America: An Introduction to Reforming Family,” *Reforming Family: The Hunts and M’Clintocks of Waterloo, New York*, Women’s Rights National Historical Park, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Women’s Rights National Historical Park sheet

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/scripts/jimcrow/glossary.cgi?term=q&letter=yes>

<sup>5</sup> “Antebellum America: An Introduction to Reforming Family,” *Reforming Family: The Hunts and M’Clintocks of Waterloo, New York*, Women’s Rights National Historical Park, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> “Antebellum America: An Introduction to Reforming Family,” *Reforming Family: The Hunts and M’Clintocks of Waterloo, New York*, Women’s Rights National Historical Park, 2001.