

Key Developments

Transportation--Seneca Falls community is going to be a primary beneficiary of some very key transportation developments:

- 1789—first ferry across Cayuga Lake
- 1791—Genesee Road
- 1800—Cayuga Lake Bridge
- 1818—Cayuga and Seneca Canal
- 1828—Cayuga and Seneca Canal linked with Erie Canal
- 1841—first railroad through Seneca Falls and Waterloo

Until about 1853 all trains going west from Albany to Buffalo went through Seneca Falls. Seneca Falls was the “gateway to the West.”

Industry in Seneca Falls--The waterfalls of Seneca Falls are going to be used as a source of waterpower for various major industries to emerge in The Flats:

- 1795—first sawmill in the Flats area
- 1824—Downs & Co. takes over a fulling mill for manufacturing purposes
- 1830—first knitting mill
- 1840—Abel Downs starts making pumps in SF
- 1844—Seneca Woolen Mill
- 1849—first hand-held fire engine made in SF
- 1855—first rotary steam fire engine

Reform Efforts--Seneca Falls is easily caught up in the “hot issues” of the day:

- People (both individuals and ethnic groups) are going to be drawn to Seneca Falls because of the potential economic gain.
- The industrial trade leads to an exchange of ideas. These include anti-slavery efforts.
- 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.
- Seneca Falls is the eastern part of the so-called “burned-over district” of Western New York during the Second Great Awakening. Out of this, a strong religious and moral fervor 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 commonly-called Mormon Church, and various political parties, such as the Liberty Party, the Free Soil Party and perhaps even the Republican Party.
- There is an interesting inter-twining of the anti-slavery reform movement and other reform movements:
 1. some interesting sets of relatives:
 - Elizabeth Cady Stanton is the cousin of the abolitionist Gerrit Smith
 - Elizabeth Smith Miller, the advocate of women’s dress reform (i.e., “bloomers”) is the daughter of Gerrit Smith, and therefore, she is a cousin of Elizabeth Cady Stanton
 - Martha Coffin Wright is the sister of Lucretia Wright
 - Susan B. Anthony is the cousin of Amelia Jenks Bloomer
 2. A strong case can be made that the women’s rights movement is an outgrowth of the anti-slavery movement.
 - Through their involvement in the anti-slavery movement, several women learned important leadership skills they could use in their own women’s rights movement.
 - Through their involvement in the anti-slavery movement, several women had a heightened consciousness of their inferior status as women.
 - A key example of this, Lucretia Mott had been chosen as delegates from the American Anti-Slavery Society to the world anti-slavery convention in London in 1840. Elizabeth Cady Stanton while on her honeymoon with her husband Henry who was a delegate. When they got to London, however, the seven female delegates from the U.S. were not seated as delegates simply because they were females. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott vow they will call a meeting to talk about that problem when they get settled in back in the U.S. (It won’t happen, however, until July 1848.)

