

Some Interesting Facts About Seneca County

1. A total of 1,328 men in Seneca County registered to serve in the Civil War. Of these, 276 died in service. In World War I, about 2,200 men between 18 and 35 registered for the draft. In World War II, the first name drawn in Washington, DC for the draft was that of James Bachman of Fayette.
2. In 1870, John E. Seeley of Ovid was elected to Congress from the 24th District by a majority of 3,200. The district was comprised of Seneca, Cayuga and Wayne counties. He lost in Seneca County.
3. In 1898, Ovid with a population of 900 had all-night street lighting. Seneca Falls with a population of 6,253 turned the lights out every night at 12:30 a.m.
4. On September 6, 1944, the Board of Supervisors took the welfare administration out of the hands of the town officials and assumed the responsibility of caring for the poor.
5. In 1915, there were 1,097 motor vehicles registered in Seneca County. In 1980, the county issued 24,033 plates which included over 5,000 trucks and 795 motorcycles.
6. In 1904 over 60,000 people traveled on the steamer on Cayuga Lake during the summer. On July 26, 1907, the steamer Frontenac burned and eight people died. Shortly after, travel by steamer was abandoned.
7. In 1907, about 15,000 tons of ice were cut from Cayuga Lake and shipped to New York City by freight cars. In 1919, an iceless winter forced all markets in the county to close.
8. Probably the biggest fiasco ever perpetrated on Seneca County, at least on some of the towns, was the plan to build a railroad from Sodus Bay to Ithaca. Seneca Falls was the first town in the county to bond for the proposed Waverly to Sodus Bay Railroad. With only about \$800,000 worth of taxable property, 400 taxpayers of Seneca Falls signed to bond the town for \$200,000. The proposal was authorized by the town on May 13, 1870. In quick succession, the town of Ovid bonded for \$60,000; Covert for \$50,000 and Waterloo, although the railroad would not run through the town, bonded for \$160,000. Not one foot of railroad track was ever laid. Seneca Falls made its final payment on its bond in 1925.