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## **Making Memories: Location-based Learning on the Erie Canal at a National Historical Park**

Katherine C. Hensel  
khc5358@rit.edu

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THE ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

MAKING MEMORIES: LOCATION-BASED LEARNING ON THE ERIE CANAL AT A  
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

A THESIS SUBMITTED  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE  
IN MUSEUM STUDIES

DEPARTMENTS OF PERFORMING ARTS AND VISUAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

BY

KATHERINE C. HENSEL

MAY 2019

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of Katherine Hensel submitted on April 25, 2019.

*Tamar Carroll*

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Tamar Carroll, Ph.D.  
Primary Advisor

*Denise DeLucia*

---

Denise DeLucia, M.S.  
Secondary Advisor

*Tina Lent*

---

Tina Lent, Ph.D.  
MUSE Program Director

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**Abstract:**

Onsite educational programming at National Parks provides groups with a unique opportunity to interact with history and science. How can Women's Rights National Historical Park be used to create an onsite educational tour and program that will deliver a memorable experience for their visitors? I conducted research on the history and anthropological consequences of the Erie Canal for an onsite program that will be implemented by the National Park Service. An example interpretive tour route is included that examines the significance of the Erie Canal for the movement of people, the local economy, the movement of ideas and religion, and human rights activism of Seneca Falls, New York, and the United States. Onsite programming gives families and school-groups opportunities to engage with ideas in new ways and create memory-making learning opportunities.

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## Introduction

The memories I have made at National Park Service (NPS) sites will stay with me for the rest of my life. They have informed the way I see the world and myself. These sites have given me opportunities to connect with nature and history. These connections helped develop a deeper interest in these topics and laid the foundation for future learning. Parks provide opportunities for families and groups to share experiences and make memories together. These memories made by children of the park service could encourage a future civic support for it and result in continued visits for the rest of their lives. By developing an experiential tour that builds on what visitors know and introducing them to new information, I use constructivist educational theory. This uses discovery through doing to further knowledge of the world around us.<sup>1</sup> Having a location-based learning opportunity at Women's Rights National Historical Park (NHP) that examines the impact of the Erie Canal on the local and national level provides a memory-making experience that will enhance visitor's knowledge of history that they can connect to past and future insights.

The NPS mission reads:

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> George E. Hein, "The Constructivist Museum," in *Reinventing the Museum: The Evolving Conversation on the Paradigm Shift*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Gail Anderson (Plymouth, UK: AltaMir Press, 2012), 126.

<sup>2</sup> "About Us," National Park Service, March 14, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/index.htm>.

The NPS was formed in 1916 with the Organic Act,<sup>3</sup> though the concept of National Parks predates the agency's creation. It is part of the Department of the Interior and employs more than 20,000 people and had over 315,000 volunteers in 2017.<sup>4</sup> The agency serves more than 330 million visitors annually. Four-hundred and nineteen areas are part of the system that covers over eighty-five million acres in states, the District of Columbia, and territories. These include national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and the White House. While many primarily envision the NPS as preserving natural resources and spectacular landscapes, more than two-thirds of all sites are related to historic and cultural interpretation.<sup>5</sup> In New York State there are thirty-five NPS areas, including a National Historical Park in Seneca Falls.<sup>6</sup>

Women's Rights NHP was established to "preserve and interpret for the education, inspiration and benefit of present and future generations, the nationally significant historical and cultural sites and structures associated with the struggle for equal rights for women and to cooperate with State and local entities to preserve the character and historic setting of such sites and structures."<sup>7</sup> It is a site to remember and celebrate the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and

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<sup>3</sup> "Quick History of the National Park Service," National Park Service, May 14, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/quick-nps-history.htm>. The Organic Act was signed on August 25, 1916 by President Woodrow Wilson in order to create the National Park Service. The new bureau was made part of the Department of the Interior and states "the Service thus established shall promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments and reservations...by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purpose of the said parks, monuments and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

<sup>4</sup> "About Us."

<sup>5</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant, Marla R. Miller, Gary B. Nash, and David Thelen. "Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service." Organization of American Historians, 2011. <https://www.oah.org/programs/the-oah-national-park-service-collaboration/imperiled-promise-the-state-of-history-in-the-national-park-service/>, 11

<sup>6</sup> "New York," National Park Service, accessed April 1, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/state/ny/index.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> "History & Culture," National Park Service - Women's Rights National Historical Park, February 7, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/index.htm>.



the human rights activists who worked tirelessly to expand the rights of those who lived in the United States. This Historical Park highlights the achievements of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her colleagues who combatted slavery, fought for suffrage, and championed human rights. The Park also resides near the Erie Canal, a critical facet of New York and national history.

The town of Seneca Falls is in Seneca County in western and central New York in the Finger Lakes region. Neighboring towns include Cayuga, Geneva, and Waterloo. Today Seneca Falls has a population of about 9,000.<sup>8</sup> The Seneca River began to have white settlers in the late eighteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The Town of Seneca Falls was organized on March 26, 1829 when the Town of Junius was split. Seneca Falls is about seventy miles east of the city of Rochester, another critical city in the history of suffrage and activism on the Erie Canal.

Seneca Falls resides between the northern sections of Seneca and Cayuga Lakes on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. The Cayuga-Seneca Canal connects to the Erie Canal and this connection was a major source of economic prosperity during the nineteenth century. In addition to the economic interests of the Erie Canal and the Cayuga-Seneca canal, these canals brought people and their ideas to new regions of the state.

This paper will begin with a literature review of the importance of location-based learning on the retention of material, its effect on critical thinking, and the effect on interpersonal interaction by examining a few case studies. Following that, a section will be dedicated to examining the challenges and goals of the NPS. I will conclude with the interpretive tour that I developed.

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<sup>8</sup> "Seneca Falls Town, Seneca County, New York," American FactFinder, accessed April 1, 2019, [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community\\_facts.xhtml](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml).

<sup>9</sup> "Historic Seneca Falls, NY," Seneca Falls, NY - Historic Gateway to the Finger Lakes, accessed April 2, 2019, <http://www.senecafalls.com/history.php>.

## Location-Based Learning

There has been a long-standing tradition of field trips to supplement and enhance student understanding of classroom material. The influence of location alone may have significant impact on how students learn. Scientists Heike Sturm and Franz X. Bogner have looked at how just changing the setting can impact the ability to learn and retain new information.<sup>10</sup> They made station-style educational experiences related to understanding how birds live and function. They then took these workstations and tested them in a traditional classroom setting as well as at a room in a museum (not an exhibit space) with Bavarian school children. The average age of the students was twelve and half years. The activities the students participated in were exactly same, the only change was location. A pre, post, and retention-test were given to the students to assess their knowledge. The purpose of the pre-test was to determine the starting knowledge of the students and to ensure the students had a similar starting point. The post-tests were given immediately after the workshop ended, while the retention-test was given six weeks following the workshop.

They found that students working in the museum scored significantly higher than the classroom students on both the immediate post exam as well as on the retention exam. Being in the museum space may have contributed to the student's higher scores. There are multiple reasons that may have led to this. First, being in a new location can be exciting for students and they may have been more engaged with the material than the classroom-based students. Secondly, while both museum and classroom students were engaged in social hands-on learning,

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<sup>10</sup> Sturm, Heike, and Franz X. Bogner. "Learning at Workstations in Two Different Environments: A Museum and a Classroom." *Studies in Educational Evaluation* 36, no. 1 (March 1, 2010): 14–19.

the museum space may have encouraged students to act more informally and work together more.

Another museum-based learning opportunity that looked at class groups occurred at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Northwest Arkansas.<sup>11</sup> Here researchers worked in conjunction with the museum to provide a free tour experience onsite at the museum. As the museum was able to cover all the expenses of the field trip, there were many K-12 schools interested in the opportunity and a lottery system was used to determine which schools would send class groups. Among the selected applicants, two schools were paired based on demographic characteristics, including grade level. One school was randomly selected and sent test groups while the other had their tours deferred until after the study and served as the control. One hundred and twenty-three different schools partook, and surveys were sent to 10,912 students and 489 teachers.<sup>12</sup>

The tour was one hour long and usually focused on five paintings. Some student groups followed the tour with a self-guided experience. The tour followed current standards of art education in museums and was a student inquiry-led experience with museum staff as information facilitators. The results of the tour showed an increase in retention of information, critical thinking, historical empathy, tolerance, and interest in art museums. It showed 88% of students who viewed the Eastman Johnson painting “At the Camp--Spinning Yarns and Whittling,” 82% who viewed Norman Rockwell's “Rosie the Riveter,” 79% who viewed Thomas

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<sup>11</sup> Jay P. Greene, Brian Kisida, and Daniel H. Bowen. “The Educational Value of Field Trips.” *Education Next; Cambridge* 14, no. 1 (Winter 2014).

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1471028763/abstract/1393DCF3E80648F9PQ/1>.

<sup>12</sup> Greene, Kisida, and Bowen, “The Educational Value of Field Trips,” Surveys were sent on average three weeks after the visit, however some schools received it after eight weeks. Groups surveyed later showed no evidence of the results being impacted by the different timeframe.

Hart Benton's "Ploughing It Under," and 70% who saw Romare Bearden's "Sacrifice" were able to recall the painting, details within the work, and the significance of what the art related to. The research team also looked at the interest level in art museums within the test and control groups and found families of the test group were 18% more likely to return to the museum. The benefits for students in attending this school field trip at the art museum showed a marked increase in critical thinking, interest in museums, and other metrics, especially for rural and disenfranchised students.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, the tours made an impression on the students.

Another team of researchers looked at how tools can facilitate scientific learning on nature walks within family units. Heather Toomey Zimmerman, Lucy Richardson McClain, and Michele Crow examined the use of magnifiers in facilitating scientific learning and meaning-making.<sup>14</sup> Twenty-eight families participated in and seven families (twenty-four people) were the focus of an informal learning setting at Shaver's Creek Environmental Center in Pennsylvania. The purpose was to see how interpersonal-interactions were affected by the introduction of a tool, in this case magnifiers like binoculars, hand lenses, or bug boxes. Families were observed on outdoor nature walk programs in varying in lengths from forty-five minutes to two hours.

After data collection the researchers performed a taxonomical and thematic analysis. The taxonomical analysis categorized how the families used the magnifiers by "Identifying,"

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<sup>13</sup> Greene, Kisida, and Bowen, "The Educational Value of Field Trips." Following the tour visits both the treatment groups and the control groups of third through twelfth graders were exposed to a painting they had not seen previously. The groups were then asked to write an essay that was blindly scored for critical thinking using a seven-item rubric. Overall the treatment group scored 9% better than the control group in their essays. High-poverty schools and minority students both experienced an 18% increase. Even more dramatic, rural students increased critical thinking skills by 33%. Students who attended the tour were more observant and described the painting at a greater level of detail. The treatment group had an overall 8% of the standard deviation rise over the control group. Minority students gained 10% of the standard deviation, high-poverty schools rose by 11% of the standard deviation, and rural schools increased by 22% of the standard deviation.

<sup>14</sup> Heather Toomey Zimmerman, Lucy Richardson McClain, and Michele Crowl. "Understanding How Families Use Magnifiers During Nature Center Walks." *Research in Science Education* 43, no. 5 (October 1, 2013): 1917–38.

“Describing,” and “Interpreting and applying” based on a 1997 paper “Enhancing family learning through exhibits.” These categories were created to analyze the progression of learning and were used to discover patterns of behavior with the families. A thematic analysis was then performed to understand how families used the magnifiers and participated together. This was done by defining the roles family members took; that of “tool suggester,” teacher, and exploration ender.<sup>15</sup>

The researchers found 53% of magnifier use was used for scientific discovery. Of the cases where an object was identified, 75% of the time (41% of all cases) the family described the object. Most of the free-form non-scientific exploration was near the start of the program and was due to their need to become comfortable with the magnifiers. This shows the importance of including unscripted time for families to become familiar with new materials. These moments of play likely laid the foundation before scientific talk could occur. The most scientific talk occurred in the middle of the program. A similar effect to museum fatigue likely contributed to less near the end. This study points to the importance of allowing buffer time at the beginning and end of programs for visitors and families to have more freeform exploration.

None of the seven families in this study explicitly connected an object to something the children were learning in school. All connections related to out-of-school experience shared by the family. This indicates the importance of shared experiences and memory-making within the family unit. The longest periods of interpreting and applying occurred when different families interacted and were related to one family sharing an unexpected discovery. Understanding how

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<sup>15</sup> Heather Toomey Zimmerman, Lucy Richardson McClain, and Michele Crowl, “Understanding How Families Use Magnifiers During Nature Center Walks,” 1924. Tool suggester was most frequently a parent or older sibling. Parents were also most likely to assume the teacher role, but child-child interactions were observed. Exploration ender occurred when frustration with a magnifier tool was detracting from the families’ experience.

family members can adopt roles to within inter- and intra-family interactions helps design programming that promotes interactions between visitors.

Each of these studies show the importance of location-based learning in making memories and developing skills. The bird workshops and Crystal Bridges both showed an increase in retention of lesson material. Crystal Bridges recorded a rise in critical thinking ability and interest in museums in those who toured. Zimmerman's team showed how family units interact on nature walks and how the participation level varies throughout the walk. I will apply these insights to thinking about solving challenges faced by the NPS.

## Challenges Faced by the National Park System

Due to limited resources and procedural bureaucracy, change is slow in the NPS. Resource limitations also slow the development of new programs. One way of combating these issues is by creating a collaborative environment within the NPS. By bringing in educators from the community, universities, and schools the Park Service can expand its reach to a larger demographic, broaden its interpretive material, create more place-based learning opportunities for the community, and become a larger part of the "cycle of education." In 2011 the Organization of American Historians (OAH) released "Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service." The purpose of this report was to look at how history was being researched and interpreted by the NPS. The report detailed strengths and examples of best practices by specific parks and groups and where the NPS needed to improve. The study was done through a variety of methods.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., "Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service" (Organization of American Historians, 2011), 5, <https://www.oah.org/programs/the-oah-national-park-service->

The report has twelve key actions it recommends as “promises to keep.” Of these it includes:

Emphasize connections of parks with the larger histories beyond their boundaries; Highlight the effects of human activity on “natural” areas; Envision “doing history” as a means of skills development for civic participation; Share authority with and take knowledge from the public; Better connect with the rest of the history profession and embrace interdisciplinary collaboration.<sup>17</sup>

Additionally, the report emphasizes five bulleted findings and recommendations. These discuss the shifting financial situation of an administration that underfunds historical work in order to fund other concerns like law enforcement and natural resources. It also critiques the artificial separation between interpretation and resource management, and the divide of historic and cultural interpretation from natural resource interpretation. Another point is the reliance on fixed or established interpretation over the more complex view of ever-changing perspectives, discovery, and concerns as history is explored.

Following the report’s introduction and general overview it turns to its second part “Lamps along the Path: What’s Going Well with History in the National Park Service” that highlights the achievements of fourteen projects. One highlight is the interdisciplinary partnership at the Cape Cod National Seashore with the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation.<sup>18</sup> Following tensions between the Cape Cod National Seashore and the local community over development in and around the national seashore, the NPS reached out to researchers from the Landscape and Architecture and Regional Planning Department and the

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collaboration/imperiled-promise-the-state-of-history-in-the-national-park-service/. The focus was a survey the OAH sent to 1,500 permanent NPS staff who deal with history, of that 544 responded. The OAH also reached out to current and retired NPS historians and administrators for advice and input. External groups including stakeholders and universities were also able to provide their perspective on history in the NPS. Researchers visited dozens of parks and met with the National Council on Public History and the National Association for Interpretation.

<sup>17</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., “Imperiled Promise,” 6.

<sup>18</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., “Imperiled Promise,” 38, 39.

Public History Program based out of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Several faculty and graduate students created a “landscape character study” and held community meetings that residents could participate in and have their voice heard. This collaboration brought in perspectives and facilitated cooperation in developing a landscape preservation plan from those who were not involved when solely run by the NPS.

Another example of collaboration with universities occurred at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Here the NPS partnered with Portland State University (PSU). The PSU Public History Field School provides hands on immersion for graduate students at the NPS site. This allowed students and future public historians an opportunity to learn through practical experiences and on-site instruction while the NPS benefitted from higher education resources and introduction of new ideas from the students.<sup>19</sup> A third highlight was achieving balance between telling a national story and a local story at NPS sites.<sup>20</sup>

San Antonio Missions NHP regularly saw visitors who were there to celebrate their personal heritage as descendants of family members who served in the Civilian Conservation Corps restoration project at the missions. However, due to legislation, interpretation had emphasized eighteenth-century Franciscan missionary experience. San Antonio Missions NHP recognized the importance of the local story and collected photographs from members of local parishes to tell this history and further developed a bond between the park and the community. One survey respondent stated “to truly be successful, a park must be able to tell a story on a local, regional, and national level. While the “big picture” helps explain the significance of a

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<sup>19</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., “Imperiled Promise,” 46, 47.

<sup>20</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., “Imperiled Promise,” 40.



park, it is the local history that best makes that story believable and understandable to park visitors.”<sup>21</sup>

The third section of the report discusses how the entire NPS system can change in order to practice more successful historical research and interpretation. It points to the divide between those who research and those who interpret, issues of historians being disconnected from one another, the distribution of where historians are in the service, the need for more and better ongoing training in the service, and the controversy over the need for professional historians versus a Carl Becker’s “everyman” as a historian perspective. The report also discusses the importance of having more historians of color in and out of the NPS, altering hiring practices to bring more historians from outside the NPS, and inadequate resources in both funding and staffing historians.<sup>22</sup>

The report also points to the importance of partnerships with external groups. The NPS has an ongoing history of partnering with outside groups in order to raise money, get volunteers, bring in new ideas, run programs, and support running the park system in other ways as well. “Friends” groups provide funding and volunteers to accomplish goals of the park and improve experience for visitors. Outside of the financial and interpretive benefits to the NPS, these partnerships also provide an opportunity for parks to interact with their communities.<sup>23</sup>

University partnerships have significant benefits for the NPS. More historic work is being done through these partnerships by having faculty historians and their students aid in research and interpretation. Students gain valuable experience and may develop an interest in pursuing a career in the NPS. However, there are cost and challenges in collaborating with other

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<sup>21</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., “Imperiled Promise,” 40.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., “Imperiled Promise,” 54–82.

<sup>23</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., “Imperiled Promise,” 83–86.

organizations as well. Outside calendars and timetables impact collaborative efforts. Compromise is always present in collaboration, and tension can often arise from compromise. Concerns about ethical standards being maintained and concern over privatizing parks when working with private sector organizations are occasionally raised.<sup>24</sup> Quality partnerships require understanding and flexibility, but it can be well worth the effort. Women's Rights NHP has partnered with me, a Rochester Institute of Technology Museum Studies senior, to offer research and create an interpretive tour examining the role of the Erie Canal on social reform in Seneca Falls, New York.

## A Brief History of the Erie Canal

The Erie Canal's history started long before the first shovel broke earth. In 1724 Cadwallader Colden, a scientist and politician, began calling for a waterway to cross New York state.<sup>25</sup> At the time, as New York Province's Surveyor-General, he saw the creation of a waterborne passage as an excellent way to connect the state to the fur-trade.<sup>26</sup> A canal would be less sensitive to changes in the weather and much easier to navigate than the natural waterways. However, due to lack of public interest, no work was done to create a canal. Seventy years later, Elkanah Watson revived a plan for a canal that utilized existing waterways. Watson's plan was rejected, but it fueled enough interest with Gouverneur Morris, a diplomat and Founding Father, and the general public to start planning a Lake Erie route. Unfortunately, with the start of the War of 1812, these plans were put aside. Then DeWitt Clinton, who had previously served as

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<sup>24</sup> Anne Mitchell Whisnant et al., "Imperiled Promise," 84, 85.

<sup>25</sup> Roberts, Sam. "200 Years Ago, Erie Canal Got Its Start as Just a 'Ditch.'" *The New York Times*, December 22, 2017, sec. New York. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/26/nyregion/history-of-the-erie-canal.html>, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Maurizi, Dennis. "Erie Canal." *New York State Conservationist*, February 2003, 3.

state governor, New York City Mayor, and was a former canal commissioner revitalized the idea for his 1817 campaign. Clinton ran for New York's Governor on a platform in part advocating for the construction of the canal. While there was support for the canal, there were plenty who opposed its construction as well. Many were skeptical of the United States' ability to create a canal twice the length of any other in the world. Some even took to referring to it as "Clinton's Ditch." However, Clinton was elected and three days after his inauguration work on the canal began. On July 4, 1817, construction began in Rome, NY, where Judge John Richardson used a ceremonial spade and broke ground. The route the Erie Canal followed along the Mohawk River and west to Lake Erie was originally created by Jesse Hawley.<sup>27</sup>

The Erie Canal was completed in 1825 and on November 4 Governor DeWitt Clinton traveled from Buffalo to New York City and poured water from Lake Erie into New York Bay.<sup>28</sup> The canal is currently 363 miles long and rises 565 feet from the Hudson River to Lake Erie.<sup>29</sup> However, sections of the canal were completed and opened prior to 1825.<sup>30</sup> A section connecting Rome to Utica opened on July 4, 1820. These sections began to make money before the entire canal was completed. The impact of the canal was momentous. It took eight million dollars to construct but cut freight rates from Albany to Buffalo by eighty-five cents, significantly decreased transit times for goods and raw materials, earned over half a million dollars in tolls within the first year, and contributed to making New York City the commercial enterprise that it is today. Many counties along the canal nearly doubled in size between 1814 and 1825 and the

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<sup>27</sup> Roberts, "200 Years Ago, Erie Canal Got Its Start as Just a 'Ditch,'" 1, 5

<sup>28</sup> Jensen, Albert C. "Building the Erie Canal." *New York State Conservationist*, June 1996, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Maurizi, "Erie Canal," 7.

<sup>30</sup> Jensen, "Building the Erie Canal," 11.

population employed in commerce rose as much as 600% between 1820 and 1840.<sup>31</sup> Location-based learning through an interpretive tour can help participants appreciate the magnitude of the canal's influence on New York State's development and that of the nation.

## Tour Route

The impact of the construction of the Erie Canal played a monumental role in not only transforming the local economy, but the local spirit as well. The Erie Canal brought new people and new ideas to western and central New York. Seneca Falls is a wonderful place to see how small-town communities can band together to enact change on the national level. These central themes are explored throughout the tour.

The tour route begins and ends at Women's Rights NHP (Figure 2 in appendix). It looks at some of the historic homes of suffragist, abolitionists, temperance leaders, and other social activists. In addition to these homes, we visit a historic mill that will soon become the home of the National Women's Hall of Fame, a historic Trinity Episcopal Church, the historic site of the Presbyterian Church, and a Wesleyan Chapel. Nine sites are visited. The tour is approximately two miles long and takes about one hour. See Figure 1 in the appendix for an aerial view of the tour route. Most of the route is flat, however, there are a few sections, especially near the start, that includes less level walkways. Except for a short section on Canal Street, the tour follows sidewalks. The example tour created here was developed by mapping locations in the Village of Seneca Falls named in the Wellman and Warren report and then selecting a route that included as many sites as possible.

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<sup>31</sup> Justin Rowe, "Fleeing to Babylon: How the Erie Canal, Diffusion, and Social Structure Forever Changed American Calvinism," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 578–607,

## Seneca Knitting Mill

The first destination of the tour is the historic Seneca Knitting Mill (Figure 3 in appendix), or Seneca Woolen Mill, located between Canal Street and Seneca-Cayuga Canal. The structure is 110 feet by fifty feet and is five stories high. It was built in 1844 of gray limestone by Jacob B. Chamberlain and Charles Hoskins. In 1855 it became the Phoenix mills. Both Chamberlain and Hoskins were abolitionists and the mill likely used wool instead of cotton to avoid materials made by slaves. 200,000 pounds of wool were used in a year and was most likely purchased from local farmers. Monthly wages for workers were \$2000 a month.<sup>32</sup>

The Erie Canal greatly affected employment rates in counties the canal ran through. The number of people employed in commerce rose by 600% between 1820 and 1840 and the population nearly doubled between 1814 and 1825 in some of these regions.<sup>33</sup> What had been remote frontier had become booming industrial towns.

## Latham Houses

The Latham family were active abolitionists and women's rights activists. The family built buildings throughout central New York, and especially in Seneca Falls. The family was originally from Connecticut and moved to Paris, New York near Utica in the 1790s before moving to Seneca Falls in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Paris was a hub for

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<sup>32</sup> Judith Wellman and Tanya Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Seneca County, New York, 1820-1880" (Seneca County Historian's Office, 2006): 1-337, [https://www.co.seneca.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/discovering\\_ugrr-ADA.pdf](https://www.co.seneca.ny.us/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/discovering_ugrr-ADA.pdf), 216. This report's goal was to record the lives of African Americans in Seneca County, but it also includes prominent European Americans who were involved in human rights and temperance. The report also looked at sites of importance in Covert, Lodi, Ovid, Romulus, Fayette, Junius, Town of Seneca Falls, Town of Waterloo, and the Village of Waterloo. Additionally, there are a few biographical sections on different people of interest.

<sup>33</sup> Rowe, "Fleeing to Babylon," 594.

abolition and antislavery petitions. Obadiah and Lovina Latham brought this activist zeal to Seneca Falls with them. Obadiah subscribed to the *North Star* and the *Liberator* from at least 1849-1852.<sup>34</sup> The Latham's had eleven children, of which seven continued to live in Seneca Falls after their father's death. The children were Adelia M. Latham Riley, Benjamin F., Edward S., Hannah Janes, Esther Latham, William Harrison, Oliver Sandford, Mary E., Susan Lovina, Obadiah B., and Nathaniel J. The family was antislavery and opposed the Fugitive Slave Act and the addition of new slave states. Edward S, Oliver S., Obadiah B., William J, and Nathaniel J. all were active in organizing opposition to the slave trade in the District of Columbia among other antislavery petition efforts. They as well as Frederick B. were also listed supporters of the Free Soil Party.

All the sons became master builders and participated in the construction of government buildings, including the capitol building in Albany. There are two sites that were owned by the Latham family on the tour. The first one at 37 West Bayard Street (Figure 4 in appendix) was the homestead of Lovina and Obadiah Latham (married August 4, 1804), and it still stands. They arrived sometime during the 1820s after the Seneca-Cayuga Canal was completed. Obadiah Latham died in 1831 after which the children sold their shares of the house to Lovina in 1834. She continued to live here with her daughter Hannah who subscribed to the *North Star* in her own name.<sup>35</sup> They were likely residing there in the summer of 1848 when both Lovina and Hannah signed the Declaration of Sentiments. In 1850, eight-year-old Frances Webb joined Lovina and Hannah. Frances is thought to be the daughter of Mary Latham Webb (died December 1848), and granddaughter of Lovina. Both Lovina and Hannah Latham died in

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<sup>34</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 226

<sup>35</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 226.

January 1859. By 1860, Susan Lovina Latham Benham is listed as the head of household. The front porch of the house was added in 1910.

The house at 39 West Bayard Street, also referred to as 13 Center Street, was the home of Edward S. Latham and Susan Foster Latham. This house was removed to construct the village fire station (Figure 5 in appendix). Edward and Susan Latham were among the wealthiest and most influential temperance leaders in Seneca Falls, and later partnered with the Free Soil Party. Edward S. Latham became the Seneca-Cayuga Canal superintendent in 1843.<sup>36</sup>

The Lathams tell a story of multigenerational activism. Obadiah and Lovina instilled in their children a zeal for community and political involvement. They all were involved in local and national affairs. Additionally, their success in building and developing throughout the economic boom caused by the introduction of the Erie Canal and its neighboring canal ways led them to be important along the Seneca-Cayuga Canal and throughout New York State.

### Bascom House & Orchard

At 4 East Bayard Street is the former home of Ansel and Eliza Sherwood Bascom (Figure 6 in appendix). This house was built around 1828 and is one of the oldest in the village. The structure is a four-bay Federal house with a post-Civil War added central gable. Behind the house there was an apple orchard that the Bascom's used for community events. When abolitionist Abby Kelley visited in 1843, she was invited by the Bascoms to use the orchard as her meeting location.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 185-90.

<sup>37</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 136.

Ansel Bascom had a background in law, he became the towns first mayor in 1828, was very well known for his social and political reform work and is known to have initiated the development of South Village. Before moving to Seneca Falls, Ansel married Eliza Sherwood. The Bascoms were often at the center of reform movements within the village. During the early 1840s Eliza became involved in reform work in the temperance movement. She sewed temperance flags for parades as well as goods for sale at antislavery fairs. Ansel Bascom's reform work was seen more publicly. He likely was the publisher of *The Water Bucket*, a temperance newspaper in Seneca Falls.

Ansel Bascom was elected as a delegate for the New York State Constitutional Convention in April 1846. He spoke in favor of a property act for newlywed women and suffrage for African American men. On suffrage he said, "Men are by nature free and independent, and in their social and political relations entitled to equal rights."<sup>38</sup> However, neither resolution passed.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton moved to Seneca Falls in 1847. Ansel Bascom spoke often with Stanton and they discussed women's suffrage and rights, however she was unable to convince him to speak in favor of the woman's vote at the State Constitutional Convention. Of him, Stanton wrote "while he fully agreed with all I had to say on the political equality of women, he had not the courage to make himself the laughing-stock of the convention."<sup>39</sup> He spoke at the Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention but did not sign the Declaration of Sentiments. It is possible he was in attendance to win votes. In 1848 he ran for Congress as a Free-Soil candidate, and in 1850 he signed antislavery petitions, including the one to outlaw slavery in the capital. In

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<sup>38</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 137.

<sup>39</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 137.



1855 he spoke at an abolitionist convention in Syracuse and published an essay in the *New York Tribune* arguing that the U.S Constitution did not promote slavery.

In August 1843 Seneca Falls was visited by abolitionist Abby Kelley. She was an agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society who lectured in western and central New York, including Waterloo and Seneca Falls. Kelley argued that any church that allowed slave-owners was pro-slavery. This was a radical opinion and churches in Seneca Falls would not host her. Instead, the Bascoms invited her to speak in the orchard behind their house on Sunday at 5:00 pm. Kelley's speech was critical of Northern churches, and in particular of Rev. Bogue of the Presbyterian Church in Seneca Falls (seen later on tour). In attendance was Rhoda Bement, who tried to get Rev. Bogue to read an abolitionist announcement in the Fall of 1843.<sup>40</sup> Rev. Bogue was a supporter of colonization and believed freed slaves should be sent to Liberia in Africa. When he did not read Bement's abolitionist announcement she confronted him. Rev. Bogue denied purposefully not reading the announcement, Bement thought he had ignored her request instead of just missing it, and they got into a loud argument in the vestibule of the church. Rev. Bogue then put Bement on trial for not attending services when Rev. Bogue officiated, for not taking communion wine, and for attending Kelley's speech instead of church service. Ansel Bascom supported Bement and was at the trial. The trial was a sensational event in Seneca Falls. It brought antislavery, abolition, temperance, and women's rights to the forefront of conversation. Kelley's speech and Bement's trial were the catalyst events for abolitionists to leave the Presbyterian Church and join the Wesleyan Church. While this tour does not visit any Quaker

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<sup>40</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 206–08.

sites, it is also a critical religion in this story. Many of the famous suffragists and abolitionists came from Quaker backgrounds, including Abby Kelley.<sup>41</sup>

Mary, Ansel and Eliza Sherwood Bascom daughter, had married Edwin Bull of Ferry Farm. Edwin's parents, Julius and Harriet, were part of the Wesleyan Church of Seneca Falls. Oral history connects Julius and Harriet to the Underground Railroad.<sup>42</sup> Mary Bascom Bull, remembered Seneca Falls as having a "spirit of reform."<sup>43</sup> This spirit was spread through Ansel's political and activist work locally by hosting Abby Kelley despite her controversy, regionally by advocating abolition at the state level conventions, and nationally by petitioning the federal government.

### Historic Trinity Episcopal Church

Built in 1833, this is one of the oldest Episcopal churches in New York (Figure 7 in appendix). It has a stone base supporting a frame building and gothic structural elements in the arches. The lot was purchased from Ansel Bascom for \$500. The architect was Peleg T. Marshall, and the mason Asa Miller. In 1886 a nave was added to the south side of the structure. A bell was added in 1852. In 1890 the Wescott-Jewel Company converted it to a factory making rulers and printing equipment. After being used as a factory the structure remained vacant for many years. In 1904 the bell tower collapsed and the windows were boarded up. In 2018 the building was converted into an apartment. However, much of the original building remains.

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<sup>41</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 136.

<sup>42</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 132-38.

<sup>43</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 135.

The Reverend John M. Guion served as rector from 1855 to 1876. The church was one of the largest and most popular in Seneca Falls. It also had many abolitionists and Underground Railroad supporters as members or affiliates, including Jacob P. Chamberlain, Mary Freeman, Sarah Elizabeth James (included on tour), Whiting and Rebecca Race, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Henry B. Stanton, and members of the Latham family (included on tour) including Obadiah and Lovina, Edward S., Oliver S., and Hannah J. Latham.<sup>44</sup> Also a member was Abby Gomar. Gomar was a former slave, suffragist, and black property owner. Elizabeth Cady Stanton referenced Gomar in her book *History of Women Suffrage* as an example of an African American woman forced to pay taxes in system that did not allow her vote and representation.<sup>45</sup>

The Trinity Episcopal Church was another meeting site for abolitionist, Underground Railroad supporters, and suffragists in Seneca Falls. Additionally, this church had both white and black members. This was another location for the community to come together and discuss issues and plans.

### Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church was originally built and located at 23 Cayuga Street but was moved to 27 State Street in in 1842 (Figure 8 in appendix). This was the site of the argument between Rhoda Bement and Rev. Bogue that resulted her trial and removal from the church for her abolitionist views.<sup>46</sup> This trial is evidence of the way social reform impacted the religion of the region. The Erie Canal was also linked to shifting national powers in religious communities in western and central New York. It was often difficult for churches to remain afloat in rural

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<sup>44</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 223-27.

<sup>45</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 166-67.

<sup>46</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 205-08.

communities. In 1801, the General Association of Connecticut created the “Plan of Union” which allowed a denominational merger of the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians.<sup>47</sup> The merge was useful in handling difficult frontier conditions, especially in western and central New York, including the Finger Lakes region. However, churches of mixed composition were unusual.<sup>48</sup> Instead, large numbers of members of the Congregational Church simply switched denominations and joined nearby Presbyterian churches. However, Presbyterians rarely left to join Congregational churches. The merge did cause some tensions.

Congregationalist living on the frontier subscribed to “New Divinity” inspired by Samuel Hopkins and Joseph Bellamy.<sup>49</sup> These new attitudes emphasized human responsibility and agency over divine sovereignty and brought a millennial optimism.<sup>50</sup> While traditional attitudes remained popular in urban areas, rural communities were introduced to and gravitated towards these new mentalities. When Congregationalists on the frontier switched to Presbyterian, they brought these new ideas with them.

New Divinity was relegated to the peripheral running of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, and the Westminster Old School conservatives remained in power. However, this all changed with the construction of the Erie Canal.<sup>51</sup> Continued immigration of Congregationalists and Presbyterians to western and central New York led to continued growth in these churches. What had been remote frontier now boasted booming industrial towns. Between 1815 and 1825 Cayuga saw a membership increase of 309% and Geneva one of 147%. Compared to locations outside the canal corridor, this was a massive increase. Ohio saw a

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<sup>47</sup> Rowe, “Fleeing to Babylon,” 579.

<sup>48</sup> Rowe, “Fleeing to Babylon,” 588.

<sup>49</sup> Rowe, “Fleeing to Babylon,” 579.

<sup>50</sup> Rowe, “Fleeing to Babylon,” 586, 593.

<sup>51</sup> Rowe, “Fleeing to Babylon,” 580.

decrease of 2% and Long Island decreased by 6.5%.<sup>52</sup> A similar boom was seen with charitable giving.<sup>53</sup> This rise in population and economic influence transformed the New Divinity from stuck on the sidelines to a main player within the church. This change eventually led to the Presbyterian schism of the 1830s and Finger Lakes region Presbyteries being removed from the church in 1837.<sup>54</sup> The Erie Canal brought growth and influence to the previously peripheral churches of the New York frontier and made them a national influence.

## James House

52 State Street was home to Thomas and Sarah Elizabeth James (Figure 9 in appendix). Thomas James bought the property in 1842 for \$199. It is not known exactly when the house was built by James and Sarah, but it was standing by 1851. The house was a typical working-class frame gable-end-to street house. Thomas James was one of two African American barbers in Seneca Falls. In 1880 the house was sold to Lauri Norcutt and the gingerbread trim was likely added then. However, there are some conflicting statements over ownership during the late 1800s. Vinyl siding was added in the 1990s and front and rear porches added afterwards.

It is quite certain Thomas James was born enslaved. In 1850 he lists his birth place as unknown, and in the 1860s he lists it as New York. Thomas most likely did know where he was born but did not want to reveal that information, at least to government officials, in fear of recapture. The Fugitive Slave Act was passed on September 18, 1850. His daughter, Martha's, reported that her birth place was Canada and in about 1837. It was likely Thomas was born around 1815 and escaped slavery sometime in the 1830s before continuing to Canada. He likely

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<sup>52</sup> Rowe, "Fleeing to Babylon," 596.

<sup>53</sup> Rowe, "Fleeing to Babylon," 597.

<sup>54</sup> Rowe, "Fleeing to Babylon," 601.

married Sarah Elizabeth James in Canada before returning to the US. Thomas's name appeared in the 1840 Seneca Falls census. Sarah Elizabeth James may have also been born enslaved. An 1880 census list Sarah Elizabeth's birthplace as Pennsylvania, her father's in Virginia, and her mother's in Maryland. Every census lists Sarah's birthplace as Pennsylvania, however, her obituary states she was born in slavery before escaping to Canada with her parents. Sarah Elizabeth was born sometime between 1802 and 1814.

Thomas James participated in the antislavery and abolitionist work in Seneca Falls. He subscribed to the *Colored American* in 1840 and attended the "Convention for Colored Inhabitants of the State of New York" in Albany in August 1840. Following this convention, he and Thomas Jackson and D. W. Keeler were appointed head representatives for Seneca County. Thomas remained active in state conventions and joined committees in Seneca Falls, Rochester, and Geneva. When the Wesleyan Methodist Church was formed in 1843, he became a member and a trustee. Thomas is also seen on antislavery documents, including a call for a Free Soil meeting in June 1848, and the first extant antislavery petition from Seneca Falls in 1850 and subscribed to *Fredrick Douglass' Paper* and the *National Era* from at least the early 1850s. He still faced discrimination and was attacked in Seneca Falls, but achieved financial success.

Thomas James was one of two black barbers in Seneca Falls. His business was used frequently by locals as well as railroad passengers. One of his more notable patrons was Elizabeth Cady Stanton. In 1850 the census listed his real property value as \$7, in 1851 it was \$150, and by 1860 it was \$6,000. In 1863, he and Sarah Elizabeth mortgaged their properties and began to build a business block that was completed in 1864. In 1864 he also wrote his will. Thomas's only child, Martha, died giving birth when she was 18 in 1855. According to cemetery records he died on December 16, 1867 of consumption. He was buried in Restvale Cemetery in

Seneca Falls. His property was left to his wife and in 1870 the census listed Sarah Elizabeth James as owning \$17,000 in property. His executors were Sarah Elizabeth and his friends Jacob Corl and Henry Henion. Documents from them clearly state Thomas was a former slave and had been unable to locate any relatives. Sarah Elizabeth James continued to live in Seneca Falls until 1875 and the State Street house was sold in 1880. She then lived in Elmira as a boarder starting in 1880. She returned to Seneca Falls by 1896. After Sarah Elizabeth's death on October 4, 1904, her funeral was held at Trinity Church and she was buried in Restvale Cemetery.<sup>55</sup>

### Bellows House

The Bellows House is located at 11 Mynderse Street and was built sometime after 1838 (Figure 10 in appendix). The Bellows represent the working-class members of the antislavery movement and were one of the larger families in Seneca Falls. Harriet Bradley Bellows purchased the lot from Jonathan and Elizabeth Metcalf. Harriet Bradley was born on March 27, 1800 in Connecticut and married William Eaton Bellows in 1848. Harriet's children were all antislavery and members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Her sons William L., James, and Charles all signed antislavery petitions in 1850. Harriet died on November 27, 1877. When the Congregational and Wesleyan Churches split in 1869 William L. chose the Wesleyans.<sup>56</sup> This is an example of how the introduction of the Erie Canal and its subsequent influence on religion of the region and nation impacted everyday people.

### Wesleyan Parsonage

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<sup>55</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 179–84.

<sup>56</sup> Wellman and Warren, "Discovering the Underground Railroad," 139–40.

The Wesleyan Parsonage located at 9 Mynderse Street is a small three-bay Greek Revival house (Figure 11 in appendix). The house was used as a parsonage from 1843-49 and from the late 1850s to the mid-1860s by the Wesleyan Methodist Church. From 1843 to 1945 Rev. George Pegler and Elizabeth Pegler lived in the house. They were English-born and lived in Canada before moving to northern New York and then Seneca Falls. The Pegler's were part of the Underground Railroad. George Pegler's involvement began in the 1830s while living in St. Lawrence County. In 1835 he attended the New York State Anti-Slavery Society in Utica. He was part of the American Colonization Society before he decided its goal had little to do with equality.

In 1844 the Pegler's hosted Peter Bannister on his way to Canada. Peter was an escaped slave from Richmond, Virginia. He likely stayed at the Parsonage. He was also invited to speak at Wesleyan Chapel. Peter spoke of his time in slavery and was critical of morals held by slaveholders. Rev. George Pegler recorded this exchange between Ansel Bascom and Peter Banister:

A. BASCOM. Why Peter, you have quite 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.

P. BANNISTER. Well, mistah, don't you suppose dat white men know as much as niggers?

A. BASCOM. Why, yes, I would suppose they knew more.

P. BANNISTER. Niggers know dat slavery is wrong; white me ought to know as much has dem<sup>57</sup>

From 1845 to 1847 and again from 1870 to 1872 Rev. Samuel Salisbury and Electa Beals Salisbury resided at the parsonage. Rev. Salisbury was also actively involved in the Underground

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<sup>57</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.



Railroad, to the point where Southern sympathizers were hostile towards him and his life was sometimes in danger. In 1852 he gave the opening prayer at the New York State Liberty Party convention in Syracuse. He also subscribed to *Fredrick Douglass' Paper* in 1852. In addition, he also served on the Business Committee of the National Abolition Convention in 1856. A letter of his was published in *Fredrick Douglass' Paper* denouncing the Fugitive Slave Bill. He died in 1874 and was buried with Electa in Spring Brook Cemetery on Gravel Road.

From 1874 to 1879 Rev. Samuel Phillips, sometimes recorded as Saron Phillips, served the Wesleyan Church in Seneca Falls. He also was an abolitionist and signed the Declaration of Sentiments. Formers slave Henry Bibb, as well as Frederick Douglass spoke at his invitation. In 1849 Douglass found Phillips “warmly interested, and ardently laboring to promote the cause.”<sup>58</sup> Rev. Horace B. Knight was at the parsonage from 1858 to 1861 and from 1863 to 1864. It is likely he also was part of the Underground Railroad in Seneca Falls. He was part of the organization while he was in Syracuse, prior to moving to Seneca Falls.<sup>59</sup>

## Wesleyan Chapel

The Wesleyan Chapel is part of the Women’s Rights National Historical Park and is located on Fall Street (Figure 12 and 13 in appendix). As such, the church itself is deemphasized on this tour as interpretive programming already exists for it. However, it is a significant historical site that tells the story of equal rights through both abolition and suffrage. It was also a notable location for community involvement and organization.

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<sup>58</sup> Wellman and Warren, “Discovering the Underground Railroad,” 249.

<sup>59</sup> Wellman and Warren, “Discovering the Underground Railroad,” 244–49.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church is directly tied to abolition, and all Wesleyans are abolitionists. It was formed in May 1843 and people from at least ten different denominations joined to be part of a community fully opposed to slavery. Frederick Douglass described it as “radically antislavery.”<sup>60</sup> In 1845 the congregation numbered more than seventy people, which was about 9% of the township’s adult population. By the 1860s about 200 had joined, but only a hundred were likely active members at a given time. Also, many attended who never became members. At least five members were African America, and two were former slaves who also served as trustees. The Church served as the meeting place for reform work, be it abolition, women’s rights, or temperance. Abby Kelley described it as “a free discussion house.”<sup>61</sup> Peter Bannister’s speech at the church was the earliest recorded lecture by a former slave in Seneca County. Many followed him including John S. Jacobs and Jonathan Walker. J.C. Hathaway, Charles Raymond, Lucretia Mott, and Frederick Douglass were a few of the abolitionist who likely spoke there as well. What led to Seneca Falls becoming a famous town, however, was being the site of the first women’s rights convention on July 19 and 20 in 1848.<sup>62</sup>

At the first women’s rights convention held in Seneca Falls in 1848, about one fourth were members of the Society of Friends. Part of the reason so many of these women abolitionists and suffragists were Quakers was due to their agrarian background that separated them from the “bourgeois gender system” in addition to their religious belief system that saw women as equals to men before God.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Wellman and Warren, “Discovering the Underground Railroad,” 233.

<sup>61</sup> Wellman and Warren, “Discovering the Underground Railroad,” 235.

<sup>62</sup> Wellman and Warren, “Discovering the Underground Railroad,” 232–43.

<sup>63</sup> Nancy A. Hewitt, “Feminist Friends: Agrarian Quakers and the Emergence of Woman’s Rights in America,” *Feminist Studies* 12, no. 1 (1986): 27-49, 29

## Tour Conclusion

Many know the significance of the Erie Canal as it relates to how it impacted the economy of western and central New York and the nation; however, its impact was just as important to the travel of people and ideas. Seneca Falls' location on the canal system allowed it to become an epicenter of social reform. Yet, that reform never would have occurred if it were not for the level of community involvement of many individuals. Be it organizing in the Wesleyan Church or in Bascom's apple orchard, it was the fact of being able to meet in groups and discuss ideas openly that allowed for organized reform movements to take place in Seneca Falls.

## Future Work & Conclusion

Future work that will need to be done includes test runs with NPS staff as well as with NHP visitors. These runs will illuminate spots where interpretation may be lacking. It is imperative for any new interpretation or educational program to take note of where visitors get confused, what questions they ask, and where the most excitement is seen. After test runs, the tour can be altered and complemented with additional programming. This tour examines the role of the Erie Canal and economic and religious change had on social reform. However, there are many stories to be told about the Erie Canal.

Another subject of interpretation needed for the Erie Canal is the impact the canal had on the environment, and how the environment influenced social reform in Seneca Falls. We tend to view natural resource interpretation as distinct from cultural and historical interpretation, but culture and environment are not isolated from each other. How the Erie Canal connected

waterways and aided in the introduction of invasive species alters the economy of a region. The amount of travel seen to a region changes the habitat for different lifeforms.

The NPS can benefit greatly from outside partnerships. By partnering with universities and their students, parks can broaden their interpretive material and interact with another facet of the community. These partnerships bring in new perspectives, more research, and more resources. Additionally, these opportunities benefit students and the parks by providing experience for the next generation of historians and cultural and natural resource interpreters.

NPS sites provide a unique setting for interacting with history and the environment. These sites have opportunities to educate the public not only about the national narrative, but also highlight local stories. Location-based learning opportunities at these sites allow visitors to connect with the past and nature. Location-based learning has been linked with improved critical thinking, greater interest in museums, increased retention of information, and opportunities for interpersonal interaction with other visitors. These connections stay with people, can build on or create foundational memories that change how they interact with the world.

## Appendix

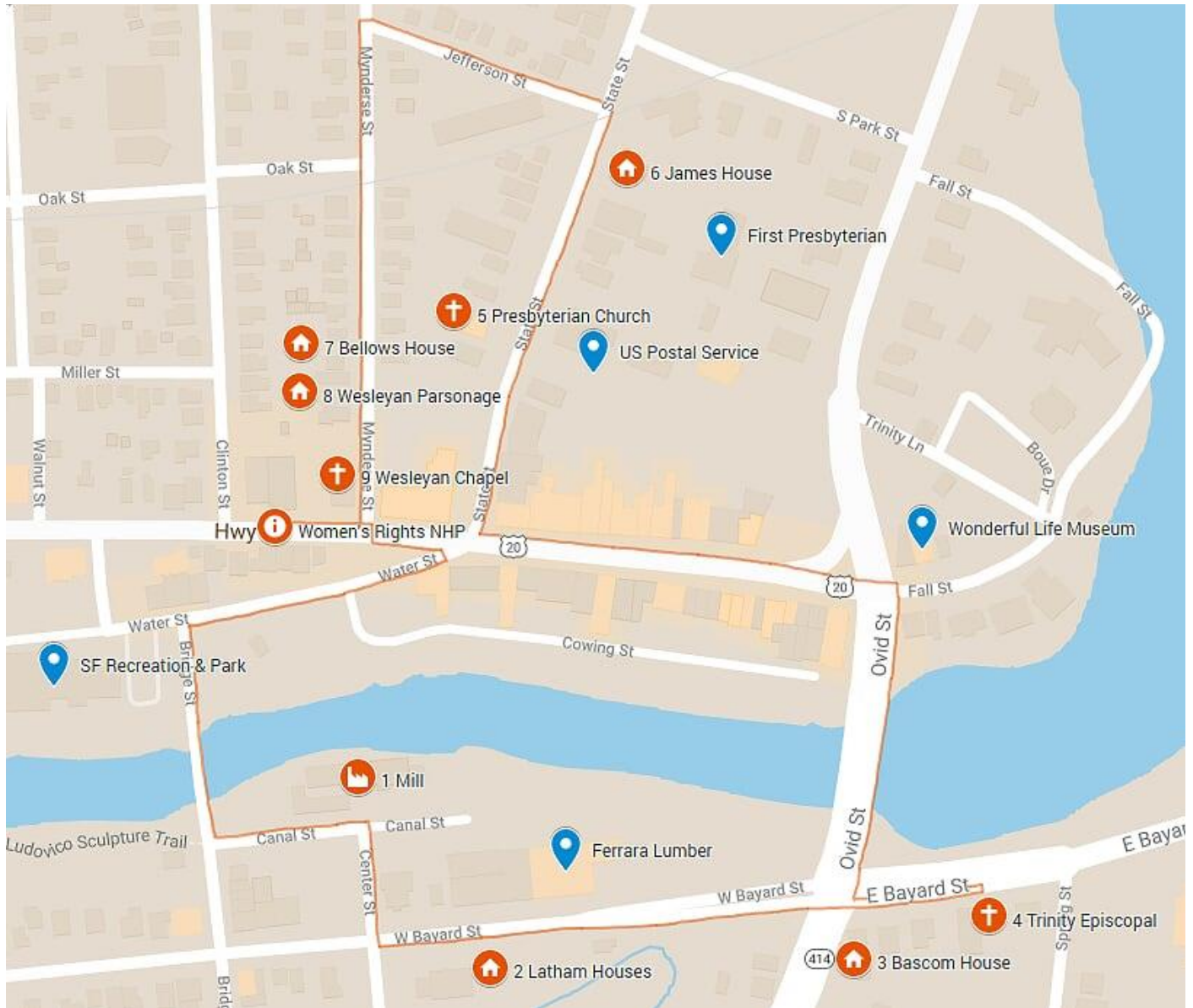


Figure 1. Tour Route. Photo created by author using "Google My Maps" and GIMP. Each stop along the tour is represented by an orange icon. The orange line is the walking route for the tour. The blue icons represent other landmarks.



Figure 2. Women's Rights National Historical Park Visitor Center. Photograph by author, 2019.



Figure 3. Seneca Knitting Mill. Photograph by author, 2019.





*Figure 4. Latham House at 37 West Bayard Street. Photograph is a screen cap from Google Street View, 2019.*



*Figure 5. Historic site of Latham House at 39 West Bayard Street. House removed to construct village fire house. Photograph by author, 2019.*



Figure 6. Bascom House. Photograph by author, 2019.



Figure 7. Historic Trinity Episcopal Church. Photograph by author, 2019.





*Figure 8. Historic Presbyterian Church. Photograph by author, 2019.*



*Figure 9. James House. Photograph by author, 2019.*



*Figure 10. Bellows House. Photograph by author, 2019.*



*Figure 11. Wesleyan Parsonage. Photograph is a screen cap from Google Street View, 2019.*



*Figure 12. Wesleyan Chapel, front view. Photograph by author, 2019.*



*Figure 13. Wesleyan Chapel, side view. Photograph by author, 2019.*



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