

Historic Facts

In addition to the classroom previsit, you may wish to do some supplementary activities with your class. If you are a new teacher, or do not currently have any supplementary materials, please call Anne Dealy (315-789-5151) or Fran Barbieri (315-568-8412) for suggestions and materials or see the Geneva Historical Society website (www.genevahistoricalsociety.com). Go to the Educator's Page and scroll down to Taking Tea. Below are some facts that might help students understand the period, before or after their visit.

The world of 1850

- U.S. population was 23 million
- 3.2 million Americans were enslaved
- NYS population was 3 million
- Ontario County's population was 43,929
- Seneca County's population was 25,441
- Monroe County's population was 87,650
- The president was Zachary Taylor.
- NYC was the largest city in the U.S. with 515,547 inhabitants. Philadelphia was second with 340,045.
- Wisconsin was the newest state (admitted 1848)
- Los Angeles and San Francisco become cities, although California doesn't become a state until September, as part of the Compromise of 1850.
- The nation is embroiled in controversy over the expansion of slavery and the admission of states in the territory acquired after the Mexican-American War. The Compromise of 1850, including the Fugitive Slave Law, sets the stage for Civil War in 11 years.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne publishes *The Scarlet Letter*.
- Popular American writers of the time were: James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Susan Warner and Jacob Abbott.
- Recent popular music included: Stephan Foster's "Camptown Races"; "Oh, Susannah"; "The Last Rose of Summer"; and "My Country 'Tis of Thee"
- Swedish singer Jenny Lind tours the United States and becomes the nation's first musical celebrity.

The world of 1890

- U.S. population was 62 million
- NYS population was 6 million
- Ontario County's population was 48,453
- Seneca County's population was 28,227
- Monroe County's population was 189,586
- NYC was the largest city in the U.S. with 2.5 million inhabitants
- The president was Benjamin Harrison, who won despite Grover Cleveland's larger share of the popular vote.
- Jane Addams founded Hull House, the first settlement house, in Chicago
- Average pay for a skilled worker, \$20 per week, for unskilled, \$10 per week
- First skyscraper (10 stories) built in Chicago in 1885
- North and South Dakota, Montana and Washington were new states (admitted 1889)
- May 13, 1890, Johnstown (Pennsylvania) flood kills an estimated 5,000 people when a dam bursts 18 miles above Johnstown.
- Mark Twain publishes *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.
- Popular authors were Twain, Henry James, Louisa May Alcott and Walt Whitman.
- Recent popular music included: "Oh Promise Me"; "The Robin"; and John Phillip Sousa's "The Washington Post".