

Welcome to Seneca Falls! As you travel from the boat launch, down the canal, and around Van Cleef Lake, you'll be paddling atop history. Beneath you are the remnants and foundations of the original canal system, dozens of mills and factories, once-prominent homes, and signs of a burgeoning industrial ascent for Seneca Falls. Gone are the mile-long rapids once circumvented by early river travelers. Gone are the artificial waterfalls that helped power industry. Gone are the "Flats" which were used by Native Americans, traders, and colonial troops. Instead, you see the result of man-made flooding in 1915 when New York State modernized and expanded the Barge Canal System. More than 175 structures were either demolished or relocated to ensure there was enough water for the two large locks to accommodate the 42-foot drop in level between Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake. While you won't be able to see the actual structures or foundations beneath you, this reference guide will introduce some of the sights and industrial activities that once took place in the depths below. Have fun, stay safe, and we hope you enjoy your visit!

Note the Seneca Knitting Mill in the top left corner of this photo. As you pass, you'll be paddling over the original sites of the factories and buildings pictured.



This is a photo of the former Upper Falls (back) and Middle Falls (front). You will pass over these sites once you paddle beneath the Ovid Street Bridge.



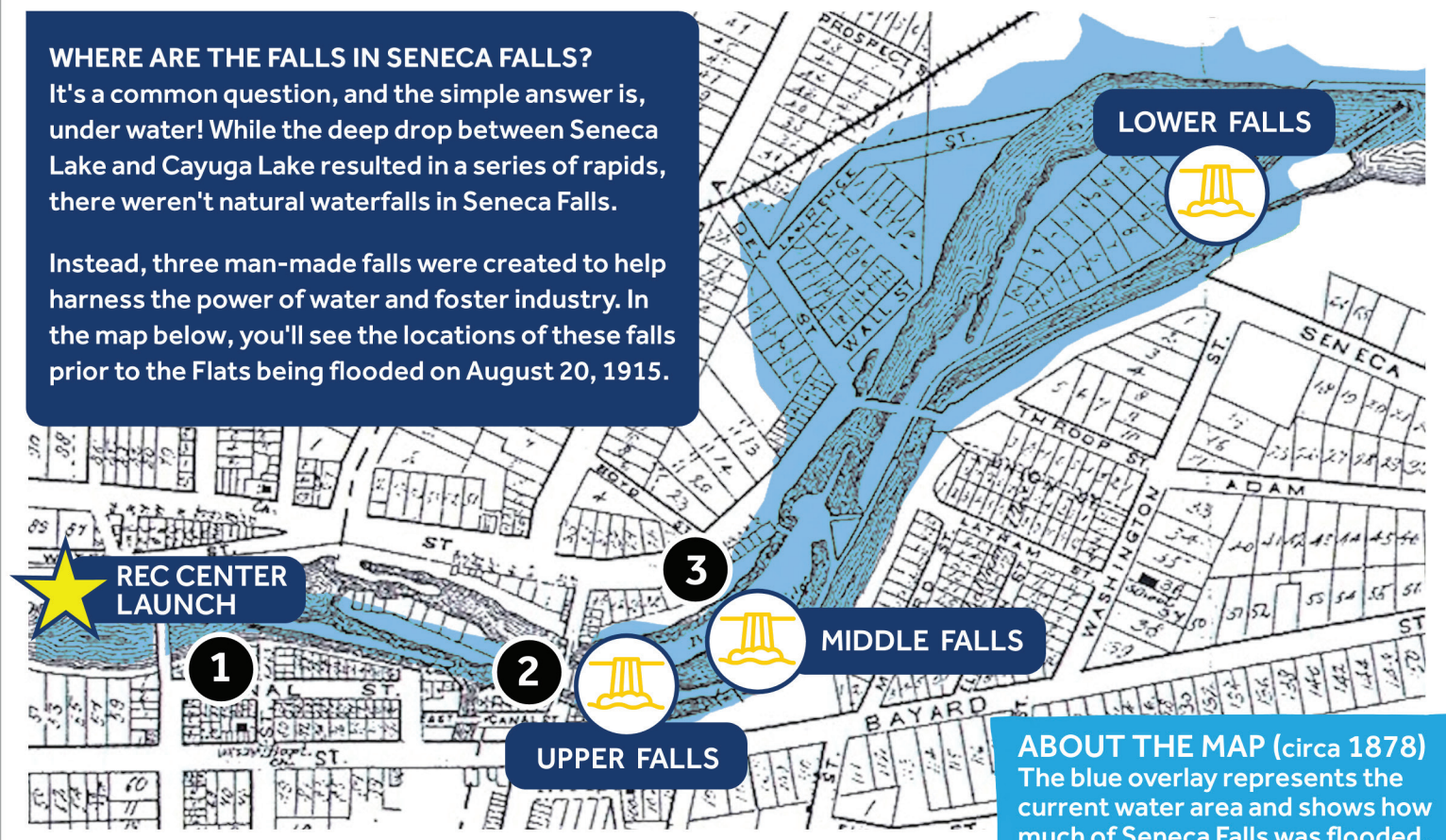
As you pass this view of Trinity Church, you'll be over the tract of demolition captured in this photo from when the Flats were prepared for flooding in 1915.



WHERE ARE THE FALLS IN SENECA FALLS?

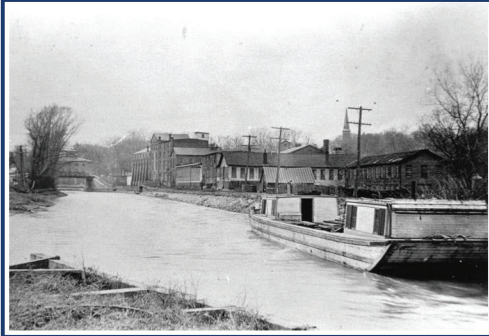
It's a common question, and the simple answer is, under water! While the deep drop between Seneca Lake and Cayuga Lake resulted in a series of rapids, there weren't natural waterfalls in Seneca Falls.

Instead, three man-made falls were created to help harness the power of water and foster industry. In the map below, you'll see the locations of these falls prior to the Flats being flooded on August 20, 1915.



ABOUT THE MAP (circa 1878)
The blue overlay represents the current water area and shows how much of Seneca Falls was flooded.

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Your trip begins here (out of frame to the left) along the original canalway, which was later expanded to better accommodate waterway commerce. This led to the removal of over 175 buildings and the flooding of the Flats.



Of the 60 homes in the residential area of the Flats, about two dozen were moved up the hill, drawn by horses, to other parts of the village.



As you paddle about Van Cleef Lake, you'll be overtop the archaeological remains of the factories, homes, and businesses in this photograph.

NOW FIND DOWNTOWN!

We're delighted to welcome you to beautiful Seneca Falls and invite you to visit our downtown area where you'll find historical points of interest, restaurants, museums, lovely shops, and so much more.

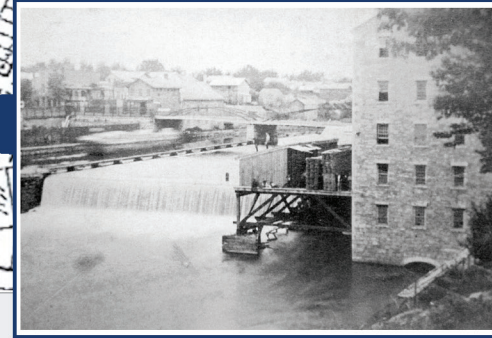
Be sure to visit the Seneca Falls Visitor Center, also home to the Seneca Museum of Waterways & Industry, for more information on Seneca Falls, our downtown, and our attractions. Located at 89 Fall Street, the Visitor Center and Museum are open daily from 10a-4p (12p-4p on Sundays).



On your return, look for this view of the Seneca Knitting Mill (top rt) and you'll be over this construction site.



The debris you see in this photo is from the pre-flood demolition, some of which was re-used in construction.



You'll pass over the original locations of the Upper and Middle Falls when you are near the Ovid Street Bridge.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:
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