

VISIT TO THE FINGER LAKES



Photo: The Elizabeth Cady Stanton house in Seneca Falls, New York.



Passionate Travelers in the ‘Cradle’ of Women’s Rights in the U.S.

Start out with two people who are passionate about the Finger Lakes region of New York and women’s history. Follow along as they pack their suitcases, squeeze in notebooks, video and still cameras, laptop computers, and a GPS. Then see them off for a six-day tour

from Johnstown to Seneca Falls to Rochester and sites in between.

The goal is to rock the cradle

The goal of Marguerite Kearns and Olivia Twine was to rock the “Cradle” of the women’s rights

movement in the United States. And they did this through a blogging tour of the Finger Lakes region focusing on women’s rights locations that had friends, family members, and others back home awaiting their daily reports. Twine and Kearns not only have a web

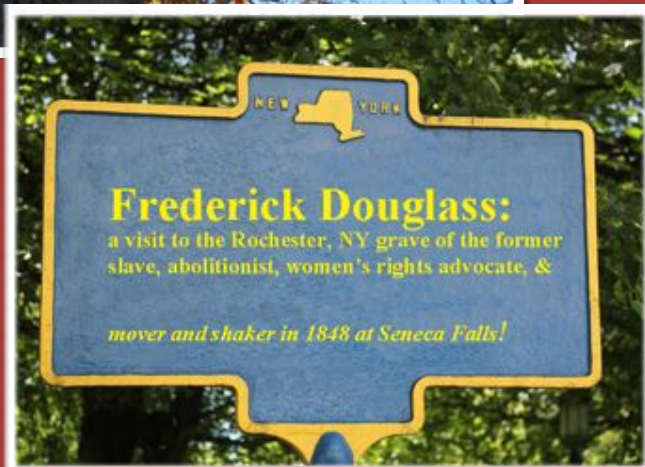
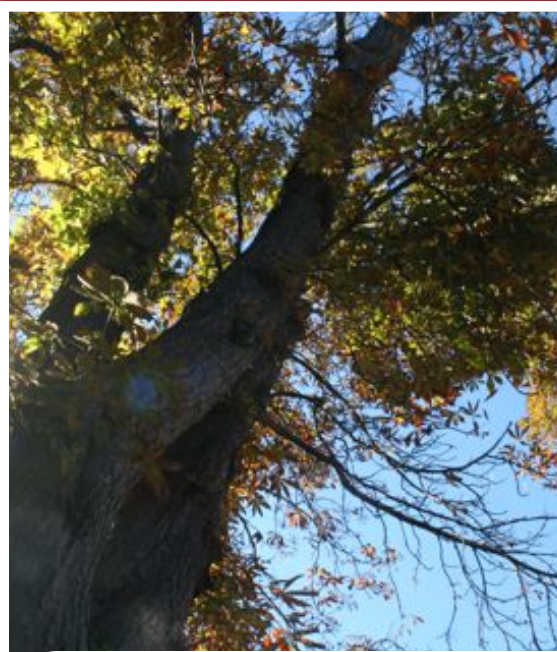


OLIVIA TWINE



MARGUERITE KEARNS

VISIT TO THE FINGER LAKES



platform, but they're confirmed enthusiasts of traveling in the Finger Lakes region. Both are convinced of its extraordinary potential in terms of attracting local, state, regional, and international travelers from now through 2017 (the centennial of women voting in NYS), followed by the nation's suffrage centennial in 2020.

"Seneca Falls is where the women got together in 1848 and changed it all," said Marguerite Kearns, the granddaughter of a New York State suffragist, Edna Kearns,

VISIT TO THE FINGER LAKES



(1882-1934). Edna Kearns organized for woman suffrage on the community level on Long Island, and she used a horse-drawn campaign wagon called the “Spirit of 1776” in New York City suffrage parades and as a speaker’s platform. The wagon is now in the collection of the New York State Museum and was exhibited in Albany in 2010 and again at the state Capitol in 2012.

“My grandmother and her associates inherited a vision of equality from a previous generation and carried the ball all the way to the passage and ratification of the 19th amendment to the US Constitution in 1920,” Kearns continued. She said that traveling through the Finger Lakes region has had many perks, including enjoying the beautiful landscape, as well as numerous exhibits, special events and related activities. “Visiting the ‘Cradle’ up close and feeling close to the women and men who made such sacrifices for us today has been a very powerful experience,” she added.

“I’m an example of an increasing group of people hooked on the Finger Lakes, its unique position in American history in terms of women’s rights, and everything else it has to offer in terms of cultural and heritage tourism,” said Olivia Twine who accompanied Kearns on the blogging tour for six days.

Twine continued: “I saw the campaign wagon used by Edna Kearns on exhibit in Albany, began reading about the suffrage movement, and talking to people about it. This led to the 2013 blogging tour. Other suffrage activist descendants out there like Coline Jenkins, the great-great granddaughter of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, are also sharing their family experiences and opening doors to a part of our history that’s both exciting and inspiring.”

Twine and Kearns like bringing to the public’s attention the part of the Finger Lakes region that became a

VISIT TO THE FINGER LAKES



Left: T-shirt sold in the museum gift shop of the Harriet Tubman historic site in Auburn, NY. Right: Tubman home in Auburn.



hotbed of free thought in the 19th century, an area they refer to as the “cradle of the women’s rights movement in the US.”

A 2003 feasibility study laying out recommendations before the federal government to develop a cultural theme park didn’t use this term but rather referred to “...a cluster of properties located in a crescent shaped area roughly bounded by Rochester in the west, Syracuse in the east, and Seneca Falls and Waterloo in between.”

Noted Kearns and Twine: “We believe the word ‘cradle’ really describes the region where a spark touched off a social revolution. These activists carved out a cradle and rocked it.

“By rocking the cradle today, we’re reminding ourselves and others about the sacrifices made by our grandmothers, great grandmothers and many other

family members.”

Kearns added: “My grandfather Wilmer Kearns supported the movement and marched in the men’s divisions of suffrage parades in New York City and Washington, DC. I grew up listening to my grandfather’s stories of the movement.”

Olivia Twine’s blog documents news and stories of the suffrage movement. Marguerite Kearns writes about her suffragist grandmother on a web platform she has been developing since 2009. Both Twine and Kearns also write for the New York History blog and they plan to continue promoting the “Cradle” and the Finger Lakes region now and in the future.

Both are determined that New York State celebrate its centennial of women voting in 2017, as well as in 2020 for the national

suffrage centennial highlighting the passage and ratification of the 19th amendment. They’re hopeful that the proposed Votes for Women federal trail project moves forward, and that NYS completes a women’s heritage trail started years ago that also requires funding for completion.

Twine and Kearns conclude: “Some people tell us it’s too early to be thinking about 2017 and 2020, but centennials don’t happen every day. We’re rocking the cradle now. The opportunities are unlimited and everyone benefits in the long run. The blogging tour resulted in a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Rocking the cradle is serious. And there’s no doubt that it is also fun.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

LetsRockTheCradle.com
SuffrageWagon.org
WomensSuffrage.org