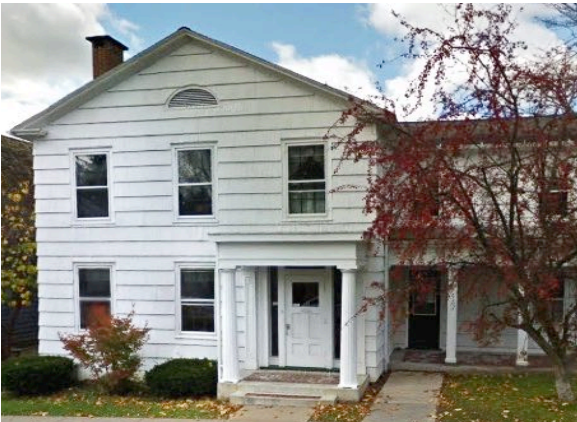


Cazenovia Fugitive Slave Law Convention 1850



**Celebration
&
Remembrance
August 21, 2021**



Walking Tour Notes

**Following Presentation by
Judge Hugh C. Humphreys
at the Catherine Cummings Theatre**



**WALKING TOUR PRESENTED BY
CAZENOVIA HERITAGE, INC.
CAZENOVIA, NEW YORK**

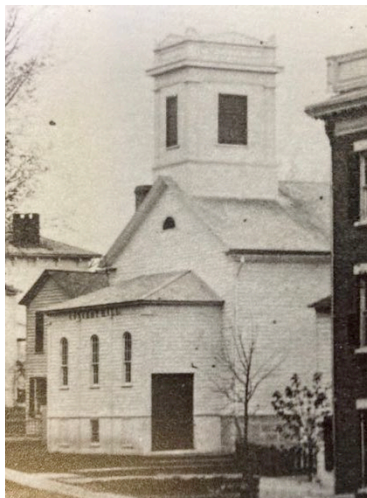
**NOTE INFORMATION BY
TED BARTLETT, CAZENOVIA, NEW YORK**

**INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE NOTES IS INTENDED AS A
SUMMARY BACKGROUND REFERENCE FOR TOUR GOERS. IT IS
SOURCED FROM AVAILABLE RECORDS AND IS NOT INTENDED TO
REPRESENT COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIES OF EACH SITE.**

Imagine the 1850 hot summer in Cazenovia with several thousand folks arriving for this Abolition Convention. The folks sponsoring it are overwhelmed by the number of attendees and have to shift the location from the first day venue at the Free Church because of space. The small village with its nineteenth century character and architecture welcomed the conventioners and made do to accommodate the visitors and hold the convention. We are fortunate that several of the Village's architectural pieces that played a role in the convention remain today for us to observe and appreciate as representative of those highly significant events of August 1850.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH (22 LINCKLAEN STREET)

The compact timber frame Federal style church building edifice sat on a raised foundation with front gable roof facing the street. By 1841 a large square tower at the front peak had been built for the 1831 Presbyterian break away congregation. The new church was known for its fre lance in creeds and Christianity (Rev. John Ingersoll [father of the agnostic Robert Ingersoll] was a preacher there) and was recognized as the Congregational Church, Free Church, or Abolitionist Church. The church had a stormy and strenuous career with turbulent meetings between pro and anti-slavery voices; while the church remained ardently anti-slavery. With the advent of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, it was abandoned.



Congregational Church
As Concert Hall 1870s.



Casa Nova



Catherine Cummings Theatre

The church frame square tower was an excellent example of vernacular frame Greek Revival design imposed upon a simple Federal style rectangular meeting house design. The imposing tower with high style Greek Revival wooden details including pilasters, cornice and anthemion balustrade were juxtaposed onto the simply detailed Federal style meeting house. The raised meeting house rested on a high cut stone foundation and was embellished with simple and light cornice, returns, and trim details. With the closing up of the Congregational Church in 1862 the building became the community Concert Hall with front entrance added (photograph). The raised frame entry

addition was simply detailed with three round arched double-hung windows on the front and wide entry doorway on the south side. The building was significantly remodeled into the Casa Nova opera house, fire hall and offices by Wolters Ledyard in 1886; in 1897 it succumbed to fire.

The 1850 Convention was first scheduled to meet in this building but with the advent of so many attendees on the first day, the event was relocated outside in Grace Wilson's apple orchard on Sullivan Street.

The present theatre was built in 1897 as community building, opera house, and Town offices. The richly embellished Colonial Revival style exterior features dormers, Chippendale details, and gambrel roofs. As built the interior had an open first story with timber arched roof, stage, and level floor. During the 1930s the interior was opened transformed into a movie theater with upholstered seats and sloping floor. As the Catherine Cummings performance theatre, it is operated by Cazenovia College for their and community performances.

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WELD'S DEGUERREOTYPE STUDIOS (10 MILL STREET)

Daguerreotype photography hit its stride in the late 1840s and 1850s. Ezra Greenleaf Weld came to Cazenovia in 1845 and opened a Daguerreian studio in his home on Mill Street. Weld was present at the 1850 convention and had the prominent leaders of the convention pose at a table in Mrs. Wilson's orchard for him to record. In 1851 Weld rented the upper story of the Hobbie & Rouse Block (McLoughlin Building) at the southeast corner of Albany and Mill Streets for his studios installing a large skylight to provide natural light for his photographic business. Weld continued as a well-regarded photographer until his death in 1875.

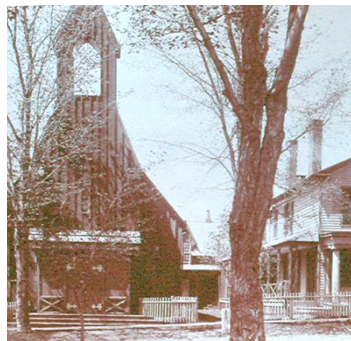
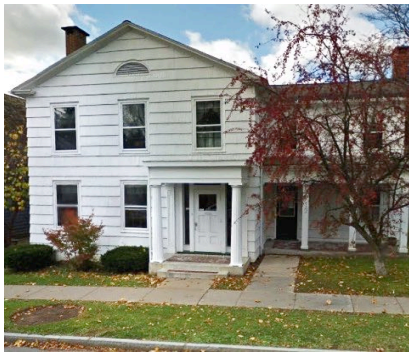
According to numerous ads in the Madison County Whig in 1850:

**WELD'S
Daguerreotype Rooms
One door north of the Episcopal Church on Mill Street
..... Also prepared to take groups of two to twelve,
and to copy Daguerreotypes without diminishing size**

The three-bay timber frame gable-front house at 10 Mill Street remains in the 1850 location "one door north of the Episcopal Church". Not unlike the Congregational Church, the house appears to have Federal style bones transitioned with a Greek revival front doorway. Compare it to the yellow Greek Revival house across the street.

The gable front house with side entry and stair hall with diminutive ell to the north is a common house form in Cazenovia. Projecting eaves, cornice returns, 6/6 double-hung windows, and form of the house are strong Federal / Greek Revival elements. The well-articulated front doorway with sidelights is a strong Greek Revival period feature. The entablature below the eaves and the original siding have been covered with 20th century broad shake shingles. At one point it had a Greek Revival porch across the entire front. The Greek Revival styled front stoop may be the remnants of that larger porch. The most notable architectural features of the facade are the articulated front doorway, sidelights, and decorated flanking pilasters.

Typically, when built, the ell to the north would have been one story; the second story was probably added later in the 19th century. In all likelihood, Weld's Daguerreotype Rooms were located on the first story of the ell with the separate entrance porch and doorway.



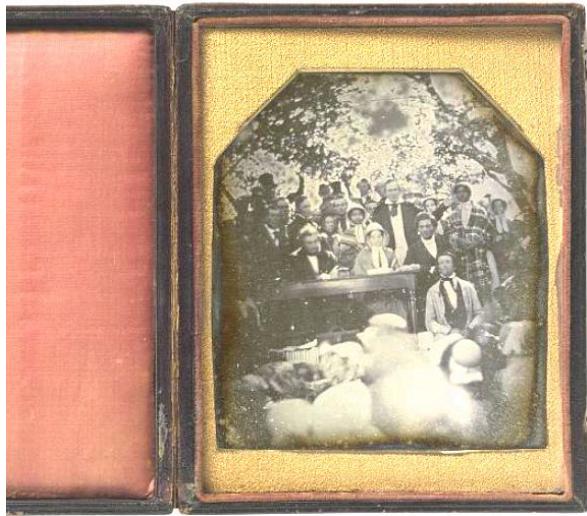
Left: 10 Mill Street 2021. Note the front stoop and altered side porch. The deep wood shingle siding covers original clapboard siding, entablature, and other 1840s detailing.

Right: 1885 image of St. Peter's Church with original Gothic Revival front and partial view of the Weld house, showing the full front porch, mid 19th century side porch and full height fireplace chimneys.

The Daguerreotype: Luckily a single Daguerreotype image on metal is in the holdings of the Madison County Historical Society. The image shows Frederick Douglass and Garrett Smith at the table with other participants of the convention.

The 1850 Fugitive Slave Convention in Cazenovia provided a unique opportunity to photograph leading abolitionists of the time in one location including Frederick Douglass, Gerrit Smith, the Edmonson sisters, and Abby Kelley Foster. A copy of the daguerreotype was given to abolitionist William Chaplin to provide comfort while he was imprisoned; Chaplin had helped many of the attendees escape to freedom.

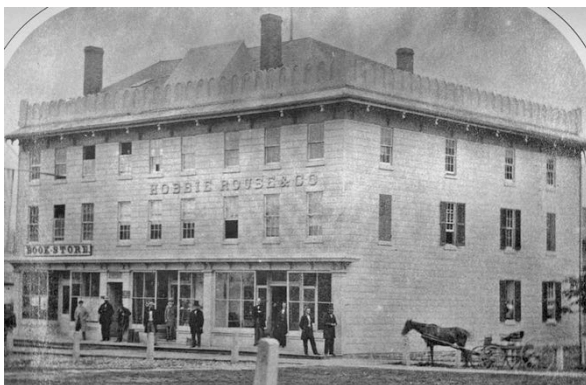
Weld created a unique image in that Daguerreotypes were challenging to take, process, and were usually taken in a studio setting where the subjects were able to sit still for the extended exposure time and light was able to be controlled. Weld's success is obvious and is the only dated Daguerreotype image of Douglass to exist. A few original half-plates exist: Two shown below, one is held by the Madison County Historical Society in Oneida, New York, the other is held by the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California.



Getty Museum Copy
Note reversed image.



Madison County Hist. Soc. Copy



Existing building at the SE corner of Albany Street and Mill Street where Weld later had his studio in Cazenovia. Left 1850s view with Weld's skylight in the roof. Right image in the 1860s shows his advertising camera located at the corner of the building.

JOHNSON HOUSE (30 ALBANY STREET)

Earliest remaining of the four taverns on the Public Square, the 1796 Johnson House was moved two lots to the west to the southwest corner of the Public Square in 1799. The timber framed five-bay, two and one half story, gable-roofed tavern is of traditional late eighteenth century New England tavern design with center stair hall, four large rooms flanking the hallway, and small rear ell. Altered in the late nineteenth century with the addition of a full front porch, roof dormer, and replacement of the multi-pane window sash, the eighteenth century tavern form, scale, and general Federal detailing remain prominent. To the right of the finely articulated Federal front doorway is an enlarged window with circa 1900 art glass transom and a single doorway which may be an original tavern doorway location. The interior plan has two large brick chimney stacks between the front and rear rooms offering four main fireplaces on each story. Elegant but simple Federal style mantelpieces, interior trim, stairway, and front doorway are notable 1796 survivors. The somber cedar shingles were added over clapboard exterior at a later date. Together with its residential neighbors the Johnson House (aka Michael Day Tavern) retains a strong sense of nineteenth century time and place on the Public Square probably not much different from when W. J. Hough owned it and Frederick Douglass and Garret Smith roomed there for the Cazenovia Convention in 1850.



Johnson House Tavern today.



Johnson House Tavern 1850s visible behind large house on Public Square.

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MRS. GRACE WILSON'S ORCHARD (11 SULLIVAN STREET)

Grace Wilson owned a house and large lot on the west side of Sullivan Street. To the south and rear of the house was her apple orchard. When the size of the attendees to the convention grew beyond capacity of the Congregational Church, she volunteered her property as a location for the August 22, 1850 convention meeting. It was held outside in her orchard, south and west of her house. Weld's Daguerreotype of the head table of the convention shows some of the apple trees behind the photo subjects. Given Mrs. Wilson's community activity and school activities, one might extrapolate that the table is possibly from Mrs. Wilson's school room.

The apple orchard was to the south of her house. Today a small house and separate apartment house buildings cover the site. Several apple trees attributed to the orchard remain in the back yard of the house at 13 Sullivan Street. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Union School was built on the orchard site and removed when the new central school was built in 1928 on Emory Avenue. Subsequently the school and adjacent small house were replaced with the present apartment complex and narrow house to the south of Mrs. Wilson's house

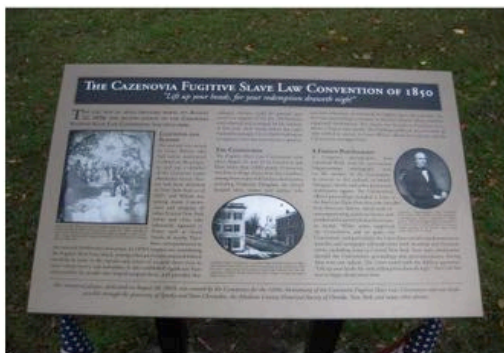


Orchard site 2021



Stone boulder plaque

The plaques honoring the 1850 Cazenovia Convention was placed in front of 11 Sullivan Street in 2010 honor of the 1850 convention. The bronze plaque was the gift of the Larry Goosight family.



The 2010 interpretive sign at the site of the Orchard and Frederick Douglass impersonator at the sign's dedication. The sign was a donation by the property owners, Sparky and Patti Christakos.

MRS. GRACE WILSON'S PROPERTY (13 SULLIVAN STREET)

Grace Wilson was a longtime advocate and pioneer for community education and for women in the middle of the nineteenth century. She was also a strong leader of the Cazenovia Ladies Anti-Slavery Society.

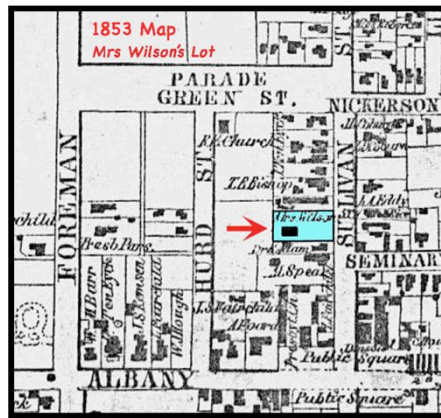
As a widow she resided in a house set back from Sullivan Street; the house was located on the northern part of her large lot, with apple orchard south of the house, and small frame school building at the south end.

While some historical evidence suggests that this three-bay Federal style house was her home; it is by no means conclusive. Historic maps of this section of Sullivan Street provide a conflicting story. Likewise, the construction date of this house has not been determined fully, but its bones may date as early as the 1790s. Believed to have been relocated to Sullivan Street in the early 19th century, it appears to have been fitted out in the ever so popular Federal style with side hall entrance and stair hall and two large parlors to the north. The gable roof with projecting eaves and returns (running perpendicular to the street) and the three-bay façade retain fenestration patterns from the Federal period. The house was heavily remodeled in the early 20th century with Arts & Crafts details. A restoration effort later in the 20th century included the distinctive front doorway with elliptical transom light and porches.

More historical sleuthing is necessary to fully understand the site during Mrs. Wilson's ownership and later alterations.

Behind the house are two surviving apple trees believed to descend from Mrs. Wilson's orchard.

This is a private residence, please do not venture onto the property.



The house at 13 Sullivan Street in 2021 set back from the street. 1853 map reference to her property on Sullivan Street.

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