

## **Introduction America In The Nineteenth Century**

The keynote of the nineteenth century was change, and the conflicts produced by the stresses of change in the first half of the century engendered the ideology of progress and individualism in the second half. Idealism, opportunism, control of the continent (justified by Manifest Destiny) were the concerns of the first half of the century; pragmatism (William James, *Principles of Psychology*), determinism (Charles Darwin, *Origins of the Species*), the emerging mass culture and American imperialism were the concerns of the second half. The apex was the Civil War whose outcome assured the maturation of the new "United" States in the northern industrial mode.

In their new nationalism, Americans struggled to adjust their political, economic and social institutions to the enormous pressures of expansion—on the frontier, in population growth, and in industrialization. For the first half of the century, that pressure was manifest in the conflict between the traditional Jeffersonian agrarian ideal and the new urban industrial reality. Politically, the American two-party system was constantly challenged as various interest groups organized and petitioned for change. One of the best-known third parties to emerge in that period was the Anti-Masonic party from western New York. Its organizational rationale was the disappearance of William Morgan of Batavia, New York in 1826 after he had threatened to publish the secrets of Freemasonry. But one of its underlying motivations was the American's fear of secret societies, most notably Roman Catholicism, whose numbers were being swelled by the ranks of recent immigrants. By exploiting that fear of esoteric groups, William H. Seward of Auburn, New York and Thurlow Weed of Rochester, New York, to name a few, engineered the Anti-Masons into a national party that nominated a presidential candidate, William Wirt, in 1832. Nationally, the political unrest resulted in a system of government in constant flux, as it tried to accommodate to the needs of an increasingly complex society. Horace Greeley's speech to the Whig Young Men's State Convention in Auburn, New York on September 21, 1842 illustrates the dilemma:

Two great fundamental principles are struggling against each other for mastery over the mind of the age...They are the principle of hope for, and confidence in man, on the one hand...the other insists that mankind must remain what they have ever been, and the future can be no better than the past.

The eighteenth century philosophy of universalism was about to be displaced by the more materialistic, albeit individualistic, ideology of rationalism and progress.

The struggle for national identity had another public arena in religion and the arts. In an effort to retard the post-Revolution decline in religious affiliation, New England churches fostered religious revival meetings, the success of which culminated in the Second Great Awakening. Its greatest intensity was felt in the Burnt-Over District of western New York. Influenced by this revival movement, Joseph Smith founded the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1830 in Palmyra, New York. The Mormon communal economic life and church/state unity appealed to those who may have felt left

behind by the new individualistic society. It was that same spirit of adherence to orthodoxy that led the elders of the Presbyterian Church of Seneca Falls in October 1842 to excommunicate Mrs. Rhoda Bement, a fervent abolitionist, for "Unchristian conduct." Countervailing the religious fervor were the Transcendentalists, who were searching for a living religion, not one that depended on a specific theological creed, for they had a distrust of conformity, industrialism and the growing materialism of American society. Led by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the movement included such literary individualists as Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller and Amos Bronson Alcott.

In spite of a monetary system ill-prepared to cope, economic growth was remarkably steady as America's vast natural resources were exploited and the growth of industrial power was immeasurably aided by revolutions in transportation (canals, steamboats, railroads) and communication (newspapers and telegraph), and the expanded role of government in facilitating those changes. The first major government funding for internal improvements was the Erie Canal in New York State, completed in 1825, which became the model for canal building nationwide. The successful completion of the Erie Canal was more than a miraculous engineering feat; it also assured that the port of New York would become a major national and international trade center of the east coast, a position it maintained throughout the nineteenth century. The national debate over agrarian versus business or state over individual interests, took its toll in the postponement of a national banking system, the problems of which were not resolved until the twentieth century, though the banking act of 1863 authorizing paper currency and subsequent legislation set some national banking guidelines. The Suffolk Bank System of New England (1819-1863), the Safety Fund (1829-1866) and the Free Banking (1838-1866) systems of New York were the first attempts at centralized banking. Counter to the eighteenth century tradition of thrift, the profound need for credit in the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century made debt virtuous. "A people which had in 1787 been indifferent or hostile to roads, banks, funded debt and nationality, had become in 1815 habituated to ideas and machinery...on a grand scale."

Though devastated by the human and economic losses of the Civil War, America's growth as an industrial power and world leader was assured by the end of the century. By then, America had expanded her frontiers to the Pacific Ocean and beyond to include annexation of the Philippines and Puerto Rico, maintenance of a military base in Cuba, and a new commitment to the Far East in the form of the Open Door Policy.

Politics in the late nineteenth century remained rife with factions and ardently partisan. However, unlike the earlier decades there were few issues over which the major parties disagreed, for they feared disturbing the delicate balance of their collective factions. There were attempts at reform—in labor, agriculture (the Grange, the Farmers' Alliance), women's rights (cradled by women activists in western New York), populism, and progressivism, all of which affected but did not seriously alter the national political consciousness.

Probably the greatest change in the second half of the nineteenth century was the diminution of an individual's opportunity to participate in the "American dream". Economic frontiers, like land, were becoming less available to the have-nots, slowing

the pace of economic, social and occupational mobility. Society became more stratified, its behavior more prescribed in imitation of the specialization and rationalization of business organization. Home and the work place were by now forever separated. Everything in American culture reinforced this change from the growth of suburbia to the ideology of the cult of true womanhood.

### **Western New York**

In the early part of the nineteenth century, waves of European immigrants joined the American population, and together they pressed ever further west, converting successive frontiers into viable communities. Western New York was the forward edge of that westward movement in 1800 after the five million acres that comprised the Genesee Country were cleared for settlement. Then Ontario County was the most advanced base of operations for the land speculators of western New York.

This was a time when individuals had great latitude in transforming the wilderness into organized communities, from the laying out of village streets and lots, to establishing such social institutions as schools, churches and newspapers. In 1790, the population of New York State west of Seneca Lake was under 1000; by 1810 there were 30,009 people in the area.

Settlers were attracted to the region because of the abundant sources of water, both for power and transportation, and because of the potential of the fertile soil for agricultural production. An early settler remembered: "Peaches were almost spontaneous. The Trees would bear in three years from stone. There was no such thing as failure of the crop." As the center of wheat production, the Genesee Valley became known as the "Granary of America" by 1823. Such was the interest in the area that one visitor to Cayuga in 1822 noted that there were as many inns as there were houses. Geneva's location at the foot of Seneca Lake was at the crossroads of the east/west overland route (Genesee Turnpike), the north/south water route to the Pennsylvania border, and later connected to the Erie Canal by the Cayuga and Seneca Canal. Because of her centrality, Geneva retained her importance to the area in spite of the fact that she had few industries, and she drew settlers from both New England and the South. Such wealthy southerners as Peregrine Fitzhugh, Robert Rose and John Nicholas brought not only their families but also their aristocratic lifestyles which impacted greatly on the local society.

Seneca Falls, on the other hand, had water falls with great potential for industrial use, but a consortium of business men organized under the name Bayard Company bought up the land on both sides of the Seneca River that embraced all the water power in Seneca Falls. Their overpricing of the land and refusal of water rights effectively postponed development of the area industrially until after 1825 when they sold the land. In the meantime, their waterpower neighbor to the west, Rochester, had experienced a dramatic boom in industrialization. Seneca Falls eventually evolved as the biggest village in Seneca County, and because of their placement on the east/west thoroughfare, the communities of Geneva, Waterloo and Seneca Falls dominated the two-county area.

In 1838 William Kerley Strong bought Robert Rose's estate in Fayette, the largest town of Seneca County. Because it did not have an urban center, Fayette was tied economically, politically and socially to Geneva or the villages to the east, Waterloo and Seneca Falls. By 1840, Fayette was a town of plantation-size estates (the "southern connection") whose population peaked in that year to 3,731, declining to 2,912 by 1890. Seneca Falls, on the other hand, had a steady gain in population from 4,281 in 1840 to 6,961 in 1890.

The Fayette/Geneva area in the 1840's had developed a reputation as an aristocratic retirement community for gentlemen farmers with an interest in conservative religious (Burn't-Over District) and cultural institutions. There was a great deal of steamboat activity on Seneca Lake for both commerce and pleasure until the late nineteenth century when railroads superseded lake transport. It was a time and a region of agricultural innovation with the introduction of drainage tiles, the threshing machine, grain reaper, drill for seeding and manuring in one operation, to name a few. Beginning in the 1840's local farmers began converting from growing wheat to operating nurseries, until by 1890 there were thirty-three nurseries in the region.

Seneca Falls in the 1890's had regained some of the industrial potential lost to the Bayard Company in the 1820's. Technological innovation in rotary pumps and steam fire engines put Seneca Falls on the industrial map. The mercantile business of the community was healthy, along with its cultural and educational institutions.

### **The Strong And Becker Families**

For the years 1840 and 1890 the Rose Hill Mansion in Fayette and the Becker house in Seneca Falls are excellent tools for comparative interpretive program for several reasons. Architecturally these homes represent the best of their periods both as symbols and as confirmation of the success of the emerging American middle class. The principal actors involved in these two mansions were also representative of their era because they were strong individualists who made the most of the existing economic and social conditions of their time for personal growth. Both men succeeded during a period when it required a pragmatic approach to the marketplace, combined with the capacity to take calculated risks. They were also knowledgeable about and intimately involved with the banking system, an education that was an absolute necessity to business survival, since there were no government agencies or regulations to protect the investor. It seems absolutely right that William K. Strong was involved in politics in western New York in the 1840's because it was the center of the political storm over representative democracy. It is also fitting that Norman Becker was not visibly a part of the body politic because in his time the American political system had plateaued in its own remarkable growth.

Evidence suggests that these men's wives were typical of the period as well. Sarah Ann Van Gieson Strong brought to the marriage a respectable name and family wealth. Her short married life (she died at the age of thirty-three), while filled with the excitement of building Rose Hill and her husband's career, was also busy with the birthing and rearing of seven children in fourteen years. Catherine Becker had six surviving children in about as much time, but records indicate that Catherine epitomized the Victorian matron in the

manner and choices of her social activities and her working knowledge of her husband's business.

Both families were involved with banking; both shared the Episcopalian denomination, although William Strong did not convert until after his second marriage in 1846. As a study of regionalism, the history of these two families demonstrates that western New York was both a continuum of the larger evolving American society and played a vital role in its expansion and wealth as well. As a comparative tool for the study of the changes in household technology, their homes and lifestyles provide excellent examples. The activity chosen for comparison, "Taking Tea," has the advantage of demonstrating firsthand how those changes were experienced over time.

### **Taking Tea**

Serving tea as a social ritual was a consistent activity in the nineteenth century. Only the prescribed etiquette changed, though the tea remained the least formal and most flexible of home entertainment activities. Teas were an ideal proving ground for the young hostess because they were the simplest way to entertain without experience and could be confined to one's friends. The scope of the affair could range from for two to an elaborate tea/supper with extended menu and numerous guests.

Generally, to preserve the idea of informality, servants' appearances were limited to the greeting of guests. It was another story behind the scenes, of course, as preparations were made for the serving of the tea. Here, then, in the period kitchens, was where the most dramatic differences between the 1840 and 1890 teas were evident, as mechanization revolutionized food processing and production. Those differences will be the focus of this study of teas in 1840 and 1890.

### **Tea in the 1840s**

In the 1840's, afternoon tea enjoyed a revival in America and according to Miss Josephine Matilda de Zeng's diary, young people in Geneva, New York followed the practice on a daily basis. Often attendance at tea was without formal invitation. The guest might offer the hostess a basket of fruit in season. In return, teatime provided: "a good deal of scandal from the different ladies, "or a conversation hypothesizing the "kind of people that would live a hundred or two years from this time," or once the tea was consumed, enjoying tea leaf "fortune telling frolic." Calling cards may have been used to announce newcomers, but they do not seem to have been required etiquette among Josephine's good friends.

Household books of the period advised the hostess to entertain her guests in afternoon dress, as if she were going to spend a quiet evening at home. Female guests arrived at four o'clock, with the men following at five o'clock or after work.

Guests were to be made comfortable in a well lighted, cheery drawing room where fires were to be set early in cool weather, and in summer blinds and windows were to be opened, with the additional provision of a feather or palm leaf fan for each guest.

The tea tray was to be set next to the hostess on the drawing room tea table with fresh butter and with more than enough cups and saucers, for one had to be prepared for

unexpected guests. On the tray there should have been a teapot and/or a coffee pot, hot water pot (in the event a guest wanted weaker tea) teas and/or coffee, cups and saucers, teaspoons, sugar bowl or saucer with tongs, cream pitcher and waste bowl (to empty cold tea into before refilling cup.) Sometimes there was the addition of a strainer or strainer spoon, tea caddy, caddy spoon and spoon tray. A distinctive feature of the 1840 tea would have been the use of handleless cups, probably because a dozen unadorned cups and saucers with handles cost the same as one dozen decorated cups and saucers without handles, indicating a choice of aesthetics over utility.

When serving, hostesses were advised not to fill the cup to the brim. The cream and lumps of sugar should be “sent round” so that each person could add them according to taste. After tea was served, a tray with biscuits, thinly sliced bread, butter, and small china dishes filled with homemade jam were passed. If cake was served, the whole cake was brought to the table and individual pieces would be cut as needed. A clean set of dishes would be used for the sweets.

The choice of food served at the teas was basically the same in both periods. Since variety was limited at the afternoon tea, it was recommended that the quality of the food served should be high: namely; the best butter, the thinnest bread and the best tea (a blend of green Hyson and black Souchong). The typical 1840 tea included teas and/or coffee and chocolate, thin slices of bread and butter, fancy biscuits, homemade jams, fresh fruit in season and cake. For a more substantial tea that was intended to serve as a light supper, there was the addition of cold meats and cheese. Marion Harland recalls one such unforgettable tea when she was served:

“Black Tea with cream, round of brown bread, hot shortcake...a big glass bowl of raspberries and currants (grown in the garden), a basket of frosted cake, a plate of pink ham, shaved...chipped beef and 'sage cheese',”

as she sat in a grapevine-shaded room overlooking Boston Bay.

### **Tea in the 1890s**

By the 1890's the afternoon tea had metamorphosed into a quasi-formal affair complete with prescribed manners and procedures. The extent of choice left to the hostess was the number of guests and the quantity and variety of food. Invitations to the 1890 afternoon tea were sent by the hostess using her calling card, with the time and date engraved or handwritten on it. Generally the invitations were hand delivered. Guests were expected to respond in one week to ten days. Those who could not attend sent their calling cards. Those who were present brought their cards to the tea and placed them in the hands of the welcoming servant who announced the guest's arrival to the hostess. The hostess, with a friend or young daughter, received her guests.

The seriousness with which calling cards were used at the upper levels of society is aptly satirized in Mark Twain's novel *The Gilded Age*.

“Mrs. A pays her annual visit, sits in her carriage and sends in her card with the lower right-hand corner turned down

which signifies that she has called in person. Mrs. E sends word down that she is engaged or wishes to be excused...or is not at home...If Mrs. A's daughter marries, or a child is born to the family Mrs. E calls, sends in her card with the upper left-hand corner turned down, and then goes along about her affairs—for that inverted corner means “Congratulations”. If Mrs. E's husband falls downstairs and breaks his neck, Mrs. A. calls, leaves her card with the upper right-hand corner turned down...this corner means “Condolence”. It is very necessary to get the corners right, else one may unintentionally condole a friend on a wedding or congratulate her on a funeral.”

As in 1840, the hostess was not to use this occasion to make an ostentatious display in her tea presentation or her costume. Female guests were to appear in “demi-toilet”, with or without bonnets. The clothing fabrics deemed suitable were velvet, silk, gauze or muslin, no laces or elegant jewelry. Gentlemen would wear morning dress. Guests were expected to stay at least a half hour but no longer than an hour and a half.

The atmosphere was as important as what was served. In an 1892 *Ladies Home Journal* article “A Talk About Teas” the ideal setting is described:

The hostess...received her guests in a pretty tea gown, a cheerful fire burned on the hearth, a few flowers added their fragrance, comfortable chairs were drawn up in cozy nearness to each other, while divans were made almost alluring by 'a riot of downy pillows'. In one corner stood the dainty tea-table, with its steaming urn, egg-shell cups, bright silver, and snowy napery. Each guest was welcomed with evident pleasure.

All of the details described for the 1840 tea—the contents of the tea tray, the order of food served and who served it remained the same in 1890, except for the china teacup which now had a handle.

## **Food Preparation**

### **1840**

The preparation of food in the 1840's was so labor intensive that the mistress of the house very often participated in the chore with her cook. The cook was often a single woman, for the demands of the job precluded time for marriage and family. Recipes used were generally those shared by family members or friends, and then it was only the suggested ingredients. The outcome of any cooking effort largely depended on the experience of the cook. In addition, there were no standardized units of measure for food recipes, which further complicated the quality of the results.

### **Hearth Cooking**

Food was cooked in cast iron pots hanging over the fire or in footed pots over fire embers, in reflector ovens placed in front of the fire, or in ovens built into the hearth. The fire required constant attention. Especially difficult was maintaining an even temperature in the baking oven. Contrary to popular belief, the greatest hazard of open hearth cooking for the cook was not the possibility of igniting her clothing, but the danger of spilling hot food or embers on her feet and hands.

### **Water Supply**

Water had to be hauled from a well or stream. For cooking, bathing or cleaning, water had to be heated in pots over the open fire.

### **Food Sources, Rose Hill**

As a working farm, it is assumed that Mrs. Strong used her own wheat (ground at the local mill) for flour. Eggs, cream, butter, meat would have

### **1890**

By the end of the nineteenth century advanced household technologies had immeasurably improved the process of food preparation. Mechanization and social mores separated household functions; therefore, upper- and middle-class women were not generally involved in the actual cooking process. There was an abundant choice of recipe books in the 1890's but standardized "scientific" cooking measurements were yet to come. The outcome of the cook's efforts still depended on her experience.

### **Stove Cooking**

Food was now cooked on a coal or wood burning stove, providing more control over cooking temperatures, and a dramatic improvement in the mechanics and cleanliness over open hearth cooking. Traditionalists complained, however, that what was gained in efficiency was lost in taste.

### **Water Supply**

Water came from an inside sink pump and could be heated on the stove or, for large jobs such as laundry, there was often a copper tank placed adjacent to the stove for heating water.

### **Food Sources, Becker House**

Documents suggest that the Beckers ordered groceries from Sidney L. Monroe of 66 Fall St., milk from E.M. Van Cleef, butter from N.J. Traver,

## 1840

probably come from the farm as well. Such groceries as tea, coffee, or sugar would have been purchased from a local grocer in Geneva, probably H. & B.F. Stagg.

### **Food Preservation**

Most perishable foods (meats, fish, butter) were preserved in brine or smoked and salted. Vegetables and fruit had to be kept in cold storage areas in the cellars or underground. Grains had to be kept cool as well as free of insects. Because food preservation was so difficult to maintain, the average diet was restricted to seasonal foods.

### **Food Preparation The Tea Party**

#### **Making Tea**

1. Enough water had to be carried from the well or stream and boiled to scald the teapot twice, make a pot of tea, and fill another pot with hot water.
2. Tea was made in a china pot or silver urn, which was scalded twice.
3. The proportion of water should be approximately two teaspoons of a blend of green and black teas to a half pint of water. Care should be taken not to “drown away all the flavor of the tea with too much water...Remember that the kettle should be boiling hard at the moment the water is poured on the teas—otherwise the infusion will be insipid and tasteless.” Let the tea steep for ten minutes before serving.

## 1890

eggs from Mrs. L.F. Compson of Tyre, and meat from George Henry & Co. of 99 Fall St. Not only was there no need for the Beckers to produce their own food, but also the variety of foodstuffs available by the 1890's far surpassed anything in the 1840' s.

### **Food Preservation**

Food could now be preserved by canning processes and the icebox lessened the likelihood of food loss through spoilage.

### **Food Preparation The Tea Party**

#### **Making Tea**

1. Water from the sink pump was used to fill the kettle, and then boiled on the stove.
2. Tea was made in a china pot or an urn, which was scalded at least once.
3. Same as in 1840.

## Servants

The most important reason for employing servants in the nineteenth century was the reality of backbreaking household labor. Until the advent of cast-iron stoves and central heating in the latter part of the century, all heat for warmth and for cooking came from open hearths, which had to be constantly fueled with chopped wood. Seven times a day or more, in all kinds of weather, water for cooking and cleaning had to be hauled from streams or wells and heated on the hearth. All waste had to be hauled out. The smoke from fires and the oils used for lighting (whale, lard, linseed, castor, camphor,) the dirt tracked in from unpaved roads, all conspired to make housekeeping a Herculean task. Each technological advance through the century—processed foods, stoves, the vacuum cleaner, kerosene and gas lighting, washing machines—made the job easier but it was not until the twentieth century that technology began to replace the servant in the American home.

America's most recent immigrants made up the bulk of the nineteenth century servant population, and in the northeast the Irish maid symbolized the typical American servant. A Geneva family's account ledger gives credence to the stereotype, for over a period of forty-one years (1847-1888) the most common ethnic surname recorded for servants were Irish. The entries in the ledger also verify recent historians' findings that there was a pattern of erratic employment among single female servants in that period, due to a number of factors: employers had unrealistic expectations, women were not the primary financial supporters of a household, or Western New York was just one stop along the westward path. Hezekiah Niles explained in 1815 that young girls and women hired to do housework would "...if they did not like the usage they receive...be off in an instant and leave you to manage as well as you can. They think that the employer is quite as much indebted to them as they are to the employer."

Wages varied according to the "going rate" for a given community. In the Geneva ledger mentioned above, the average wage over a forty-year period was \$2.50 to \$3.00 a week (which conforms to the national average) and indications are that the servants were paid at the convenience of their employer. One male worker, Sandy Thornton, who was consistently employed for such tasks as chopping wood, stove cleaning and soap making, was paid as high as \$6.00 a week. The assumption is that most of the female servants lived with their employers, so the additional compensation of room and board should be considered as added income. When national domestic wages were contrasted with wages paid for other women's occupations (room and board considered), domestic wages were among the highest and most consistent. Evidence suggests, however, that servants diet was starchy and less adequate than that of their employers, and their living quarters often consisted of bare essentials. A young woman who interviewed for a position in a New York City household was offered the following:

A hall bedroom, with a single bed an' a small table, with a washbowl an' small pitcher, one chair an' same nails in the door for hanging things; that was all except a torn shade at

the window. I looked at the bed. The two ragged comfortables were foul with long use.

I started down the stair an' came right upon Mrs. Melrose, who smiled as if she thought I had been enjoying myself.

"I'm perfectly willing to try and do your work as well as I know how, I said, "but I must have a place to myself an' clean things in it.

"Highly-tighty!" says she. "What impudence is this? You'll take what I give you and be thankful to get it. Plenty as good as you have slept in that room and never complained."

"Then it's time some one did," said I. "I don't ask anything but decency, an' if you can't give it I must try elsewhere."

"Then you'd better set about it at once."

She did and her new household offered her an equally bare room but it was at least clean.

The most common American servant was the general housemaid, and in rural areas she was expected to do outside chores as well. Working conditions were not always the best and the hours were inordinately long and irregular.

I rose at six and served-breakfast promptly at seven. By half-past nine the downstairs work was finished.

"Thursdays you will clean the sitting room," said my lady, "but you must tidy your own room first. I wish you always to put your own room in order before noon." So I spent ten minutes in my room and two hours in the sitting room. I could not finish in less time Five times during the two hours I was called off by the door bell and twice I went down to look after my bread.

I finished soon after twelve, and hurried down to prepare luncheon; this I served at one. I had been on my feet steadily for seven hours and they began to complain. I was thankful for a chance to sit, and dawdled over my lunch for half an hour. It was half-past two, everything was in order, and I was preparing to go to my room when my lady appeared saying that the kitchen floor ought to be wiped. She was right. The floor was covered with oilcloth and it was getting dingy. The kitchen was large, and it took me half an hour; then I went to my room. I was very tired. In my own housekeeping I had taken frequent opportunities for short rests, here the strain had been steady. I was too much heated to dare a bath, but I rocked and rested, did a little mending, and tidied myself up a bit. It was astonishing how soon four o'clock came. It did not seem possible that I had been upstairs forty minutes.

The duties of each servant depended on the needs of the household and the existence of other servants. The change from “help” in the early part of the century to “domestics” in the latter part was due to the developing double nature of the middle and upper class home where mundane housework still had to be done, at the same time that the home was “increasingly conceived as a refuge from the world of work.” By the late nineteenth century, a servant hierarchy evolved from the British model.

#### Men

Butler worked jointly with the Housekeeper (deputy to employer)

Footman helped Parlormaid

Valet was responsible for male employer’s appearance, contacts with merchants, etc.

#### Women

Ladies Maid (ladies toilet)

Chambermaid

Parlormaid

Laundress

Cook (ruled kitchen, was sometimes male)

Equivalent in servant status to the Housekeeper was the Nursemaid who was the alter-mother. Though the average household did not have anything resembling the above coterie of servants, it is important to note that the hierarchy and status among domestics mirrored society-at-large in the extent of authority given and the nature of specialized duties.

The 1840 Federal Census suggests that the Strong family at Rose Hill had at least three live-in servants, including one “Free Colored Person (female) under [age] 36”. The 1900 Federal Census lists three servants living at the Becker house: David Fancy, widower, 39 years of age, born in New York State; Mary Merrigan, single (first-generation American born of Irish parents,) age 39; Kate Doran, single, age 40, Irish. From the order of placement in the census, we could assume that David Fancy functioned as Footman and/or Butler, Mary Merrigan was the Parlormaid, and Kate Doran was the general Chambermaid/Housemaid.