

2215 FIVE MILE LINE ROAD

Grist mills, saw mills, and tanneries were the stuff of early Perinton settlement and industry. The abundance of water power available from Thomas and Irondequoit creeks drew settlers to this area and provided them with a ready source of income. In the early decades of the 19th century, there were over 25 water-powered industries located on the banks of these creeks in the Penfield-Perinton area, now defined by Linden and Five Mile Line Roads.

In 1821, Andrew Lincoln and his partner, Samuel Rich, built a grist mill along the west bank of Irondequoit Creek, noted in some sources to be only the third mill built in the town. Over the next 40 years, Lincoln and Rich enlarged the mill a number of times, adding partners and new mills until they had one of the largest complexes in the area, including a 26-acre mill pond that covered part of today's Spring Lake Park. They marketed "Monroe County Flour" throughout New York and New England.

Benjamin Arey, another of Andrew Lincoln's partners, operated a tannery along the creek just north and west of Linden and Five Mile Line roads. Arey, his wife Mary, and their five children lived in a house north of the tannery at what is now 2215 Five Mile Line Road. Although they probably did not own the house, they were the first residents and lived there from 1838 to 1858. Other long-term owners included the Thistlewaite, Haupt and Merin families. One of the subsequent occupants of the house had ties not only to Perinton, but also to Penfield. The Rev. Porter McKinstry, his wife Chloe, and their children lived in the house from 1863 to 1894 (except for the years of 1867 to 1870). Porter McKinstry was minister at the Penfield Methodist Church. Despite the fact that the house has had a number of owners over the years, to old-time Penfield residents the house is still the McKinstry house.

The 1838 house was built in the Greek Revival style by Rufus and Phoebe Keeler. They, however, never lived in the house. The main section of the house has three bays with 6-over-6 windows and is 2 ½ stories high with a front-facing gable. A square window with muntins (dividers) is centered in the gable. The front door is set in a Greek Revival frame with a Doric cornice, Tuscan pilasters, sidelights and a transom. The foundation is cobblestone with stone corner quoins.

Over the years, there have been several additions to the original house. The wing to the south is two stories high with a south-facing gable. The foundation of that wing is covered with stucco, but is probably rubblestone. The addition in the rear includes a screened porch and a second-floor sleeping porch with has been a great attraction for the children who have lived in the house. A one-story lean-to connects to the porch. The latter two additions were completed in the 20th century.

In 1966, Dr. Robert and Mrs. Merin purchased the house. Mrs. Merin remembers that



“we drove out to see the house at 5 o’clock and I fell in love with it. At 9 we signed the papers and it was ours.”

Their children enjoyed sledding and skiing on the hillside and meadow that comprise the back yard. Mrs. Merin enhanced the handsome carved woodwork around the windows in the spacious living room and dining room with custom window treatments and furnished the house with a combination of antiques and reproductions. The dining room even boasted a Dutch brass chandelier that used candles. Only the fifth family to own the house, the Merins sold it in 1981. The house currently has new owners, having been sold in late 2000.

The setting, with the house set high above the creek and enhanced by a 200-plus-year-old 49 inch diameter sugar maple tree in front, is impressive. Ted Collins, local arborist, has recognized the unique aesthetic and historic value of the tree. Upon the request of Louis Atkins, the owner at the time, the property (house and tree) was named a Designed Landmark in March 1989. It was the first individual house so named under Perinton’s Historic Preservation Ordinance.