

2429 TURK HILL ROAD

Turk Hill Road was originally laid out in 1811, and by 1829 it extended straight through Perinton from the north to the south line. For many years it was known as Baker Road, after Jeremiah Baker, a prominent citizen who lived at the road's intersection with East Church Street. The name "Turk Hill" may have come from the flocks of turkeys that liked the beech trees along the road or it may have come from the fact that the area south of Ayrault, which was originally considered of little value, was occupied by groups of rowdy squatters commonly referred to as "turks." As more settlers moved to the area, however, Turk Hill Road, as a main north-south thoroughfare in Perinton, became a prime location for farms.



One of several farmhouses on the road, 2429 Turk Hill Road, located on the west side of the road between Garnsey and Steele Roads, was designated in 1994 as a Perinton historic landmark. The house has significant architectural characteristics and is associated with some of Perinton's early settlers, which are two of the criteria necessary for designation. Preservationist Ted Bartlett surmises that at least one part of the house dates to the 1850's. Since the front portion of the house is lower than the rear portion and is in the Queen Anne style, it was most likely added later, probably in the 1880's or 1890's. Queen Anne style characteristics include an attic window with small panes surrounding a larger pane, the porch with its decorative spindles and knobs, and the scalloped gable clapboards. The house also has a small one-story wing that was a later addition. Double doors with heavy curved moldings open into the house off the porch. Interior features include hand-hewn beams that support the floor joists, wood trim, and a concrete-block cistern. It is believed that the door to the furnace room may have been the original door to the house.

A number of outbuildings give this property the sense of being an intact farmstead. There is a privy, an ice house, a pump house, and a barn. An open carriage shed on the back of the house has been enclosed and houses the vanes from a now unused wind-powered sawmill that stands behind the house. This comfortable-looking farm house, on one of Perinton's higher hills, surrounded by mature trees, and flanked by its outbuildings, has a wonderful setting.

The property was first owned by one of Perinton's early settlers, Anson Howard. Although the 1852 map shows Howard as the owner, he had probably settled there earlier. Family letters of 1850 and 1851 refer to his farm and to his having been in the area at least since the previous decade. Another source mentioned his purchase of the Turk Hill Road farm as early as 1833. In addition, he served as treasurer of the local Society for the Detection and Apprehension of Horse Thieves as early as 1847. Howard's wife was a Baldwin, the sister of neighbor Giles Wood's wife. Other members of the Howard family also settled in Perinton on Macedon Center Road.

By 1857, the Turk Hill Road property had been sold to Alex and Lucy Bumpus, and by 1876, it had passed to Thomas and Pernelia Foley, who named it Far View Farm. Foley Road, which used to connect Turk Hill and Moseley Roads, was located on the northern edge of the farm property, which totaled 172 acres by 1902. Ruby Foley, Thomas and Pernelia's daughter,

married Elijah Shilling and took over the running of the farm early in the 20th century. Ruby and Elijah had responded to a call from Ruby's parents for help when her father had a stroke. The couple left their cottage on Valentown Road so quickly that they never finished clearing the dinner table. They never returned to that cottage, the work on the Foley farm taking all their time. According to a friend, even at the age of 81, Elijah voiced his sorrow that he and Ruby had not been able to live out their lives there. In 1948, 40 years after the couple had hastily left the cottage, it was opened for auction and the dinner plates were still on the table and the old telephone was still on the wall with the 1908 directory.

The major crop at Far View Farm was potatoes, an important crop in the area, and several local farmers, Shillings, Butlers, and Bakers among them, were referred to as "potato kings." At one point it was claimed that Perinton grew more potatoes than any other community in the country. In 1895, for example, Perinton shipped out over nine million bushels. Most of the potatoes were grown on high ground areas such as Turk Hill Road up until the 1920's when the muck potato became popular.

It was probably during the Shilling ownership that the house was remodeled in the Queen Anne style. A Shilling niece, Emma Foley Birch, inherited the farm, which remained in the family until 1957. This significant and intact example of Perinton's agricultural heritage continues to be well cared for by its owners.