

7725 PITTSFORD-PALMYRA ROAD

The farmhouse at 7725 Pittsford-Palmyra Road in Egypt is not only an unusual structure, but also one that qualified as a Century Farm under a program instituted in 1937 by New York State to recognize rural farms and families. Among other criteria, the farm had to have been in one family and been a viable farm for at least 100 years.

The house is vernacular in style and unique in that it was built in two different styles at two different times, and as such is known as a “marriage” type of house. The western section of the house was built sometime in the 1820’s. Plunket Loud, a longtime Egypt resident, once stated that the house dated to 1825, but documents that were uncovered by local historian Marjorie Snow Merriman gave the date of construction as 1829. This older section has Greek Revival details in the center entrance and side pilasters. Apparently the older section was removed and used as a play house and tool shed when the western section of the house was built around 1890. Obviously it was later reattached. The newer section has detailing reminiscent of Queen Anne styling, especially in the shed-roofed front porch with its curved bracketing and spindle trim. The porch on the older section of the house is similar, indicating that it too was built at the later time. Although the western or newer section of the house is bigger than the original part, the similar porches unite the two sections stylistically and the overall impression is pleasing.

The house has a stone foundation with large rough-hewn beams in the basement. There is not only a large cistern there, but also a stone-faced well, which in the wetter seasons has water no more than three feet below the basement floor level. It is possible to look down the well quite far. Needless to say, the current owners, who have a small child, keep the site well camouflaged. The basement has also been the home of a number of garden snakes and at least one four-foot-long milk snake. The snakes, however, were more unsettling to people working on the house than to the owners themselves. In keeping with the Queen Anne detailing, the house also has two small stained glass windows. Between the kitchen and the dining room there is a unique built-in cupboard that is accessible from both rooms. The detailing on the dining room side is just a little fancier than that on the kitchen side. It is obvious that in addition to the fact that this house is really two houses joined together, that many changes have been made over the years to the interior. Although parts of the second floor have original wide floor boards, the space has been significantly opened up, making a few large rooms and providing space for closets and bathrooms. Originally, the owners speculate that there were a number of smaller rooms and of course no large closets and bathrooms.

The property, which once included 160 acres and a water course or mill race, was originally owned by William and Lydia Perrin Gregory, who sold it to Elihu Wanzer in 1829. The Gregory family were early investors in western New York land and subsequently continued west to purchase new land in Michigan. There is some conflicting information about when the farm was sold to the Case family. One record indicated that the property was sold to Nathan Case on April 3, 1851, for \$7300, while another record says that an Amos Case, a “wool buyer,”



owned the house in 1832. Clearly by the early 1850's, the Case family members owned the farm and they remained there until 1965. Nathan Case is noted as the owner of the land on both the 1858 and 1872 maps of Perinton. In 1896, 80 acres were deeded to son George, as he had cared for both the farm and his father for a number of years. When George died in 1929 the house and property passed to his daughter Marjorie who was married to Bruner Bown of Fairport, the son of one of Fairport's most successful businessmen. As a dairy farmer, Bown was active in the Grange; he was also active in local politics and served as Justice of the Peace. He worked the farm until his death in 1965. Since the Case-Bown family ran the farm for over 100 years, the property qualified as a Century Farm.

By the early 1990's, most of the farmland had been sold and developed as Egypt Park Estates, but the Bown connection was remembered with the naming of a new road in the subdivision as Bown's Hill Lane. The current owners, Ann Moss and William Kingston, purchased the house in 1994. They have made some changes to the house, which include moving the location of the kitchen door, replacing a door in the living room with a window, and redoing some of the flooring. They also added a garage to the west end of the house and did some landscaping. When using some of the fill from a large grassy pile in the side yard to create landscaping berms for the front of the house, they discovered rubble and remains from one of the old barns. As with any old house, there is always something else to discover. The owners delight in the house's history, in all its nooks and crannies, and in caring for this reminder of Perinton's agricultural past.

The house was designated a landmark under Perinton's Historic Preservation Ordinance in February of 2001.