

FOUR GENERATIONS OF PERINTON BENEDICTS

The Erie Canal opened up western New York to trade and travel, settlement and jobs. The Benedicts were one of the many families that took advantage of the new opportunities. Enoch Benedict and his two sons, Gilbert and Jacob, made the trek to western New York from Nassau County in 1824 via the Erie Canal and settled on 45 acres of land along the Rochester (Fairport) Road on land just west of Schummer's Cemetery.

Gilbert and his elder brother Jacob were both active in the Perinton community. Jacob served as commissioner of highways, overseer of highways, and fence viewer; Gilbert also served as a highway overseer and appears on several juror lists. Both men appear on the 1852 map as having land on the Rochester Road.

Jacob Benedict and his wife Rhoda Beebe, whom he married in 1811, had nine children. The 1836 and 1843 tax records indicate that Jacob was farming 82 acres in the vicinity of the Rochester Road and he appears in the Federal census records of 1830, 1840, and 1850. Rhoda died in 1832 several weeks after the birth of Lewis, her ninth child. Jacob died in 1855 and is buried in Greenvale Cemetery with his wife. While his will lists the children, it indicates that most of them had moved west, settling in Illinois and Wisconsin.

Gilbert Benedict, a veteran of the War of 1812, and his wife Cornelia had five children, Nellie, Hannah, Gould, Jane, and Jacob. The 1836 and 1843 tax records indicate that he farmed 45 acres in the Rochester Road area near his brother Jacob. Cornelia died in 1831, the same year as the birth of her last child, and by 1833 Gilbert had married Lydia Smith of Walworth. They had three children: Elmer, Cornelia, and George. By 1865, Gould, Elmer, and Jacob and their families were still living in Perinton. Lydia had died in 1862, and Gilbert was living with his son Jacob, Jacob's wife Elizabeth, and their daughter Rosanna on the Rochester Road farm. Gilbert's daughter Nellie was also part of that household.

Gilbert died on April 11, 1869, at the age of 80, after having lived in Perinton for 44 years. His obituary noted that he "has always been a stable member of society and of the Church of God." He is buried in Greenvale Cemetery as are his two wives, Cornelia and Lydia.

Elmer Benedict, Gilbert's son, was educated at the Red Schoolhouse west of the village of Fairport in East Rochester and later attended Macedon Academy. After teaching at the Red Schoolhouse, he married Rachel Bancroft of Macedon and bought a 52 acre farm on Benedict Road, a section that is called Mill Road today, where they raised their two children Adrian and Nellie. Elmer was known as a "radical Republican" and served Perinton as assessor, justice of the peace, and poormaster. He was also a member of the Grange. He lived on Benedict Road until Rachel's death in 1903, after which he moved to the Cottage Hotel in Fairport village where he remained until his death in 1909. Both Rachel and Elmer are interred in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.

Elmer's son Adrian was also a lifelong resident of Perinton, having been born in his grandfather Gilbert's house on the Rochester Road. As a child he lived on Benedict Road with his family, and then for over 40 years in his home on the southeast corner of Kreag and Pittsford-Palmyra Roads. Like his father he was active in the town, serving as assessor from 1923-43. He lived the last years of his life with his daughter in the village of Fairport, where he died in 1944 at the age of 85. His grave can be found in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery.