

## 495 VICTOR ROAD

Among the many historic structures in the hamlet of Egypt there are several that are of themselves designated landmarks and that have histories that meld with the history of Egypt and early Perinton. They were parts of farmsteads and were owned by families who were significant in the life of the community.

The Greek Revival farmhouse at 495 Victor Road is one of those special houses. It appears to have been built in the 1840's and is located on a hill with a wonderful view overlooking White Brook valley, still quite a



grand agricultural vista. Built over a stone foundation, the structure is one and one-half stories with a center entrance. The front has a one-story 5-bay extension. The two enclosed end bays and the center three bays that make up a recessed porch create a striking entryway. There is a shed-roofed addition on the south side and a former carriage shed on the southwest side, which was attached to the house in the 1940's and is currently the den and garage. The windows have six-over-six panes with wooden shutters. The original house had three small bedrooms upstairs and three more downstairs with a kitchen, pantry, sitting room, and parlor. Dr. John Homer Woolsey, grandson of Lorenzo and Martha, the first owners of the structure, has left a fascinating description of the house:

“All entrances were covered with the fragrant wisteria and grape-bearing vines. Enclosing the front and driveway yards was a looped iron and wooden fence and heavy gates.

The home was chiefly entered by the side doorway into the dining room that had a fireplace with [a] suspended iron kettle on one side and on the opposite side near the windows [was] the dining table. About the fireplace was the focal point of gathering for discussions while in her rocking chair close to one of the windows Grandmother Martha, with her ever opened Bible, sat, read, listened, and added her dogmatic opinions. At the right corner was the doorway leading to the sitting-room with the traditional knitted ‘God Bless Our Home’ under glass in a picture frame and further on a room with horsehair covered furniture designated as a parlour and seldom used....Off the kitchen was a large woodshed kept well stocked with varying sizes of cut wood and a cool dank cellar under the house for preservation of perishable fruit and vegetables. The rear yard was bordered....on another [side] with the stone plaster ‘smoke-house’ for preparing hams and bacon and further on by several feet the privy with architecture accommodating all ages.”

The land upon which the house stands was purchased in the early 1800's by Peter Hartman. Hartman's daughter, Martha, married Lorenzo Woolsey in 1842. They probably built the house soon after, and by 1849 both the land and house had been deeded to them. The Woolsey family were among Perinton's early settlers, arriving here in 1830 and settling in the vicinity of Pannell and Ryan Roads. Lorenzo and Martha lived at 495 Victor Road for over 50 years, until their deaths in the 1890's. They were active in the community, becoming charter members of the South Perinton United Methodist Church, which was incorporated in 1837.

Lorenzo was often asked to run for local office but declined, citing his lack of education and saying “I thought I could not do them justice...because of my lack of education...so I would not accept any of them.” However, the parents saw that their four children were educated. They attended District School #11 on Wilkinson Road near the church, and the three sons went on to high school in Fairport. The oldest son, Eliot, became a physician, another son Jerome was active in real estate and insurance, and their youngest son John earned a pharmacy degree and eventually ran the Egypt General Store and post office. As was common for the times, their daughter, Martha Paraside, only finished grade school and spent her life taking care of her parents and their home. The house remained in the Woolsey family until 1924.

The Carvel Martin family purchased the house in 1940 and made a number of interior changes while continuing to preserve the original ambiance of this Greek Revival farmhouse. It was during their ownership that the carriage shed was attached to the main house and converted to a garage and den. In addition, the kitchen was converted to a family room with a fireplace and the pantry became the kitchen. Their property extended to as many as 80 acres and included three barns and an additional building where they raised horses and dogs and stored buggies and carriages. Subsequent owners, Brent and Mary Smith, exposed original oak beams and chestnut corner posts in the family room and maple floors in the dining room. They also developed flower gardens that surround the house, further enhancing its rural charm. Currently the house and barns sit on about eleven acres of land, the rest having been subdivided.

In 1990, the Landmark Society surveyed the house and architect Paul Malo called it a “very handsome house.....[an]excellent example of a type of Greek Revival house that isn’t very common.....lovely.” The following year it was declared a designated landmark under Perinton’s Historic Preservation Ordinance.