

Perinton Center and its Pioneers

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In the early years of the 19th century, other settlers followed the Perrin family to Western New York and to what would become the Town of Perinton. In 1811, Isaac Arnold, a Quaker from Rhode Island, purchased sixty acres of land in Perinton Center for \$240 and built a public house or inn. Originally the inn was run by Lyman Tripp, another settler, but as business began to grow, Isaac himself took over. Records show that he held a license for keeping an inn from 1822 to 1829. As was common practice in early settlements, the local inn was also the center of public discourse and action, and, not surprisingly, was the site of town meetings from 1827 to 1829. Arnold's tavern still stands at the northwest corner of the Ayrault-Turk Hill Road intersection.

Isaac Arnold served in the War of 1812 and was subsequently very active in town affairs, holding a variety of positions between 1813 and 1826, such as poundkeeper, clerk, overseer of highways, and fence viewer. In addition to his duties as innkeeper, he made wooden churns and apple grinders for cider making. Isaac and his wife Abigail Wilbur had seven children, one of whom, Thomas Henry, lived for a number of years on his South Main Street farm in the house currently known as the Arnold-McDonough house (# 224). Darius Arnold, Isaac's brother, also lived in Perinton, and was active in town affairs, serving as overseer of highways, fenceviewer and poormaster. He was married to Joanna Slocum, whose four brothers, Amasa, Elisha, Benjamin, and Smith were early settlers in the Perinton Center area as well. Amasa was married to Darius' sister Anne. A search of local cemeteries reveals the graves of Thomas Henry and his wife Marietta in Greenvale Cemetery and Darius Arnold's wife Joanna and five of their children, as well as Darius and Isaac's mother Lavinia in Perinton Center Cemetery.

The Benjamin Slocum family came from Adams, Massachusetts and settled on a parcel of land purchased from William Walker. They paid \$1,170 for 320 acres on the west side of Turk Hill Road between Ayrault and Pittsford-Palmyra Roads. In 1804, Benjamin and his four sons, the aforementioned Amasa, Elisha, Benjamin, and Smith, along with Amasa's wife Anne Arnold and daughter Amy, moved to the new farm. The move did not begin auspiciously as the small cabin in which they took shelter burned on their first night. Samuel Bennett, another early pioneer in the area, took them in until they could build log houses. The Slocum men were active in Perinton affairs and served in such positions as school commissioner, overseer of highways, fence viewer, and town clerk. Amasa was the first elected town clerk in Perinton, and he was also interested in the area's business beyond his farm. As such he took boats through the canal, one of which transported 130 bushels of potatoes, twenty barrels of pork, thirty barrels of flour, and twenty barrels of whiskey from Wayneport to Brockport for Darius Arnold, his brother-in-law and fellow pioneer. The Slocum farm boasted the first orchard in town and perhaps a cemetery as well, which is said to have been located on the southwest corner of the Ayrault-Turk Hill Road intersection. However, there is no longer any evidence of a cemetery in that location. The Slocum farm remained in the family for over sixty-five years. Although Smith Slocum and his wife Elizabeth are buried in Perinton Center Cemetery, other members of the family are buried in unmarked graves, after the custom of the Quakers, in Farmington's Friends' Cemetery.

Samuel Bennett, who had housed the Slocum family on their arrival in Perinton Center, had come to Perinton in 1795, after purchasing 320 acres in the Ayrault-Turk Hill Road area. He was a Revolutionary War veteran, a survivor of British prisoner-of-war camps, and, more importantly, a blacksmith, an essential trade in any settlement. Known for his ingenuity and his ability to make the best use of scarce iron, he first set up his business under a tree with a sign reading "Horses shod unless the weather be rainy." A devout Baptist, Bennett was instrumental in the founding of several churches in the area and was also one of the trustees of the new Perinton Center Cemetery. Samuel and his wife Paulina died in 1819 while on a visit to Cayuga county where they "took the fever." They had two daughters, one of whom married Benjamin Slocum, thus adding another pioneer family connection.

By the 1820's, Perinton Center was a thriving community with an inn, a blacksmith, a school (District School #3 located on Turk Hill Road between Ayrault and Pittsford-Palmyra Roads), a cemetery

(Perinton Center Cemetery across from Martha Brown School), and a number of successful farms. Roads had been laid out in the area including what would become known as Turk Hill Road, portions of Fairport-Webster Road (Route 250), and Ayrault Road west of Turk Hill (known as Wapping Road). The community was growing.