

The Second Congregational Church in Ironville was dedicated October 11th of 1843. However it was duly formed and incorporated in 1846 with 35 members. The basement once served many purposes in this neighborhood. It was at different times a school room, a gathering place and was used by Annie Penfield to honor Civil War Veterans until the last of them passed on. It is designed in a restrained Greek Revival style. The balance in the façade, blocky form, strong pediment, and corner pilasters speak to the style, but the building lacks much other significant detailing. Separate entrances have been retained from the days when men and women would use different doors, and often sat apart in service as well. The heavy cornice and pilasters are repeated on the bi-level enclosed bell tower. One of the most impressive features on this building are the massive, 30/20 windows that run



along either side and flank the entrance. The numerous small panes reflect the limitations of glass making at the time.

The parsonage for the Congregational Church was built also in 1843 and used to house the pastor and his family. Today it is the location of the Penfield Homestead Museum's Business Office and Research/ Genealogy Library. Similar to the Harwood House, it has the 3-bay, side hall plan, cornice return, and flat entablature over the door, typical of the style. An interesting detail that appears on several Ironville buildings is the rectangular light in the gable. A window, fanlight or other decorative feature is typical of this style, often in a triangle to emphasize the pediment, a rectangle is rare. This may be attributed to a local builder who had a hand in all of these buildings, or the detail may have been copied.



Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) is the regional, nonprofit historic preservation organization for the Adirondack Park. This tour is one of over fifty events AARCH is offering in our 2009 program schedule. Further information is available by contacting AARCH at 518-834-9328 or by visiting our website at www.aarch.org.

AARCH would like to thank the Penfield Homestead Museum for helping to prepare and lead this tour.

*For more information about Ironville history contact:
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Architecture of the Champlain Valley



Ironville

This hamlet, which was first named Irondale, an Adirondack mining community in Crown Point, is listed as the "Birthplace of the Electric Age", being the site of the first industrial application of electricity in the United States. The Electro-Magnet was Joseph Henry's invention to recharge the crude iron ore separator, which was first used here in 1831. Now known as Ironville, this area was instrumental to modern progress and to the efforts in the Civil War.

In his study of the Crown Point Iron Industry, Dr. Eugene Barker writes about the separating of iron from ore. "The ore, after being mined, was drawn to large open kilns, about 300 tons of it being piled upon twenty-five cords of wood. Heat caused the stone to loose its hold from the iron. The ore was then generally put through the water process of separation. It was placed in troughs with grate bottoms, in which it was stumped and screened, then passed through sieves through which water rose from the bottom. The iron being heavier, sank through holes in the bottom of the sieve into a trough, while the pulverized rock was raised and carried off by the current of the water, often with a considerable amount of the iron in fine particles."

This was a wasteful process and so a separator came to be used in Crown Point. It was a cylinder about 5 feet long and 2 1/2 feet in diameter studded with magnetized bars on its surface. It revolved in a trough into which ore was shoveled. The iron particles were attracted to the magnetic charge of the bars and attached to them as the cylinder revolved. Stationary brushes then wiped the bars clean and the iron fell into waiting receptacles. After awhile the magnetic bars would lose strength and need to be re-charged by the electromagnet. He goes on to say that the electromagnet in use at Crown Point was secured in 1831 from Professor Henry of the Albany Academy at Albany, NY (who later became Director of the Smithsonian Museum). It was worked by a galvanic cell (wet battery) for recharging the bar magnets of the separator and for detecting iron and steel from brass and copper scrap metal.



This homestead was built by Allen Penfield of Pittsford, Vermont in 1828. He moved here to build a forge to process the recently discovered iron beds nearby. Penfield, with partner Timothy Taft, set the iron business rolling and in 1846 built a second forge, which was enlarged in 1873. The Ironville Works became an important aspect of the larger Crown Point Iron Company, employing around 60 men. Around the works was created a company town that included worker housing, a company store, church, and school. By the late 19th century the iron reserves had been exhausted and the works were shut down. Most people moved from the area in search of work, leaving behind a remarkably well preserved collection of mid-19th century buildings.

The Penfield home has been enlarged significantly at least once, though it is unclear which section was built first, and several smaller additions were also made. The house was basically doubled by adding a second 5-bay structure at a 90-degree angle to the first. The addition was most likely done within 20 years as Federal and Greek Revival styling is incorporated throughout. Both main entries feature elliptical fanlights above the doors, and 12/12 windows are used consistently throughout. A summer kitchen was also added in the form of a small single story building on the north façade. Finally a wrap-around porch was added in the Queen Anne style, using turned posts and curved brackets.

This remained the home to the Penfield family for three generations: Allen's son, Colonel James Penfield, lived there in the summer and was followed by his only child, Annie, who lived there until her death in 1954.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Penfield Foundation is to preserve and protect the historic landscape, hamlet and homestead associated with the early nineteenth-century iron working history of Ironville, New York and to teach visitors and town residents the social, industrial and business history of the Crown Point Iron Company and the family history of the Penfields through exhibits, tours and special events. The collection includes historical information, which supports local family genealogy, military, business, industrial, social and agricultural history of Crown Point. To this end, the Foundation maintains the homestead as a museum, which includes a collection of buildings, artifacts and an archive of documents, photographs and books, related to local history.

The prosperity of the early to mid-19th century in Ironville is reflected in the construction of a number of buildings in the Greek Revival style which dominated American architecture from about 1825-1860. The Harwood House, originally owned by a partner in the iron works, is a gable front, 3-bay house with partial return on the cornice line and decorative pilasters on the corners that imply a temple form. Timber framing, which was in use at this time, created limitations in floor plans. Building shapes were restricted to boxes, which lent themselves well to the Greek Revival style, as seen here. Later shifts to balloon and then platform framing afforded more flexibility, as bay windows, dormers, and varying room shapes became more prevalent.



The Dutch Colonial Revival wing and the wrap around porch were most likely added in the early 20th century, obscuring somewhat, but not compromising the integrity of the original structure.



Both of these simple dwellings most likely would have provided housing for workers employed at the iron

works. They are 1 1/2 story, vernacular, Cape Cod type homes. Lack of ornamentation indicates that these were built out of necessity to provide shelter, versus creating an architectural showpiece, as with the Homestead and the Harwood House. The porches were most likely added in the late 19th century. The orientation towards the side versus the road seems to be a take on creating a dooryard, which is the area between the kitchen and the barn or other outbuilding where farm activities would take place. Workers in Ironville received their homes along with cows from the company. In addition they probably kept chickens or other animals as well as small gardens, providing sustenance for the family.



Entablature

Superstructure of moldings and bands that lie horizontally above columns, resting on their capitals.

