

YORKTOWN HOMES OF HISTORIC DISTINCTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERRY NAUMANN

Frank Costa has lived in the converted carriage house since 1956.

Ryjk's Patent

In the 17th century, one of the first families to settle in the Cortlandt/Yorktown area was the Lent family. Their patriarch, Abraham, came from a wealthy merchant family in Holland, who had nine children. Three of his sons, Ryck, Jacob and Hendrick, with three other young men purchased from the native Sachoes a large piece of land that became known as Ryjk's Patent.

This land encompasses the city of Peekskill and extended from the Annsville Creek of today east to parts of present day Yorktown Heights. The surname "Lent" was eventually adopted by Hercules, the oldest son of Ryck, after the town in Holland from which the family came. At one point, their land extended from Lent's Cove (on the Hudson near Indian Point) through Blue Mountain Reservation and on to Maple Street, Baptist Church Road, and even to Baldwin Road in Yorktown.

To the north, the Lent holdings extended east from Peekskill, and, by the mid-19th century, descendant Stephen Lent (born 1806) and his wife Happy Miller Lent occupied a farmhouse on East Main Street in Mohegan Lake with their four children. A much esteemed citizen, Lent served as Yorktown's justice of the peace for 12 years. Sometime around 1880, Lent built a carriage house on his property. Today, that carriage house has become the comfortable home of Frank Costa, who has lived there since 1956. Now, it is also the Yorktown Landmark Preservation Commission's latest Home of Historic Distinction.

In 1907, after Stephen Lent's death, his children sold the property and it passed through a series of owners until 1925, when it was purchased by Primo Costa, Frank's father. Here, the story becomes much more colorful, since Primo Costa's occupation was that of a bootlegger. Frank Costa grew up in the original Lent farmhouse and over the years, his father made changes to the carriage house,

funding his renovations with the proceeds from his liquor business. His still attracted a variety of colorful characters including the notorious gangster Legs Diamond. Thanks to Prohibition, the building was first transformed into a garage and then to a cottage, all the while retaining its Victorian charm.

The elder Costa was an amateur stone mason and examples of his work dot the gardens of the property. The original farmhouse, which has been renovated beyond recognition, and the carriage house were subdivided many years ago, so the smaller building now nestles on a separate property, surrounded by giant evergreens and Primo Costa's gardens.

The Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission is always seeking applicants for the Homes of Historic Distinction Program. To qualify, homes must have historical significance based on age, architectural style, past ownership or association with a person or event important to Yorktown's history. Through the program, plaques designating the basic facts about each house's history are fabricated and installed on or near the home. The commission will work with each homeowner on appropriate wording for the plaque and will assist in research. The cost for the application and the plaque is \$100. Applications are available online at yorktownny.org/planning or by emailing nmilanese@yorktownny.org.

The commission would like to acknowledge the assistance of Tim Beachak and Dustin Miller of Signs Ink of Yorktown in the design, preparation and production of Homes of Historic Distinction signage.

This article was submitted by the Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission as part of a series highlighting Yorktown Homes of Historic Distinction.

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