

YORKTOWN HOMES OF HISTORIC DISTINCTION

George Ferris Farmhouse

On Dec. 7, 1815, a man with the unlikely name of Barzilla Dusenbury granted a sweep of land on a hillside west of the village of Yorktown to a farmer named George Ferris. Soon after, Farmer Ferris built his new home at the crest of a hill facing west over rolling farmlands and on to Peekskill and the Hudson. His house would have had a spectacular view. The original farmhouse was probably located in the kitchen area of the current home, and over the years, successive owners added rooms and embellishments.

In 1849, the property passed from the Ferris estate to Isaac Denike; it later passed to William Fowler, and over the years to Simeon and Helena Johnson, Theodore Studley, Rosetta Baldwin, Minnie Tompkins, Thomas O'Brien and in 1946, to Joseph Carr.

During the 1930s—the O'Brien years—the home was called Fairview Farm. A herd of cattle grazed in the meadows and apple orchards surrounded them. In 1946, the new owner, Joseph Carr, installed a tavern over the kitchen in the now-dilapidated house. Longtime residents recalled that, although the house was falling apart, the bar was always

open—a friendly watering place for neighbors. Around 1970, Carr started selling off his 60 some acres, retaining about 2 acres for himself.

Finally, in 1985, Kevin and Cheryl Lodewick purchased the property, removing the tavern and conducting an exhaustive renovation of the property. As Cheryl Lodewick said, “We were the crazy people who saved this house from the bulldozer.” The Lodewicks proceeded to gut the home, but tried to preserve whatever original features they could, from zinc and tin ceilings to stained glass windows and radiators. Every dowel and spindle of the staircase banisters were refinished. They called the place “Golden Hill” and made it their home for 30 years. In 1989, the Lodewicks were honored by the Yorktown Historical Society with a Heritage Preservation Award.

And, in 2015, when the Lodewicks decided to move on, they were fortunate to find a like-minded family in Michael and Laura Grabowski, who saw the property as a home for their family. The Grabowskis, together with their children, Ethan, Maya and Gillian, envision themselves as stewards of the next generation for a remarkable

piece of real estate. They decided to rename “Golden Hill” in honor of its original builder.

Today, the George Ferris Farmhouse still has a spectacular view, although the meadows of the past are now filled with the housing developments of the '60s and '70s, and to the east by the Taconic State Parkway. Nonetheless, Michael and Laura Grabowski are committed caretakers of the home that happened on Barzilla Dusenbury's original acreage.

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



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NANCY MILANESE

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.

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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Q: What is a hernia?

A: A hernia is an opening within muscles or connective tissue, called fascia, through which intestines or fat protrudes. Hernias tend to occur in the belly through previous incisions, or most commonly in the groin, which is known as an inguinal hernia. They can develop at any age, from birth onward. Hernias may grow over time or they can come on suddenly; they may result from strenuous activity, heavy lifting, during pregnancy, or even from a fit of coughing.

Q: What should I do if I think I have a hernia?

A: It's important to seek medical attention right away if you think you have a hernia. Aside from resting and taking ibuprofen for pain, unfortunately there isn't a lot that people can do on their own when it comes to treating a hernia. The only definitive treatment is surgery. Hernias, if left untreated, can continue to enlarge, putting you at risk for potentially dangerous complications, like lack of blood supply or strangulation to the intestines.

Q: What are the surgical options for treating a hernia?

A: Hernias are treated either by open repair, or minimally invasive surgery, which includes laparoscopy or robot-assisted surgery. At Northern Westchester Hospital all methods are available and selected based on the size and location of the hernia. Inguinal hernias,

or hernias in the groin, require a synthetic mesh to repair and cover the defect, or hole. Other methods, like Laparoscopy and robotic hernia repair, allow the surgeon to make smaller incisions with smaller operating tools. In both types of surgery, the risk of complications is minimal – about the same as any surgical operation. Hernia repairs are ambulatory procedures and you'll be able to go home the same day. The risk of recurrence is slim: There's about a 5 percent chance that a person will experience another hernia in the same spot or elsewhere.

Q: How long is the recovery period?

A: I generally recommend patients take a week off from work and that they do not lift anything heavier than 25 pounds for at least six weeks. I typically don't restrict cardiovascular exercise with my patients and most patients are able to return to regular activities without pain after a few weeks.

Did you know?

There are about 200,000 hernias diagnosed every year. About 2 percent occur in adults, 4 percent in infants.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention