

HOMES OF HISTORIC DISTINCTION

# Peter Pratt's Inn

Peter Pratt's Inn (the Carpenter-Davenport Homestead) has been awarded many, much-deserved accolades over the years for its gourmet cuisine. But, long before the charming 18th century structure became a 21st century dining destination, it had already served a multitude of functions.

The inn was originally situated on the 250 acres that made up the Carpenter-Davenport Homestead. Located in the oldest settled part of Yorktown, then called Hanover, the property abuts the Revolutionary War site of the defeat of George Washington's Command Post by the Tories in 1781.

The main part of the building was constructed in 1823 using the foundation of a barn built in 1780. Amy Carpenter, who had inherited the property from her great grandmother, Rachel Davenport, married Daniel Griffin, who expanded the original colonial structure, later adding the two Victorian era wings on either side, to accommodate their family. The building today looks much as it did upon completion by Daniel Griffin in 1861.

Between 1915 and 1924, the old farmhouse became an outpost of the Bowery Mission to house men from the city, brought up north to work at a nearby sawmill.

As the 20th century progressed, Croton Heights was set to become the first housing



PHOTOS COURTESY OF NANCY MILANESE

Peter Pratt's Inn

development in Yorktown, as publisher and soon-to-be land developer Halsey Wilson purchased much of the surrounding land as well as the Carpenter-Davenport House for use as an inn. Guests at the inn would soon include his friends and other purchasers of his lots, happy to have found a place to stay as they waited for their homes to be completed in then-remote Croton Heights. In 1926, the Wilsons christened the building the "Croton Heights Inn," opening its doors to local residents and their guests.

In 1940, the Croton Heights Inn, as it continued to be called, took a decidedly

cosmopolitan turn when it was purchased by the Russian émigré nobleman Prince Victor Kotschoubey and his wife, Princess Kyra Nikolaievna, shortly after their marriage. The two secured a liquor license and soon the elegant inn was serving illustrious friends of the prince with names such as Vanderbilt, Getty, Duncan Hines and McCormick (all of whom have signed the guest register located in the Inn's center hallway).

By the 1950s, the inn had been rechristened the Beaujolais Restaurant, by Charles Biles, who had leased it from the

Kotschoubey's seasonally. Biles' head waiter then took over the lease and transformed the inn into Northern Westchester's finest bordello.

In 1965, the Pratt family became the fifth owners of the property. Today, the restaurant retains its original colonial design, and patrons, dining by the fireplace, can look up to see the same chestnut beams resting on the granite boulders that have supported them since the 18th century.

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](http://yorktownny.org/planning) or by emailing [nmilanese@yorktownny.org](mailto: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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