

HOME OF HISTORIC DISTINCTION

Theodosius White's Tenant Farm House

When the esteemed Revolutionary War surgeon and former Yorktown Supervisor Ebenezer White died in 1827, his youngest son Theodosius inherited his property, which encompassed 178 acres in the area surrounding what is now Granite Springs Road.

The land included several houses—among them the original Ebenezer White Homestead itself, and farther down the road, a smaller one-time tenant farmhouse, which is now the charming home of Trisha Sullivan Rothberg, Seth Rothberg and their son, Liam. This home, Theodosius White's tenant farmhouse, is Yorktown's latest Home of Historic Distinction.

Although the town lists the building date of the house as 1861, it is easy to see architec-

tural elements that are much older. And, like most of the tenant cabins in the mid-Hudson Valley, the original primitive structure was expanded and embellished over the years. A proud steward of her historic home, Trish Rothberg is quick to point out the old roofline and the hand-hewn beams in the house, which the family purchased in 2004.

The many much-needed renovations undertaken by the Rothbergs over the years evolved into veritable "archaeological digs" yielding such items as a tin of 19th century makeup—"Harry Tetlow's Superb Gossamer for the Complexion"—found in the bathroom wall. A later project removing wall materials to add electrical service to a staircase in 2008 revealed a 1914 letter to a

Sarah H. Johnson from "Eben Wood, Esquire" in Peekskill.

A metal detector employed in the garden unearthed a Colonial uniform button from the Revolutionary War as well as some from a World War I uniform. One of the home's prior owners, adjusting to the changing needs of the 1920s, added a garage constructed from a Sears Roebuck kit to accommodate a family automobile. The garage, complete with a metal plaque from Sears, remains on the property today.

By all accounts, Theodosius White was a successful farmer and lived a long life, dying in 1885 at the age of 96. It is likely that he himself lived in the home only briefly, preferring instead to make his father's larger homestead the family seat. Stories reveal him to be a beloved grandfather, prone to corny jokes, and active well into his eighties (when he was able to jump into the air in his ice skates and click his heels together while teaching his grandsons to skate!).

More than a hundred years later, his tenant farmhouse continues to reveal clues about its past and the families who called it home.

The Yorktown Landmarks Preservation Commission (YLPC) is always seeking applicants for the Homes of Historic Distinction Program. To qualify,



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERRY NAUMANN

Trisha Sullivan Rothberg at the Theodosius White Tenant Farm House

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 around

the home. YLPC 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.

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