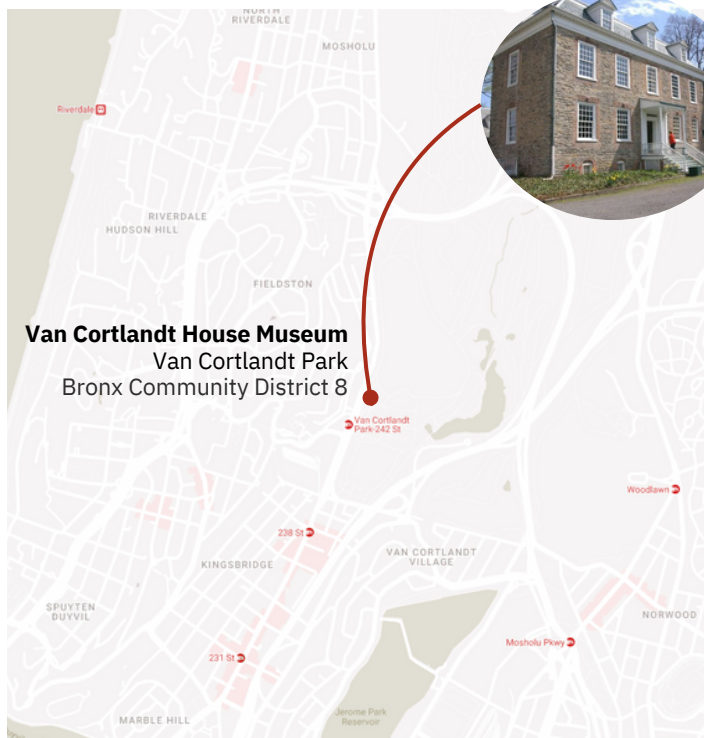


# Van Cortlandt House Museum



HISTORIC  
HOUSE  
TRUST  
NEW YORK CITY



## History

The house was built in 1748-1749 at the behest of Frederick van Cortlandt, son of a wealthy merchant who first purchased land in the area in 1693. Over the years, the Van Cortlandt family amassed a large estate which they called their “Yonkers plantation.” In the 18th century, wheat, rye, corn and other crops grew all across what is now Van Cortlandt Park.

Three generations of the Van Cortlandt family held enslaved Africans on the property from 1698 until 1823. Some, such as Dinah, worked as house servants. Others, like Piero the miller and Levellie the boatman, performed skilled labor that increased the profitability of the plantation. Enslaved Africans held by the Van Cortlandts left a legacy in today’s park that is still visible. They worked on roads that are now park trails and they dammed Tibbetts Brook to create the beautiful mill pond still enjoyed by park goers.

The house is significant as one of the few remaining landmarks of the Hudson Valley which has witnessed the entire development of that region from the period of European settlement to the present day.

## Stewardship

**Nonprofit Partner:** National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York

**History** In 1888, the City of New York purchased the 1,000-acre Van Cortlandt family estate to form the new Van Cortlandt Park. The second President of The National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of New York, Justine Van Rensselaer Townsend, played a key role in the house's first restoration in 1896, and in its subsequent opening in 1897 as the first historic house museum in New York City and only the fourth in the nation. She also lobbied with New York State to create the public-private partnership model that is critical to park stewardship today.



## Museum Today

**Themes:** Black History, Women's History, America's Birth, Mercantile History, Agriculture, Revolutionary War

**FY23 Attendance:** 5,913 (23% school group visitation)

**Admission:** \$5 Adults; \$3 Students/Seniors; Free for children under 12; Free on Thursdays; Free during Black History Month & Women’s History Month

**Hours:** Open Thursday - Sunday, 11 am - 4 pm. No reservations required. Self-guided tour available in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Russian

**Transportation:** #1 train to 242nd street, Bx9 to West 246th Street and Broadway, BxM3 Express Bus to 246th Street and Broadway Metro-North Hudson River Line to Marble Hill Station



# Van Cortlandt House Museum



## Programs

*"I have brought students from Manhattan College to the Van Cortlandt House Museum every semester since 2015. I have seen dramatic improvements in the interpretation of the site, and in providing a contemporary view of the history of this historic house, its grounds, and the people who lived in the house, including the enslaved. [Site Historian] Nick Dembowski's research and the work of the museum staff in providing new displays and interpretation have enriched the experience for me and my students."*  
- Professor Adam Arenson, Department Chairperson of History



**History for Adults:** Archaeology & History at Van Cortlandt Park



**Arts & Culture:** Pinkster Festival



**4th Grade Field Trip:** The Enslaved People of the Van Cortlandt Plantation

## Collections

Van Cortlandt House Museum strives to be a vital member of The Bronx Cultural community and the larger region by preserving, researching and interpreting the Van Cortlandt House, its grounds, and historical collection for a wide audience for the purpose of growing meaningful connections between the past and the present.



Virtual Experiences



Delft Tile Tours



Dutch Colonial Room

## Capital Projects\*

**Fence Reconstruction:** Funded at \$2.7M: Currently in construction procurement

**Exterior Restoration & ADA Improvement Project:** Funded at \$16.1M; Currently in design

\*Managed by the Historic House Trust of New York City in partnership with NYC Parks

