



*An early 20th century photo of Richardson's Canal House Inn.
(Note the bridge over the Erie Canal in the background, which served the Rochester and Eastern interurban electric trolley line that ran from Rochester into Canandaigua and on to Geneva.)*

One of Perinton's most venerable buildings stands by the canal in Bushnell's Basin. Known today as Richardson's Canal House, the structure was built somewhere around 1818 by Gould and Elias Richardson as a stagecoach stop on one of the main stage routes between Canandaigua and Rochester. It was known as the "best inn between Buffalo and Albany on the stagecoach line," and for most of its long life has served as an inn and tavern

Between 1837 and the 1890's, the structure had a number of different owners and for a time served as a private residence. John Kossow renamed it as the Exchange Hotel when he purchased the property in 1897 and ran a successful business there until Prohibition forced him to close. The inn suffered some hard times in the ensuing fifty years. It briefly housed a nudist colony, but an aroused neighborhood "bred in strict New England tradition, drove the nudists out." The structure served as apartments until the mid 1950's when the county health department ordered it closed because of faulty plumbing. Empty and dilapidated, by the 1970's the old inn was slated for demolition.

Reprieve appeared in the person of Andrew Wolfe of Wolfe Publications who took possession of the inn in 1972. Restorers worked hard to establish the ambiance of a country inn, which was to be run by Andrew Wolfe's wife, Vivienne Tellier Wolfe, who shared her husband's interest in old buildings and architecture. Ms. Wolfe oversaw much of the restoration which was completed in an amazing nine months. The newly restored Richardson's Canal House Inn opened on Valentine's Day in 1979 and soon was receiving rave reviews. Ms. Wolfe continued to run this fine popular restaurant until 2002 when ownership was turned over to Johannes Mueller.

Despite its nearly 200 years of existence and the many changes that have taken place, Richardson's Canal House Inn, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is aptly described as the oldest original fine food tavern still on the Erie Canal.

