

fire-proof structure of brick, with walls three feet thick, and at one side, supported by three stone buttresses. The vaulted interior has two divisions with no connection with each other, entered from opposite sides, and with a thick division wall of brick. Various are the opinions as to the use of this—what is generally called “the vault.” A powder magazine, wine cellar, dairy, vegetable room, all have been mentioned, as well as a storehouse for goods when the building was a store. I give all, and a choice may be made, or other suggestions offered. Perhaps later investigation may make clear its use. A loft has been put on in modern times, which was there when Dr. Scadding visited it about 1870, but previous to that, it showed the round vaulted brick roof.

Various legends float about, as of fish-ponds, and that one room of the house was literally lined with mirrors. To the mind of the plain frugal settlers of those days, the abundance of mirrors in French houses would have a dazzling appearance. The ceilings are very low, as may be shown by the stairway of only seven steps. The building itself is frame, and is in excellent preservation, many repairs having been made at different times. During the war of 1812 it was used as a hospital.

The property has had many owners, but one can trace almost, if not all, the occupants and owners—the Count de Chalus, Quetton St. George, Mr. S. Kent in the first half of the century. About 1550, it was bought by Captain Baxter, with two hundred acres of land adjoining it, from Col. Allen, of Toronto, the father of Senator G. W. Allen. Every year two barrels of a special kind of apples grown there, were sent to him by Capt. Baxter. The house had previously been occupied by Mr. McPherson. It next passed into the hands of Mr. Warren, by whom it was sold to Mr. Shickaluna, the famous boat builder of St. Catharines, who erected near it a house, many said, as much resembling a boat as could be done. In his turn, it was sold to Mr. Mills, still living in Toronto, who made great improvements in the house. Afterwards the property came into the hands of Cap. Geale Dickson, who erected the fine residence now standing, since improved by the present owner, Mr. Jackson, one hundred acres having been sold to Mr. Doyle. While in possession of Mr. Dickson, the half of the Count's house was taken down. This year the Niagara Historical Society has placed seven stones to mark historic spots, and one of these has been placed here with the inscription, “The building near was erected by the Count de Puisaye, a French Refugee, about 1800.”