

**SOME NOTES ON  
PRE-1840 STRUCTURES  
IN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE  
OLD TOWN**

**PART 1**

**STREETS A-G**

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## INDEX

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade numerous local researchers in Niagara-on-the-Lake (NOTL) have started to address the limited historical documentation of our culturally rich heritage community. During this period the social history documentation of NOTL has doubled, based on the number of books, reports and NOTL Museum website files published. Today our community is on a par with the most documented communities in North America, such as those in Massachusetts. Our Museum's website is now one of the three most extensive social history archives in the province of Ontario - the other two being Library & Archives Canada in Ottawa and the Ontario Archives in York.

It is anticipated that current and future researchers here will continue to reduce the gaps in our community's history documentation. One of these gaps is the documentation of our historic structures around the municipality. As a start, the Niagara Historical Society received a Federal grant from the Next Horizons for Seniors agency in the summer of 2013; a senior student, Michael DeJong was hired and two volunteers, the late Professor Bob Augustine and Graham Aldridge signed up. David Hemmings acted as the project leader, supplying the structure photographs, the family histories of those living in the structures and general research direction. The target was 130 pre-1840 structures. This body of work was the basis for compilation presented here in three Parts with an Index. More recently Val Hancock has assisted in the completion of this document for publication on the NOTL Museum website.

The information provided in this document should be read as an unfinished set of notes. These notes are taken from NOTL Museum documents, published books, some Town documents and the structure files of Joy Ormsby, the former Town Historian. They represent a composite of the best information available to the contributors of this document. By publishing this document, we are anticipating future improvements by property owner submissions that may have better or more comprehensive information about their structures and the interesting families who lived in these structures. We hope this process of updating will allow this document to become a better history for our community, our Town staff and visiting researchers.

There is an extensive Index in Part 3, which is a veritable Who's Who of the early inhabitants of, and visitors to, the Old Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

David F. Hemmings  
President, Niagara Historical Society  
December 2019

## 87 Ball Street



The origins of this house are not entirely clear and piecing together its history requires some conjecture. Based on its design, it would appear the house was built sometime in the 1830s. It was very likely built on the other side of Ricardo Street on land originally owned by St. Mark's Church. Originally St. Mark's owned all 8 acres between Ricardo, Wellington, Byron and King Streets, but they gradually began to lease some of this land, particularly the 2 acres facing Wellington Street.

The land north of Ricardo, where this house now sits, was originally military reserve land that was granted in 1831 to the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. The company drained and dredged the marsh along the river allowing for the construction of shipbuilding facilities and warehouses. During the 1830s and early 1840s the company was very successful, leading to a considerable increase in the town's prosperity and population. By the end of the 1840s, however, the company was in decline, and began a slow descent towards bankruptcy.

Much of their land was foreclosed to financial institutions and sold off, with this section, lot 7, being acquired by George Heaslip, a carpenter, in 1870. He built a house on the lot soon after, which was destroyed in a fire. A later owner, James B. McMillan, purchased this house and then moved it to the Ball Street property. Architecturally, the house features a saltbox design that is relatively rare for its age. It has clapboard siding, a 3-bay façade, and a stone foundation that straddles a hillside slope.

## 507 Butler Street - Stewart-Anderson House or William Stewart Homestead



The small house at 507 Butler Street was an integral part of Niagara's "coloured village," a community of former enslaved persons and Black Loyalists that was developed in the southwestern section of the town. It sits on lot 337, on the outskirts of the original town survey, originally granted by the Crown to Andrew Butler (1759-1804), the son of Col. John Butler (1728-1796) and Catharine Bradt (1735-1793). Butler was a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in the Rangers led by his father and was held captive for a time in 1780. He would later settle in Niagara with his wife Ann, the daughter of Lewis (Ludovicus Cobes) Clement (1725-1781). Upon his death in 1804, Andrew Butler left the property to his son, Joseph Walter Butler (1797-1872) who, upon his departure for Oneida in Haldimand County, sold the property in 1828 to his cousin Lewis Clement (1787-1879). While an 1810 plan of the town shows no buildings on the lot, Andrew Butler's war losses claim indicates there was probably a house there, burned in the fire of December 1813.

William and Susannah Stewart, for whom the house is named, came into possession of the property in 1834 when Clement sold it to them for the price of £25, the same year they entered Upper Canada. There is little record of their status prior to arrival here – they may have enslaved people freed by leaving the United States. The "coloured village" where they settled was populated by a diverse group of people. Some were Loyalists who had been promised freedom and land in return for fighting with the British in the Revolutionary War. Some had been brought as enslaved persons by Loyalists themselves when they moved to Upper Canada in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Slavery had been largely abolished by Lieut. Gov. Simcoe in 1793, but this only prevented the further importation of enslaved persons and did not free existing ones. Nevertheless, gradually they earned their freedom, and by the time the Stewards arrived most were earning wages in various capacities.

Both an African Methodist Episcopal and a Baptist Church served the black population of Niagara, although William Stewart initially went to the Anglican

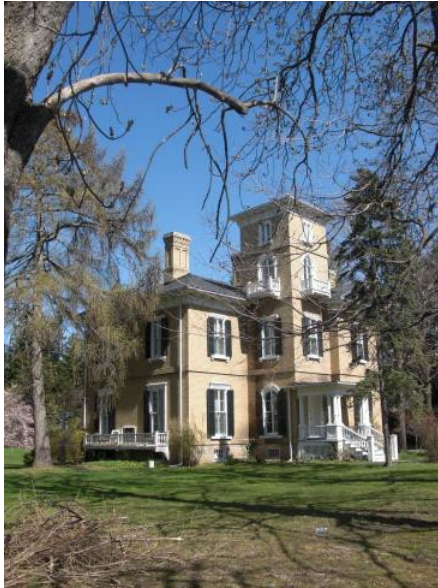


Church. The Baptist Church's burial ground, where many of the town's Black population were buried, can still be seen today on Mississagua Street.

William and Susannah Steward were involved in one notable enslaved fugitive case - that of Solomon Moseby. Moseby had escaped to Niagara where he earned his freedom but faced extradition back to the United States. The Stewards were one of several hundred citizens who signed a petition asking Lieut. Gov. Sir Francis Bond Head to refuse to extradite him. On his way back across the border, Moseby was rescued by a large crowd of black citizens in a riot which saw several people killed - likely Canada's first race riot. Moseby fled and was eventually able to make it to freedom in Britain.

This house was probably built around 1835 shortly after the Stewards' arrival here. Its construction - a one-and-a-half storey saltbox with rear lean-to was typical of those constructed by black residents in Niagara at that time. In 1847, the Stewards left Niagara for Galt (now Cambridge) where they spent the remainder of their lives. By that time, the lot had been subdivided several times, with various portions being sold to other black residents, such as Robert Baster who acquired the southern half in 1836. The northern 1/2 acre, which included the house, was sold to John Oliver for £87.10s when they left.

## 17 Byron Street - The Rectory



Prior to the establishment of this rectory, the incumbent at St. Mark's Church had resided at their own private house. The Rev. Robert Addison (1754-1829, born in Westmorland, England), who founded the church before the War of 1812 resided at a cottage, Lake Lodge which still stands today north of Konzelmann Winery on the shore of Lake Ontario. His successor, Rev. Thomas Creen (1799-1864, born in Ireland), who was originally a Presbyterian, lived in his own house at 363 Simcoe Street, which also stands today in the old town.

Rev. William McMurray (1810-1894, born in Ireland) assumed the role of the third rector in 1857, and with no parsonage constructed yet, he lived at a hotel for his first year. Thus, it was McMurray who was the impetus for the construction of this ornate house, completed in 1858. This is Niagara's only Tuscan villa – the Italianate style becoming increasingly in vogue in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is similar in style to the house of John A. Macdonald in Kingston, Ontario. Its construction material, white brick, was also unusual and was imported from England as ballast on ships.

The house is similar in scale to many of the houses that were being built at the time by prosperous merchants and officials. The overall design of the house might seem, overall, rather ostentatious, with a tower which served little function other than to catch an occasional glimpse of the lake. (Interestingly, the house's interior detailing is simpler than the ornate exterior would suggest.) While it may seem incongruous for a clergyman in a small town to live in such spacious quarters, such an arrangement was relatively common – there was some prestige associated with the position and they didn't want to be seen in smaller accommodations than their parishioners.

McMurray arrived in Upper Canada at age 8 from Northern Ireland and was a pupil at John Strachan's school in York, later undergoing his theological training under Strachan as well. Not yet ordained, he was sent in 1832 to Sault Ste. Marie to act as a catechist and lay reader. After receiving his ordination in 1833 he returned there and married Charlotte Johnson, a granddaughter of an Ojibwa chief. Prior to moving to Niagara, he served as rector at Dundas where he built St. James Church, and then studied at Trinity College in Toronto.

As Rector of Niagara, McMurray oversaw the construction of the Rectory and also was able to convince the heirs of the Rev. Addison to donate his considerable library of 18<sup>th</sup> century English literature to the church. The library was originally housed in the Rectory and is one of the largest of its kind in Canada. McMurray's tenure also saw the construction of the Parish Hall (now known as Addison Hall), which has subsequently been considerably expanded to include the library. The membership of the Church dropped considerably during his tenure, in large part due to the recession caused by Niagara's declining political and economic importance. Nonetheless, McMurray served the parish until his death in 1894 – a Memorial Window commemorates him in the south isle of the nave. He is buried in St. Mark's Cemetery. During his tenure, McMurray cared for two of Miss Maria Rye's British Home Children, young girls who were transported to Canada to remove them from the urban gutters of Britain and engage them as domestic servants in homes and on farms until they were 18 years old.

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**The story of St. Mark's Church** in Niagara-on-the-Lake has its beginning in 1790, when two residents wrote to Bishop Inglis of Nova Scotia requesting that a clergyman be sent to minister to the residents of the new village. The following year, the Reverend Robert Addison was commissioned as missionary and minister at Niagara. The Church and indeed the whole Diocese of Niagara owe their origins to his pioneer work. Addison's parish covered the settlements from Niagara to Burlington and Brantford, including the Indigenous People along the Grand River. Notable figures among St. Mark's early congregation would be: Sir Isaac Brock (1769-1812), Daniel Claus (1793-1813), Joseph Brant (1743-1807), John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) and his wife Elizabeth Gwillum (1762-1850).

As early as 1759 when the French Fort Niagara, on what is now the American side of the Niagara River, had been captured by the British, the Reverend John Ogilvie came from Albany, N.Y. to hold Anglican services for several months. During the upheavals of the American Revolution, settlers crossed the Niagara River and established farms and a small community on the west bank. In 1784, the Reverend John Stuart of Kingston visited the community briefly and preached in Fort Niagara.

The Bishop of Nova Scotia forwarded the request for a resident clergyman to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in England. This Society was engaged in supporting mission work around the world. The Society had received an application from Robert Addison for service abroad. So, in May 1791, Addison was appointed and within a couple of months he set sail for Canada. He brought with him a silver chalice and his library of more than 1,500 books, which remain possessions of St. Mark's.

When he arrived in Niagara the following July, Addison discovered that his "parish" included all of the little villages that were springing up from Fort Erie to Ancaster and from York (Toronto) to London, including the Six Nations Reserve along the Grand River. There was no church building in what was called Newark, and services were held in the Masonic Lodge, or the Indian Council House. The congregation included most of the important people of the day, such as Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), Colonel John Butler (1728-1796) and Major General Sir Isaac Brock (1769-1812). Addison also found himself the Chaplain to the newly formed legislature, a position that he was to fill for the next quarter century.

The land granted by the Crown for a Church lay midway between the town and the military establishment at Fort George. Work began quickly on the construction of a fine building with the stone being quarried from the escarpment and hauled to the site by the troops. It seemed for a while that the project was too ambitious for the small congregation and the work was not complete enough for the holding of services until 1809. The structure was rectangular and the outline of the extension for the chancel may still be seen in the floorboards. The building remains the oldest Anglican Church in continuous use in Ontario.

### **Years of Prosperity**

In 1840, following the visit of the Right Reverend John Strachan, Bishop of Toronto, a subscription was begun to enlarge the church and by 1841 the addition of the transepts was completed. The east window was installed at that time, as well as the four tablets beside it, bearing the ten commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. Balconies were constructed on all three sides of the Church, primarily for the seating of the troops from the Fort. Additionally, in 1843 two high pulpits were added, their sloped ceiling providing sufficient acoustical quality to allow the speaker to be heard throughout the Church. The Rectory was constructed in 1858, in the style of a Tuscan Villa favoured by the well to do of the day.

A chime of six bells was installed in the church tower in 1877, replacing the original bell.

In 1886 the Sunday School House was built adjacent to the Church. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Church was significantly altered. The balconies were removed. The organ which had been in the west gallery was moved to the front of the Church. The box pews were removed, and the paneling used as wainscoting around the Church. New pews were installed in both the nave and transepts. These major renovations were completed in time for the parish to celebrate its centennial in 1892.

The first half of the twentieth century saw a number of furnishings given as memorials.

Seven stained glass memorial windows, installed by McCausland of Toronto, added to the beauty of the Church; please see the section entitled Windows under the History tab for more information on the stained-glass windows. Electric lighting was installed in both the Church and the Sunday Schoolhouse. Three bells were added to complete the set of chimes in the tower in memory of those who died in action during the First World War.

### **Restoration**

By the early 1960's it became evident that major repairs were required in the Church. Both the roof and floor of the Church were reinforced and restored, and new lighting was installed. The organ was removed and the space it had occupied was converted into a Sacristy. The organ was placed in the balcony, supplemented by new pipes and a new console, as a memorial to those who had served in the Second World War.

A new communion rail and baptismal font were installed, with the ladies of the parish completing the needle work for the new kneelers. The Schoolhouse, which by then was referred to as the Parish Hall, was also in need of repair. In 1966, extensions were added to both sides. A Historic Building Foundation was established to separate the costs of maintaining the buildings from the regular finances of the Church, thus allowing donations to be made specifically for the maintenance of these historic properties.

As the Church approached its Bicentennial an era of renewed enthusiasm began. A concert grand piano was given to the congregation. Heraldic arms were presented, bearing the inscription Proclaim the Good News. The summer lecture series was instituted to offer challenging theological perspectives to the congregation and community. A concert committee was established to present regular concerts including organ, piano, vocal and instrumental music. The Peace Chapel was created in the north transept to be used for Eucharist services for small groups.

Throughout their long and colorful history across four centuries, the people of St. Mark's have remained true to their calling. They have worked together to sustain and enhance their buildings and property. They have worshiped together in times of stress and in times of celebration. If Robert Addison were to return today, he might at first find the words and music of the service falling strangely on his ears. Once accustomed to the newness of the language, however, he would find that this people have remained true to their calling to proclaim the gospel to a different, but equally needy world.

Rectors of the Parish:

The Rev. Robert Addison, M.A.	1791 - 1829
The Rev. Thomas Creen	1829 - 1856
The Venerable Wm. McMurray, D.D.	1857 - 1894
The Rev. Canon John C. Garrett	1894 - 1917
The Rev. Charles H.E. Smith, MA	1918 - 1954
The Rev. C.N.P. Blagrove B.A., L.Th.	1954 - 1958
The Rev. H.N. Mansfield BA, L.Th.	1959 - 1965
The Rev. Hugh Donald Maclean, S.Th.	1965 - 1978
The Rev. Canon D. Thomas, B.Sc., Dip Th.	1979 - 1985
The Venerable Peter H. Ford, MA	1986 - 1991
The Venerable Ian Dingwall, BA, L.Th., B.S. T.	1991 - 1998
The Rev. Canon Dr. Robert S.G. Wright, M.Div., Ph.D.	1998 - 2015

## 41 Byron Street - St. Mark's Anglican Church/Addison Hall



St. Mark's Church is one of a handful of structures in Niagara-on-the-Lake that predates the War of 1812; the powder magazine in Fort George, McFarland House, Addison's Lake Lodge and a part of the Clench House also predate 1812. The Reverend Robert Addison began his ministry in 1792. By the outbreak of hostilities in 1812 the building was deemed to be the best church in the province. It was situated in a burying ground that predated it by many years. The earliest recorded burial was that of Elizabeth Johnson Kerr (1761-1794), wife of the local doctor and daughter of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), the British Indian Agent in New York State. An earlier burial is noted on a stone that was discovered during some construction. It records the death of Leonard Planck, a soldier in Butler's Rangers, who was wounded in Upper Sandusky, Ohio in the last battle of the Revolutionary War and brought to Niagara where he died of his wounds in 1782.

These early dates indicate that this land had been recognized as a burial site before the Church was constructed. Since this was the first high land as one moved up through the swampy shoreline of the Niagara River, it was most likely used as a burial site long before the arrival of Europeans. Burial grounds are usually recognized as a kind of sacred place. Perhaps it was because this was a recognized burial ground that the land was considered inappropriate for any construction other than a place of worship.

When war broke out in 1812, the church with its hillocks became a natural site for battle. The land around the church was already a bit undulating and the troops readily dug the low spots into defensive rifle pits. These trenches are still visible two hundred years later. The settlers, returning to rebuild their lives following the American occupation of the town, claimed that these pits had been shored up with tombstones. If that is so, they remain buried.

When the American forces retreated, they burned most of the buildings in the village. The walls of the church, having been constructed of sandstone taken from the cliffs along the upper Niagara River, had withstood the heat. When the British Army returned, they were able to repair the roof and use the church as their base, particularly for feeding their troops, until they could put Fort George into good enough condition once more.

When peace had been restored and the damage to their town surveyed, the members of the parish discovered they were left with a badly damaged church building. Because material and manpower as well as money were in such short supply, it was not until 1827 that the restoration was finally completed, and the building consecrated as St. Mark's Church. Robert Addison had survived to see the building constructed, used for worship, turned into a hospital and a commissary until it was largely destroyed by fire, and finally restored and consecrated to the purpose for which he had intended it from the initial laying of the foundation.

The congregation continued to grow, and some expansion was required. By 1839 a transept had been added and balconies placed around three sides. This necessitated the construction of the high pulpits. The east window also dates from that period.

For the centennial in 1892, the box pews were replaced by standard pews and the balconies removed to allow more light into the building. The addition of stained-glass windows began at that time with the most recent one placed in 1968.

By the 1960's major renovations were necessary including a new roof. The configuration of the chancel was redesigned, and the chamber of organ pipes moved to the balcony. The pulpit that had stood in front became credence table and altar in the Peace Chapel making this useful for small weekday eucharistic services.

Today the church serves not only for the weekly eucharistic services, but as an ideal concert space for choral and chamber music events.



## 177 Byron Street - Nash Cottage



The land southeast of King Street was largely underdeveloped in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the exception of Fort George, which had been left in ruins after the War of 1812, and Navy Hall. Most of the land in this area north of Byron Street was marsh, making it particularly unsuitable for development. In 1823 this land became officially part of the Town, spurred by the transfer of land to James Crooks (1778-1860) in exchange for lands confiscated from him around Fort Mississauga, which was developed after the war as a replacement for Fort George.

It was not until 1831, however, that development began here in earnest. In that year the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company was granted most of the lands north of Byron to develop shipbuilding facilities. It was a handful of prominent Niagara residents, including Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834), Robert Dickson (1796-1846), Thomas Butler (1755-1812), William Duff Miller (1786-1859) and Ralph Morden Crysler (1796-1865), who petitioned for the company's incorporation. The company began by draining the marsh and excavating the basin, then installed a railway, and then constructed a series of warehouses, docks and wharves. The company's business was booming in the 1830s, and the town of Niagara grew in prosperity as a result.

The land here was part of Block B of the Dock Company lands, the area surrounded by Byron, Nelson, Ricardo and Melville Streets. The house at #177 Byron was probably built in the early years of the Dock Company's operation. During the 1850s, this house was owned by Frederick George Nash, who was then Secretary of the Dock Company, and occupied by a Mrs. Murphy, based on tax assessment records. It was known as Nash Cottage in the 1860s.

By the late 1840s the company had begun a period of steep decline, in large part due to the Welland Canal reducing Niagara's importance as a trade route centre, and also due to reckless lending and borrowing. In order to stave off bankruptcy,

the company began to sell some of its lands to private owners. It was not until 1870 that Block B was sold, the purchaser being Duncan Milloy. Milloy (1824-1871) was an industrious sailor and ship owner who had moved his family to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1862. Milloy's steamboat the *Zimmerman* had burned at the Niagara wharf in 1863, but soon after launched the *City of Toronto*, which he had designed himself. Milloy is also notable for building the Oban Inn at 160 Front Street.

Milloy died in 1871, leaving the property to his family, including the small cottage that is now 177 Byron. This house was first occupied by John Murphy in the 1870s, and then later by William A. Milloy (1853-1905), one of Duncan's sons. William operated a lumber mill, which later became an engine works and machine shop, at the corner of Nelson and Ricardo Streets, while living here. The house passed out of the Milloy family's ownership in 1895 when it was sold to John H. Simpson (1844-1907).

Originally, the house was a simple square one-storey cottage. A conjectural plan shows it had a centre hallway, with a dining parlour and bedroom on one side, and a parlour and two other small rooms on the other. The kitchen would have been in the basement originally. Later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the family room and kitchen extensions to the main floor were constructed.

### 43 Castlereagh Street - The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum building, owned by the Niagara Historical Society, is composed of two separate buildings with a recent connecting addition. The first, Memorial Hall, to the west, was built to house the Niagara Historical Society's collection in 1907 and was in fact the first purpose-built museum in Ontario. The second, to the east at the corner of Davy Street, functioned as a high-school from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and was annexed to the museum later.

Both of these buildings were built in Block 39 of the 'New Survey, the four 4-acre blocks surrounded by King, Picton, Wellington and Castlereagh Streets. These 16 acres, along with 5 on Ricardo Street, were granted to wealthy merchant James Crooks (1778-1860) in exchange for lands confiscated from him surrounding Fort Mississauga, in 1823. As a result of this transfer, the land southeast of King Street began to be developed and was added to the town, thus the names of streets change across King Street (hence Gage Street becomes Castlereagh Street, etc.) Crooks gradually sold off parts of these lots and many of the older homes in this neighbourhood were built by those who purchased them in the 1830s and 1840s.

Crooks kept the 2 acres long Davy Street between Castlereagh and Platoff Streets until 1854, when he sold them for £200 to the Niagara Town Council, and then in 1859 they were sold to the Board of School Trustees. In that same year, Niagara's first public school was built at #40 Platoff Street. The high school, facing Castlereagh Street, was built in 1875. Prior to that the high school had been housed in a variety of temporary locations.

Memorial Hall, and the Niagara Historical Society, owe their existence to Janet Carnochan (1839-1926), to whom the historical plaque in front of the museum is dedicated. Carnochan, who had previously been the principal of the Niagara Public School, was principal of the high school from its

construction to her retirement in 1900. The Society was founded in 1895, by several residents of the town, and its earliest home was a room formerly occupied by the Public Library in the Court House. The organization, under Carnochan's leadership, began to develop a collection of artifacts, as well as petitioned for the preservation of various historic structures around the town. Eventually, the collection - which included military equipment and regalia, clothing, Indigenous weapons and artifacts, rare books and photographs - needed more space, and the present 2-storey 30' x 60' structure was opened to the public in 1907.

The building was designed by W. B. Allan, a St. Catharines architect, based on drawings by Walter S. Allward. The foundation was constructed from the rubble of the Indian Department Council House, on the Commons. The museum's opening was attended by the Lieutenant Governor, and took place in the hall itself, with the exception of afternoon tea. General Brock's hat, still on display at the museum, was one of the artifacts that garnered much interest at the opening. Other examples of the museum's early collection included a Cuban Machete, a Roman battle axe, and a Civil War military coat.

The building at that time was strictly devoted to display space - no peripheral facilities (offices, storage washrooms) were accounted for in the design.<sup>1</sup> By the 1920s, the building already required significant repairs and expansions. Janet Carnochan died in 1926, and in the following years the group of volunteers who operated the museum began to dwindle, along with its membership. Nonetheless Carnochan's successors maintained the museum as best they could. In the 1950s, a space heater was installed, and eventually a furnace (the building had been unheated prior).

In the late 1940s, the museum's space issues were resolved when the high school vacated (after which the students were bused to Niagara Falls). In 1949, the high school property was transferred to the museum, and the building was considerably renovated for use as museum display space. The 'link' building was constructed between 1971 and 1973, and its front windows were obtained from the St. Mark's Parish Hall. At that point the old high school was primarily display space and the 'link' housed the museums' offices and storage; more recently the two buildings have largely switched places with the majority of administration and artifact storage in the high school and the gallery displaying the history of the town in the 'link'.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Niagara Historical Society Museum: A Study in Museum Development." By Margaret Louise May, Museum Studies Program, University of Toronto, 1982.

## 8 Centre Street - The Lyons-Jones House



The house presently at 8 Centre Street has an interesting history that is inextricably tied to the 'Wilderness', the 4-acre heavily treed property behind it between King and Regent Streets through which flows the One Mile Creek. The Crown granted one-acre Lot 193 in 1796 to James Clark. Clark was a soldier in the British army, who it is said may have fought with Wolfe at Quebec in 1759, after which he returned to England. Returning to Canada in 1769, he moved to Niagara in 1791, and served as the Barracks Master at Fort Niagara, and then the Barracks Master of the Forces at Fort George, Fort Erie and Chippawa. The Clark's built a house on that lot, and the property was passed down to James's son George and his wife Sarah. The house originally on the lot would have burned down along with the rest of the town in the fire of 1813.

In 1825, Col. William Claus (1765-1826) purchased Lot 193 from George and Sarah Clark for £125. Claus was an important figure in the Indian Department - the son of Daniel Claus (1727-1787) who had been a deputy secretary to Sir William Johnson (1715-1774). Daniel had been made a refugee by the outcome of the American Revolution, fleeing to Canada while leaving his considerable property in New York behind. He petitioned the British crown to grant him land, unsuccessfully, until after his death the 4-acre property known as the 'Wilderness' was granted by the Six Nations to his widow. William also rose to prominence in the Indian Department as Assistant Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Claus raised his family at the Wilderness, and shortly before the outbreak of the War of 1812 his daughter Catherine (1796-1873) married Lieut. Benjamin Geale (1790-1821) of the 41<sup>st</sup> Regiment. Geale was wounded and taken prisoner during the war and died in 1821.

Catherine Geale remained a widow after that, raising 4 children. In 1826, after William Claus died, the property at lot 193 was passed to her and she moved there. Geale's second marriage in 1833 to John Lyons (1797-1844), a Registrar for

Lincoln and Haldimand counties, was conducted by the Rev. Thomas Creen (1799-1864) at St. Mark's Church. The house that stands today was probably built several years after that and remained in the Geale family until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. John Bernard Geale (1820-1899), Catherine's son (from her first marriage), became involved in the military like his father, becoming a lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment. He married Caroline Cox in 1846; the ceremony was officiated by the Rev. Creen. He is said to have recalled the Indian encampments on the banks of the One Mile Creek on the Wilderness property who came there to meet with his grandfather, William.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the house passed out of the ownership of the Geale descendants, when it was purchased by Michael Green, who passed it on to his son, Jack Green. In the 1960s, the house was purchased by a couple from Toronto, who undertook the considerable restoration of the house, retaining as much of its architectural heritage as possible. Today it is used as a B&B.

Architecturally, the house is notable for being set back from the street more than most houses of the time, and also for the blind windows to the left of the entrance - they cannot open as there is a fireplace and chimney stack behind them, and were placed there simply to balance out the façade. The house's structure is generally similar to its original construction, except for the side wing which was added later.

## 64 Centre Street - The Simpson-Ness House, c. 1830



The land was granted by the Crown to Joseph Small in June 1796. Two years later he sold it to George Forsyth. It then remained in the Forsyth family for over 50 years, until 1 acre of land were sold to John Simpson in November 1851. Simpson (1807-1878) mortgaged the property to build the house and lived in it for many years.

John Simpson was a businessman, politician, and public servant. Born in Yorkshire, England, John was a linen draper in London, England before emigrating in 1835, and setting up as a bookseller and stationer. In September 1837 he began publishing the *Niagara Chronicle*. In January 1837 he had edited a volume of poems, tales, and essays by local authors, and from 1843 to 1849 he published annual editions of *The Canadian mercantile almanack*. He continued to centre his interests in the paper, its press, and associated bookstore until he disposed of the whole undertaking in 1852. Simpson married a local lady, Mary Barker (1822-1887), in May 1841 in St. Mark's Church.

Simpson had shifted and enlarged his business interests by the late 1840s. The subscription list of the newly launched Niagara District Bank was located in the *Chronicle* office in 1845. In the following years he subscribed to the stock of the Erie and Ontario Insurance Company and a proposed Niagara Boot and Shoe Manufacturing Company. In addition, he was secretary of the Niagara and Ten Mile Creek Plank Road Company, the Niagara Permanent Building Society, the Niagara District Building Society, and the Erie and Ontario Railroad Company. Niagara-on-the-Lake's economy was declining under competition from neighbouring towns, however, and Simpson was content to be sustained by the collectorship of customs at Niagara-on-the-Lake in the years 1855-57.

Simpson's political apprenticeship began in 1846-47 when he was president of the Niagara board of police. In 1848 he was elected to the Lincoln district council and in 1851 to the town council of Niagara-on-the-Lake. He served as mayor of

Niagara-on-the-Lake for four years beginning in 1852. He then entered provincial politics. Simpson was returned in 1857 as a Conservative, defeating Charles Curry. He was successful in the two following general elections, defeating Thomas McMicking (1829-1866) in 1861 and Henry John Boulton (1790-1870) in 1863. A man of proven competence and party loyalty, Simpson was appointed provincial secretary in the Étienne-Paschal Taché – John A. Macdonald government on 30 March 1864 and continued in the cabinet until the formation of the “Great Coalition” in 1864. He then resigned on 29 June to make way for three Grit ministers, including George Brown, to enter the cabinet. In compensation he was appointed deputy auditor general, an office he continued to hold until his death at Ottawa in 1878.

In his years at Niagara, Simpson was a close associate of William Kirby who was his election agent. A requisition to him, requesting that he stand for nomination in 1857, held 206 signatures, a veritable directory of the business community and the social register of Niagara. Throughout his career he was a member of the Church of England, and he was active in Christ Church in Ottawa.

The Ness family were a more recent occupier of the property.

This House was built in the Georgian-Regency style in about 1830. It has a large basement and a small attic, and the main floors are finished externally with rough cast. The verandah has been recently restored. The front door has a transom and side lights. Eighty percent of the original cylinder-blown glass still remains and eight percent of the hinge latching and butt locks on the doors are also original. The windows have sidelights in the palatine style. The dining room, living room and master bedroom retain the original fireplace with decorative mantels. The walls and ceilings still have the original lath under plaster; a signature on one of the walls states: ‘W. J. Livingstone 1870’. The floors throughout the house are wide pine, although those in the living room and kitchen have been covered over with hardwood. The original kitchen, as was commonplace with earlier homes, was in the basement, which contains the remains of a bake oven and fireplace. Black servants in the early days are believed to have had their quarters in the basement. A small root cellar also remains. In the passage from the cellar are the remains of a large cistern. The two-door garage beside the house was possibly built in the 1920s.



## 240 Centre Street - The Breakenridge-Ure House



This home awaits restoration, but its boarded-up exterior conceals an interesting history. It sits on lot 202, originally granted by the Crown to Miles Hitchcock Sr. (1740-1802), a loyalist, who was married to Martha Margaret Patience Secord (1743-1815), the aunt of Capt. James Secord (1773-1841), Laura Ingersoll Secord's husband. Hitchcock sold the lot in 1800, shortly before his death in 1802, to Abraham Davenport for £25. The house's most notable occupant, and likely builder was John Breakenridge (1789-1828), a barrister, who acquired the lot in 1822, likely building shortly thereafter.

This was Breakenridge's third house. He had previously built the houses at 363 Simcoe Street (the Creen House) and at 392 Mississauga Street (the Breakenridge-Hawley House) - all three houses being on the same 4-acre block bounded by Mississauga, Centre, Simcoe and William Streets. Janet Carnochan's *History of Niagara*, notes that "The brick house occupied by G. Bernard, at the corner of Centre and Mississauga Streets, was the residence of John Breakenridge..."

Breakenridge is a relatively important figure in Niagara's history, for his practice as a lawyer, and for the elegant homes he built. His eulogy notes that "In the death of Mr. Breakenridge, Niagara has lost one of its best friends. He settled here shortly after the war and built several of the most elegant and tasty houses in town. He was charitable, hospitable, and had numerous friends."

Breakenridge died in 1828, leaving a widow, Mary, who ran a school in the house for several years. Their daughter Elizabeth Anna married a James Gerald Fitzgibbon, the youngest son of the Col. James Fitzgibbon who was famous for his win at the Battle of Beaverdams in June 1813 and his leadership against the Mackenzie Rebellion of 1837 in Toronto.

Mary Warren Breakenridge (1791-1871), widow, sold the lot, still intact, to John Hamilton Connolly (1824-1907) in 1852 for £250. He then sold it in turn to Phillip Hopkins for £450 in 1855, suggesting considerable improvements to the property. During the time of the Hopkins family's ownership the house was rented out, and in 1866 and 1867 it had one very interesting tenant. Shortly after the American Civil War, Upper Canada was a refuge for various Confederate political figures (due in part to the fact that they shared a common enemy - the United States - with Great Britain) who feared reprisals from the leaders of the victorious north. One of these was John Porterfield, a banker originally from Nashville who served as a Confederate financial agent in Montreal.

Porterfield is notable for receiving the proceeds from the 1864 St. Alban's raid, in which Confederate rebels raided a bank in Vermont using Canada as a base. He was also involved in a scheme to wreak economic havoc in the North by shipping gold out of the country, and succeeded in exporting \$2,000,000, before abandoning the operation.

Architecturally, the house has a fairly standard layout with a centre hall and principal rooms at the front. It has the most fireplaces of Breakenridge's houses - four on each floor.

## 219 Davy Street - Read House



This property was a part of "Crooks Block" Lot 39 that was granted by the Crown to James Crooks (1778-1860) in 1833. A small house was believed to have been built before 1840 and passed through several hands. The owner of the property in the 1860s and 1870s was John Clockenburg (1822-1904), a German immigrant shoemaker who with his wife Sophia Schmidt (1835-1927) had a large family. Both he and his wife lived into the 20th century and are buried at St. Mark's Anglican Cemetery.

During the early 20th century the More family owned the house, which in those days was about 24 ft. x 24 ft. with bake ovens in the back under an old lean-to as part of the house. Inside the house there was a furnace under the stairs and no heat upstairs. The house was constructed of 4 in. x 4 in. studs with brick; clapboard was on the exterior walls.

Don Read and his wife Sally Usher acquired the house on property about 50 ft. x 125 ft. in 1956 for \$6,100 from Phyllis Usher. They built a two-storey garage and loft in the rear of the lot. The Reads added the rear section of the house in 1975.

The Reads obtained a judgment at O.M.B. requiring Reeve John E. Campbell (1916-1994) to close the old Canning Factory (Community Hall) on Platoff Street; however, Campbell failed to close this canning factory as required. In "compensation" Councillor Nellie Keeler arranged for the driveway between Davy Street and King Street just south of the Read House, to be henceforth signposted as "Read Lane" after Don Read and his contribution to the Town.

In 1979 the Reads sold the Read House to Henry Wiens. In more recent times the two-storey garage and loft has been demolished. Don Read was also involved in the Read-Usher Real Estate business on Mary Street. In addition, he had also owned a building just west of today's post office on Queen Street, which he sold to Kevan O'Connor, a real estate developer.

## 230 Davy Street - Baikie-Borsook House



The land about Fort Mississauga was once the property of Captain James Crooks (1778-1860) of the 1<sup>st</sup> Lincoln Militia. When the Government, after the War of 1812, desired to build a second fort to defend the mouth of the Niagara River, they exchanged the four blocks bounded by King, Picton, Wellington and Castlereagh Streets for what was known as "Crooks Land".

The present-day Davy House was formerly the Baikie House, named after Peter Baikie a shipwright employed at the Town Docks. Baikie had purchased the property from Hon. James Crooks in 1842. Crookes Land Lot 32 was in Niagara-on-the-Lake's "New Survey" which was published after the War of 1812. The Davy-Baikie House stands on a ¼-acre part of this lot.

Soon after the land purchase, Peter Baikie built a two-storey side-gabled house reflecting the fondness for elaborate verandahs in the early 1840's, including a bellcast roof and fretwork trim of a whimsical and inviting nature. The front includes the first French doors in Upper Canada marking a change in fashion as the Victorian era was soon to emerge. The house plan, however, follows the Niagara precedent of a single room to either side of the hall and a kitchen behind with a steep sloping or "lean-to kitchen". The two end chimneys are known to have served stoves on the main floor while heating the upper rooms in an ascending manner.

As trade shifted to St. Catharines with the introduction of the 2nd Welland Canal in 1848, the importance of the shipping business in Niagara-on-the-Lake was diminished and Baikie left the area two years later, renting the house first to George Blain and then selling to the family of Ann and Ian Baikie for £300 in 1858. They lived in the house until 1874, when they sold it to Henry Ferguson for \$800, but had to reclaim the property the following year. Subsequent owners in the 19th century were Alexander Allen, William Sagar (who paid \$600 for the property in 1879) and Pleasant Bradford.

## 112 Delater Street



The white clapboard house at 112 Delater is one of several older houses in the area near the Niagara River and southeast of King Street that were formerly owned by the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. Prior to 1831, when the company was incorporated, the land here was largely undeveloped, save for Fort George and Navy Hall (which were themselves largely in ruins after the war). In the early 1830s, however, the company drained the marsh which occupied most of the land north of Ricardo, including what is now Delater Street. They built a series of wharves, warehouses and shipbuilding facilities, and grew considerably, leading to a significant growth in Niagara's prosperity.

The present house was built here in 1837 by James Kennedy, a carpenter in the employ of the Dock Company. Kennedy had a large family with many descendants, most of whom are in the United States. He purchased the brewery on Dock Company lands and moved it to this area where he also operated his carpentry shop. At that time most of the land was leased to Dock Company staff and officials, rather than owned. He and his family attended St. Mark's Church.

By the late 1840s, the company was in decline, and began a slow path towards bankruptcy. This was largely due to Niagara's decreasing importance as a centre of maritime commerce, and also due to the bankruptcy of many of the company's lenders. It was 1870 when most of the former Dock Company lands were disposed of. Kennedy was able to retain his property, purchasing lots 2 and 3 for \$127, and upgraded the house in order to increase its value. Kennedy sold lot 2 in 1891, but retained lot 3, where the current house is. He died in 1900, and one of his daughters acquired the property - it stayed in his family until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 115 Delater Street



For most of the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the land where this house now stands was mostly marshland, until it was drained by the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company after its incorporation in 1831. The 1830s saw a flurry of building activity here, including the construction of wharves and shipbuilding facilities, and houses for the company's officials. The company prospered in the 1830s, and with it, the town of Niagara.

The specifics of this particular house are somewhat unclear. It was most likely built to house one of the company's officials, but its particular occupant is unknown. It was built in the Greek Revival architectural style, sometime around 1840. It may have been moved here from another location as was common practice at the time.

The Dock Company declined from the 1840s onward, and by 1870 most of the company's lands and assets were disposed of. In 1892 this particular property was acquired by George Goff, a grocer, and his wife Amelia. Amelia was the daughter of James Kennedy, who had been a Dock Company carpenter and built the two storey house across the street at 112 Delater Street. One of the wooden pulpits at St. Mark's Church was devoted to the memory of James Kennedy, his children, and George Goff, dated 1909.

## 280 Dorchester Street - Crook-Johns House or Crooks-Stairs House



The land here, lot no. 118 was granted by the Crown to Oliver Gahagan, who served in Captain Bernard Frey's Company of Butler's Rangers, in 1796. The house at #280, however, was not originally built on this land, but rather on lot #72, at the SE corner of Queen and Simcoe Streets. This lot was granted to Peter Cain in 1802. There is an interesting connection to the aforementioned Bernard Frey - Frey purchased lot 72 from Cain in 1803. Frey was killed during the War of 1812 - his widow later lived at the small house at 223 Victoria Street on lot #100. There were several buildings on the lot before the War of 1812 based on an 1810 plan of the town, all of which would have been burned in the fire of 1813.

In 1818 the north ½ acre of lot 72 was sold to John Crooks (1797-1833) and it is Crooks who built the current house in about 1820. Crooks was one of several industrious brothers, one of whom was James Crooks (1778-1860), a wealthy merchant who owned most of the land around Fort Mississauga and who was granted the 16 acres of the 'New Survey' east of King Street in exchange for them. Crooks joined his brothers in Niagara in 1804, and held several positions including magistrate and Town PostMaster. Crooks published the *Niagara Herald* newspaper in the late 1920s and in 1929 was accused by William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861) of using his influence both as a newspaper publisher and a judge of undermining his credibility and labelling him a traitor unjustly. Crooks' newspaper was a competitor (and ideological opponent) of Mackenzie's.

In 1838 the property was acquired in a sheriff's deed by Samuel Street (1775-1844), a merchant who operated a prosperous forwarding business out of Queenston, after which it changed hands numerous times. The house's journey to its present location on Dorchester Street involved not one, but two moves. First to the corner of Queen and Victoria Streets (lot 57) in 1915, and then finally to its present location in 1973. The original house had an 'ell' shape plan, the ell wing housing the servants' quarters and the kitchen. Its 5-bay construction with gable roof is very typical of its time period.

## 284 Dorchester Street - Gwen O'Loughlin House



Before 1800, the original grantee, Garret Slingerland, moved to a farm in Grantham after selling this property to Andrew Heron (1762-1848), a prominent civic leader and publisher, whose residence was on Prideaux Street. Here he planted an orchard, mainly apples, with a few peach trees. In January 1813, Mr. Heron conveyed title to John Sanders, who was assembling the other three adjoining lots on this block into a four-acre holding. Sanders was a cabinet maker, and probably built and lived in the first house to stand here, with adjoining root house, stable and a large workshop.

Before the year was out, American forces had invaded, occupied and burned the town. Sanders made compensation claims for his trees, fences, outbuildings, and small dwelling house, "22 by 10 feet, with a good cellar". At the war's end, Sanders sold all four acres to John Secord (1757-1830), veteran of Butler's Rangers and family relation to the Secords of St. David's, Queenston and Niagara. John Secord's will split the property among his descendants; his granddaughter Susannah Secord Davis (1810-1875) inherited this lot after his death in 1830.

In that year, Susannah married her father's solicitor, William Winterbottom, and they built the present house as their residence in 1832. Shortly thereafter they added a barn to the property. The house is built upon the foundation of the original Sanders home, but it is considerably larger than its predecessor. Since 1875 it has passed through numerous hands and undergone many improvements and restorations, although the core of the dwelling retains some original features, such as the fireplaces, the banister and some of the pine floors. The present owner has rescued the old barn and incorporated much of into a courtyard in the rear of the dwelling. The lot is very deep and private, with towering willow trees growing beside the banks of One-Mile Creek, a portion of which crosses the property.



## 10 Front Street, Old Bank House or The Yellow House Inn



This property has a long and “colourful” history. Earliest records show that this lot, Lot Number 1 – the first lot surveyed in the area, was in the possession of Alexander Auldjo in 1795. Alexander Auldjo, an interesting character himself, was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, immigrated to Canada circa 1778 and had various careers as a businessman (import/export, fur trade), as a Justice of the Peace in Montreal in 1796, as a member for Montreal in the Legislative Council in Lower Canada that same year and a member of the militia in Lower Canada who rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel during the War of 1812. We also know that Mr. Auldjo invested heavily in properties in both Upper and Lower Canada which was found on his death in 1821 to total some 5000 acres.

The buildings on this property, like virtually all buildings in what was then called Newark, were completely destroyed by retreating American forces on the evening of December 10, 1813. A claim for reparations from not only the destruction by fire by the Americans but also the subsequent demolishing and use of stone from chimneys and what was left of the foundations by British Forces was submitted by Mr. Thomas Powis, Tavern Keeper of the Yellow House Tavern, to officials in York. This claim outlined both the physical layout of the buildings on this property and the goods/chattles lost during these events valued (in his estimation) at some 1500 Pounds. It is noteworthy that mention is made in this claim that the Magistrates of the Niagara District had leased the lower apartments in the Yellow House Tavern for the purposes of a jail for six

months at the princely sum of seven dollars per month. Like most of the buildings of that era, the walls were of stone in a clapboard style.

Lot Number One is located at the corner of Front and King Streets near to the Niagara Escarpment and River. The building is also close to various docks and it is not at all surprising that it served as a Tavern and Inn over the years.

Records also show that this property was owned by a number of individuals including Thomas Racey in 1817 who is credited with the building what was then known as "The Yellow House Inn" which was a favourite haunt of sailors, boat builders, businessmen etc. who would pass through the important Niagara Region trading region.

The two-storey, three-bay clapboard house was erected on the site of the "Yellow House." The "Yellow House" was one of the town's first taverns and burned in 1813 as the American's withdrew.

The Old Bank House sits close to the street on a raised stone foundation. The front facade is covered with smooth lined stucco. The east and west walls of the dwelling are covered with roughcast stucco. Originally the house had clapboard siding and the stucco was chosen undoubtedly for its lower maintenance. The house maintains its centre hall plan with internal chimneys at each end of the gable roof. The decorative Victorian porch was an addition made later on and covers the divided transom of the main entrance. Without the porch, it is easy to make out the house's Georgian/Neo-Classical architectural elements.

Other notable owners of the property have included Samuel Street (1775-1844, merchant), Thomas McCormick (manager, Bank of Canada), Lewis Shickluna (shipbuilder), Henry Augustus Garrett (1814-1903) and John Geale Dickson (1845-1931).

The Old Bank House is a gracious Historic Boutique Inn situated in the heart of Old Town, while overlooking Lake Ontario. The Building was the site of the first Bank of Upper Canada and site of the first Commercial Historic Country Inn which has been operating for 100 years. Surrounded by patios and a 50-foot porch our guests enjoy both indoor and outdoor spaces for dining. The Building has recently been completely remodelled and updated offering private (en-suite) bathrooms.

## 80 Front Street, The Captain's House



The house at 80 Front Street sits on a ½ acre lot (lot 7) that was originally granted by the Crown in 1804 to Ann Lyons, the wife of William Lyons, who served for 24 years in the British 8<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Regiments of Foot. She had been married earlier, but her husband and child were killed before she arrived in Upper Canada in 1778.

It is unclear if there was a house on the site of the present one at the time of the fire in 1813 – Gray's 1810 town plan shows a building slightly to the west of the present house, straddling lots 7 and 8.

William Lyons' war losses claim does not list a house, but does tell us that he lost a great deal of timber (9,800') in the summer of 1814, on his way to deliver it to Fort George, as commanded by Major General Phineas Riall, who exempted him from militia service for this duty. As he was delivering the timber, formed into rafts, the American army under General Jacob Brown invaded the Niagara frontier on July 3, and those who had been recruited to help him were called to militia service, thus forcing him to abandon his timber.

After the war, the property was owned briefly by Dr. Robert Kerr (1755-1824), who also owned several adjoining lots facing Prideaux Street. The house that stands today is thought to have been built by Captain Edward Oates, probably in 1817 with an expansion in 1825 (hence the 'Captain's House'). Oates was the captain of the packet ship the *Duke of Richmond*, a sloop of approximately 100 tons that was launched in 1820 in York. An advertisement in 1822 reads:

"Richmond Packet, Edward Oates, Master, will regularly leave York for Niagara on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and Niagara for York on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, from the 1<sup>st</sup> of June until the 1<sup>st</sup> of September. [...] The superiority of sailing and accommodation for ladies and gentlemen are too well known to the public to make comment upon."

Oates was born in 1772 near Cork, and had served in the British merchant service, settling in York, Upper Canada, in 1817. In 1820, the same year his ship was built, he was made Inspector of Flour, Pot and Pearl Ashes at York. It is possible that Oates chose the lot so near the water so that his wife could see his vessel returning from its regular trips back and forth to York. The *Duke of Richmond* met its end in 1826 while running a load of cargo from Oswego, in a shipwreck on the bay of Presqu'Île (at which point Oates was no longer the captain). Oates died in Port Dalhousie in 1827 where he was Superintendent of Works and Collector of Customs.

Other notable residents of the property include Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Evans, C.B., who commanded the 70<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Infantry, who owned the property from 1817 to 1836, according to the Registry. (Oates, who lived in the house for at least some of this time, is not mentioned in the abstracts, so it is unclear how he fit into the picture). It was also owned by James Boulton, between 1836 and 1847, a prominent barrister and Member of Parliament. Boulton, whose main residence was on King Street, was noted for his tactics as a lawyer:

“James Boulton, as we understand,  
Addressed the folk in Haldimand;  
If he can't talk a man to sleep,  
Before a jury he can weep.”

The history of the house 80 Front Street took an interesting turn in the 1860s when it was occupied very briefly by the former 14<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the United States, John C. Breckenridge. After the end of the Civil War, in which the Confederate States were defeated by the Union, Niagara served as an informal 'headquarters' of Confederate refugees (who were worried about being prosecuted by the victors). They were welcomed to Upper Canada in large part because they and Britain shared the United States as a common enemy. Breckenridge, who had been Vice President between 1857 and 1861, and subsequently Confederate Major General and briefly Confederate Secretary of War, rented 80 Front Street in the summer of 1866, returning the next summer to settle down for several years until it was safe to return to the United States.

Architecturally, the house is built long and narrow, with timber frame posts projecting into the rooms at each corner. Like most houses it has been expanded over time, with a wing at the back of the house containing a kitchen, bathrooms and bedrooms being added around 1900. The original kitchen still contains the fireplace, bake oven and crane.

## 130 Front Street, Kirby House



This house is notable for being the homestead of Canadian author William Kirby (1817-1906), who lived here from 1855 until his death. The lot on which it stands, #11, was originally granted by the Crown to Nicholas Ten Broeck (1770-aft 1804). Ten Broeck was the son of Peter Ten Broeck (1737-1804), a captain in the Butler's Rangers, and came with his family from New York to settle in Niagara in 1782. It is unclear whether the Ten Broecks built on this lot before the war – an 1810 plan of the town does not show any dwellings on the lot.

The property changed hands considerably for the next several decades and was owned by several notable figures in Niagara's history. First the Town Clerk, Ralfe Clench (1762-1828) sold it to Andrew Heron (1762-1848), a merchant who would later print the *Niagara Gleaner*. Thomas McCormick, the first and only local manager of the Bank of Upper Canada (at 10 Front Street), acquired it in 1822, at which point the existing house was most likely on the lot (1818 being the probable build date). McCormick sold the property for £62 10s, the same price as he purchased it for, to Thomas Courtney in 1833.

William Kirby moved into the house somewhere between 1855 and 1857, having acquired the lot in several different transactions. Kirby was born in England in 1817 and came to Cincinnati as a child with his parents where he lived until 1839. In that year he decided to move to Canada, in large part to help defend against the threat of raids from agitators across the American border. After visiting several Canadian cities, including Toronto and Montreal, he came to the Niagara area, working first as a tanner, and then as a schoolteacher. In 1847 he married Eliza Magdalena Whitmore (1817-1891), a granddaughter of Daniel Servos (1738-1803), and in 1850 became editor of the *Niagara Mail*.

Kirby is best known, of course, for his writings, among which *The Golden Dog* is particularly notable, written between 1869 and 1872. Inspired by his visit to Quebec City, the book uses that city as a historical backdrop for a fictional account of the history of New France. The book, dedicated to Maria S. Rye, was immensely well received and it is said was enjoyed by Queen Victoria herself. Kirby also published the *Annals of Niagara*, in 1796, which documents the history of Niagara from the time of his arrival there to its zenith in the 1850's and decline after its importance became secondary to St. Catharines. Kirby was also well known for his poetry. One of his poems entitled *The Hunger Year* (1879), documents the difficulty of the life of United Empire Loyalists in the early years of Niagara's history:

They who loved  
The cause that had been lost and kept their faith  
To England's Crown and scorned an alien name  
Passed into exile; leaving all behind  
Except their honor.  
Not drooping like poor fugitives they came  
In exodus to our Canadian wilds,  
But full of heart and hope, with heads erect  
And fearless eyes, victorious in defeat.  
With thousand toils they forced their devious way  
Through the great wilderness of silent woods  
That gloomed o'er lake and stream till higher rose  
The northern star above the broad domain  
Of half a continent still theirs to hold  
Defend and keep forever as their own.

Kirby died in 1906, still a resident of this house, and is buried in St. Mark's cemetery, beside his wife who had predeceased him by 15 years.

## 160 & 168 Front Street, Oban Inn and Mary Secord Trumble's House



The town's original country inn, the Oban has a rich history dating back to the early 1820s. Joseph Clement (1750-1812) received a Crown grant for this ½ acre property on Lot 13 in 1796. As part of the desecration of the village in December 1813, the dwelling on this property was burned to the ground by enemy troops. On 10 August 1822 the property was sold to Mary Secord Trumble (1799-1876), the widow of an Irish surgeon in the employ of the British Army in Jamaica and British Honduras, where he had died of sunstroke earlier that year. At £56.5.0, this was a good price for Mary, who was the eldest daughter of James Secord (1773-1841) and the now-famous Laura Ingersoll (1775-1868) of Queenston. She rebuilt the dwelling house on the property in late 1822; this house still exists, with an extension, at 168 Front Street. Mary then sold the ¼ acre of garden on the corner of Gate Street to Charles Rowe. She and her two daughters, Elizabeth (1817-1893) and Mary (1820-1890) lived in the house for the next five years until 26 May 1830 when she sold the house with its ¼ acre to James C. Crysler (1801-1854), of the now-well-known automobile maker's family, for £150. The house overlooked Lake Ontario and the military land that ultimately became the oldest golf course in Canada. In the early 1830s Mary Secord Trumble, her two children and her sister Charlotte (1801-1880) left Niagara to take ownership of her in-laws' estate in County Sligo, Ireland. Over the next ten years the house at the corner of Gate and Front Streets became the home of the Lockharts, the Richardsons, and David Archibald McNabb (1805-1840, the younger brother of Sir Allan Napier McNabb, 1798-1862, the Premier of Canada from 1854 to 1856).

In 1843 the widowed Alexander Milloy (1792-1853) emigrated from Argyllshire, Scotland to Brantford, Ontario with eight sons and two daughters. All of Milloy's sons had careers in the inland shipping business; however, the most industrious was Captain Duncan Milloy (1824-1871). After marrying Euphemia Thompson (1829-1910) in 1851 and having five children, Duncan took employment on Royal Mail Line steamers running between Hamilton and Montreal. Two years later he moved his family to Toronto and took command of the passenger steamer *Chief*

*Justice Robinson* running from Toronto to Niagara and Lewiston, New York, a route he was to travel most of his life. By 1858 he was commanding the *Peerless* running from Toronto to Hamilton, and had purchased the opulently appointed, 475-ton, side-wheeler steamboat, *Zimmerman*, returning for the 1859 season to the Toronto, Niagara, and Lewiston route. This allowed his service from Toronto to connect with the new Erie and Ontario Railroad down at the docks in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Captain Duncan Milloy moved his family to Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1862, making their home in 168 Front Street. However, in 1863, however, the *Zimmerman* burned at its Niagara wharf, its steam-whistle shrieking mournfully. Duncan immediately handed a design of his own to the local Shickluna shipyard, and on 20 April 1864 the 221 feet, 512-ton *City of Toronto*, slipped into the water. Railways ran around the head of Lake Ontario after 1855, and there was less need for passenger shipping; except for one year, Milloy was the only one making the journey from 1861 on. Canadians favoured his route as a link to the eastern seaboard and to Europe since it connected with the New York Central Railroad at Lewiston. A passenger skipper had standing in the community. Duncan Milloy, a Presbyterian and a freemason, appears to have been on familiar terms with such Conservative leaders as John A. Macdonald and John Hillyard Cameron. He also owned Niagara Harbour & Dock Company in his latter days; and in the late 1860s he also raised the funds to build a hostelry now known as the Oban Inn at 160 Front Street. Duncan had served for two years on the Town Council.

Duncan Milloy died prematurely in 1871 at the "Oban House," his home at Niagara. In the last two seasons before the *City* burned in 1883 it was owned and skippered by his eldest son William. One of Duncan's brothers, Donald (1837-1907), at one time purser on the *Zimmerman*, later headed the steamboat partnerships. The Oban Inn was named such by William (Bill) Milloy. After Duncan's untimely death, the Oban House remained the home of his widow Euphemia and her surviving children, William (1853-1905), Colin (1863-1923) and Effie (1861-1927).

The Milloy family misfortunes grew and the Oban Inn property was lost to the mortgagees who sold it to Frank Holmwood Sr. and his wife Marie Veronica McFaul, who ran the place very successfully until Frank Holmwood Jr. died in 1967. The effervescent Edna Burroughs, a silent screen actress, persuaded her husband, Harry, to buy this historic Inn, and the hostelry was then owned and operated by Edna and her son Gary. A devastating fire on Christmas Day 1992 completely destroyed the Inn, leaving only the foundation. Re-created as an exact replica of the former Inn, The Oban Inn again opened its doors in November 1993. In 2006, the Inn underwent a significant transformation while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the long tradition of hospitality. Today, the Inn



features 26 well-appointed guestrooms, a gastronomic restaurant, and a full-service spa.

The Oban Inn is now owned by Si Wai Lai, and her commitment to the inn's history of hospitality excellence is clear – she has been the recipient of the Golden Award Ontario Hotelier of the Year honour, Niagara University's Canadian Business of the Year award, Ernst and Young International's Entrepreneur of the Year award, and more.

## 58 Gage Street, Taylor House, 1840



The Awde and Taylor families lived in this house for more than 100 hundred years until it was purchased by the current owner almost 30 years ago.

The original Crown Grant for the acre on Lot 151 was made to the Honourable William Dickson (1769-1846) in March 1803. After the War of 1812, the property was sold to the Waddle family who kept it until the 1840's. Matthew Cathline, a carpenter and contractor, built the home around 1840. In the mid-1860's, the Peter Christie family owned it. The house and property was next purchased by Albert Clayton Awde (1881-1949) around 1926. Mr. Awde was the Supervisor at the Delhi Fruit and Vegetable Canning Co. (part of Canadian Cannery Limited) located at the corner of John and King Streets from 1922-1949. This building was renovated and became the Pillar and Post Inn & Spa in 1972.

Albert Clayton Awde and Ethyl Gerhard (1880-1947) had been married in 1907 in Delhi, Middleton, Norfolk, Ontario. They had six children (five surviving to adulthood) consisting of four sons and two daughters. The youngest daughter, Alice Martha Awde (1915-1982) married U.S. Army Captain Dewey Donald Taylor (1896-1985) in 1940. After Albert Awde's passing, the house was purchased from the estate by Mr. and Mrs. Taylor. They had one son, Donald Awde Taylor (1940 - 2018). He married Gail Anne Zoeger (1941-1993) in 1960. Donald inherited the property at 58 Gage Street from his mother. Upon Dewey Taylor's passing, the house was rented briefly and then occupied by William J. and Edna Zoeger (see 19 Johnson Street, p. 57) from 1987 - 2004. Donald Taylor sold the home to the current owners in 2007. The house has undergone renovations since this date.

## 83 Gage Street, White House or Claus-Bright House



This large Georgian house, often referred to as the 'White House' is one of the few properties left in Niagara that still occupies the entire 1-acre lot that resulted from the 1791 town survey. In this case, it was lot 145, and the original grantee was William Claus (1765-1826). The registry office records show that Claus's grant was registered in 1820, but we know he occupied the land long before as an 1800 plan shows the owners of various lots in that year, with Claus at #145.

William Claus was a very important figure in early Niagara's history. The son of Daniel Claus (1727-1787), a close associate of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), he rose to prominence in the Indian Department, and in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was a key figure in Indian/British diplomacy and commerce. His mother was Ann Johnson (1745-1801), Sir William's daughter. William was married to Catherine Jordan (1768-1840), and they had 5 surviving children. William likely did not build on this land, however, as his house was that 4-acre property today known as 'The Wilderness' (between King and Regent Streets, north of Mary). That property had been granted to his mother Ann, at that point a widow, by the Six Nations reserve, in gratitude for her husband's kindness to them.

William Claus died in 1826, and his son John Johnson Claus (1800-1873) inherited the property. It is likely John who built the current house, sometime around 1830. A sale in 1838 to James Lockhart shows a considerable price of £300 for the lot, indicating it had been improved considerably. Lockhart was a prominent merchant, banker and ship owner, who would later become the secretary/treasurer of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. He likely purchased this lot as an investment, as he lived elsewhere (at that time 209 Queen Street), and he sold the lot in 1840 to William Kingsmill for £450. The

increase in price probably reflected the growing property values that resulted from the Dock Company's, and consequently the town's, prosperity. William Kingsmill (1795-1876) passed the property on to Judge John J. Kingsmill (1829-1900), his son, who subsequently mortgaged the property several times.

This house was one of those occupied by Confederate refugees after the Civil War. Niagara became a haven for such refugees in large part because Britain and the Confederacy held the United States as a common enemy. James Murray Mason was a US Senator from Virginia and had been appointed commissioner of the Confederacy to the United Kingdom and France during the war. Mason first rented the house at 115 Wellington (on St. Mark's Church property) in the summer of 1867, and then from 1868 to 1869 rented this house on Gage Street. It is possible that Mason, while living here, may have hosted John C. Breckinridge (1810-1896), the last Vice President before the outbreak of the war, who was living at a house on Front Street at that time.

This house was, sometime around the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, one of those houses used as private hospitals in Niagara-on-the-Lake. It wasn't until the 1918/19 flu epidemic that it became apparent that these small-scale private hospitals were insufficient to providing comprehensive health care, which led to the eventual development of the Niagara Cottage Hospital.

Currently, the White House serves as a B&B. Architecturally, the house is notable for being set well back from the road. The house's east wing was added sometime around 1915-1920 (due to increasing hospital capacity requirements).

## 86 Gage Street, Livingston House



The Crown grant of this property was made to Archibald Thompson, a Scot who emigrated to Tryon County, New York, on the eve of the revolution. In 1776 he lost his small farm to the rebels and fled to join the Indians under Joseph Brant's command. Being captured and sentenced to death, he escaped and went on to serve as a master carpenter in the rebuilding of frontier forts at Oswego, Vincennes, and elsewhere. His numerous children gave him grounds for extensive land claims, which were eventually honoured by the grant of hundreds of acres of farmland in Stamford Township, where he eventually moved. In 1817, this property was conveyed by his patron, the prominent merchant William Dickson (1769-1846), acting either as agent or unregistered owner, to a new family, the Waddels.

Jane Waddel was the widow of Francis, a soldier in the artillery who retired from the army in 1808 and received as a grant the acre lot just across Victoria street from this location. There he planted an orchard and built a comfortable farmhouse, with barns and a carpenter's workshop. According to family legend, General Isaac Brock (1769-1812) was a guest in their homestead at the time of the Queenston Invasion; leaping upon his horse he lost his hat, which was returned to him by young Robert Waddel. The general pronounced this an ominous sign, remarking that it would be fortunate if his head returned safely from battle that day.

In 1813 Jane received a double blow: her husband Francis died and two weeks later the retreating Americans burnt her homestead to the ground; everything was lost and she was left a widow with five children. The acquisition of this property and others in 1817 gave them a new home, where she lived with her grown sons Robert and John. In 1840, John Waddel split the property, retaining the corner half and selling this one separately to a young carpenter, Philip Cathline.

Who built this house is unknown, but the Waddels' retention of the corner half suggests their dwelling was there, not here, and the sale price for this property was notably low for a half acre with a residence on it. That would indicate that the carpenter Cathline built this house shortly after 1840 for his own large family. They lived here many years and the mature Philip became a solid citizen, serving on the town's committee to beautify Simcoe Park by planting trees, as well as other public-spirited activities.

## 155 Gate Street, Old Methodist Meeting House



This 3-bay house at 155 Gate Street was originally built at a different location and moved here in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has a long history that is tied to the Methodist Church. Its original location was near the corner of Gate Street and Gage Street, adjacent to the Methodist graveyard which can still be seen today (just south of Gage). It was built in approximately 1823 on lot 154, which had been originally granted by the Crown to the Presbyterian Church (along with several other lots).

The history of the Methodist Church in Niagara predates this, with the Niagara circuit being established in 1795. The Methodists were primarily based out of the United States, and originally sent circuit riders into Upper Canada instead of establishing permanent church buildings such as those established by the Anglican Church and others. Their style of worship was very non-traditional, focusing on travelling preachers and energetic revival meetings. During the War of 1812 they were considered suspect, because of their American origin, and were the object of hostility from Upper Canadian religious leaders such as John Strachan, because of their religious views and practices.

The first Methodist meeting house - this building - was opened in 1823, under the leadership of John Ryerson, who had been appointed to the circuit the previous year. Its specifications were 42' by 32' by 20', with a 7' by 10' porch. John was succeeded by his brother William the following year. John and William were the brothers of Egerton Ryerson, who would later become one of the most notable advocates for the rights of Methodists in Canada. During this period the Methodist Church was also heavily involved in the Temperance movement, and many meetings of the Temperance Society were held in this house.

In 1852, the Free Church, or the Canada Presbyterian Church, built a brick church on Victoria Street, just south of Queen Street. This denomination ceased

operation in 1869, after which the Methodists rented their building, and eventually purchased it, leading to the abandoning of the original meeting house. That church building is now Grace United Church (the United Church being formed from the 1925 merger of the Methodist Church and certain segments of the Presbyterian Church). The 'Free Church' (or Free Kirk) was largely absorbed by St. Andrews Presbyterian Church on Simcoe Street

In 1874 the old meeting house was sold to Thomas Burk, who moved it to its present location and operated a pork factory out of it. Lot 45 was granted in 1809 to John Camp, after which a hotel was built on it, first operated by Robert Weir as 'Weir's Sign of the Lyon' and later by Alexander and Agnes Rogers, (whose family lived at the house at 157 Queen Street) as the Harrington Hotel. This hotel was burned in 1869. The meeting house was eventually converted to a dwelling house and was the home of Mrs. Hannah Lowe Servos (1846-1935) and her son, Lance Servos, for many years. Mrs. Servos is notable for being the secretary of William Kirby, the prominent Niagara writer, during the time he wrote his most famous work *The Golden Dog*. Kirby's house still stands on Front Street today.

The Methodist cemetery at Gate and Gage Streets was enlarged to encompass the land on which the meeting house stood. It continued to be managed by the new church after its relocation and is now maintained by Grace United Church. Its oldest gravestone is that of Mrs. Sarah Beecroft Lawrence (1763-1823), the wife of an early Methodist preacher and Irish Palatine immigrant, George Lawrence (1757-1848).



## 156 Gate Street



156 Gate Street sits on a ½ acre lot (all the lots north of Queen Street were a ½ acre originally) that was granted by lottery to John Chisholm in 1791. Chisholm was a native of Scotland who had supported the British in the Revolutionary War and served as a 'Brant's Volunteer' in the Indian Department in 1783. After the war he began to farm in the Niagara peninsula, where he was also granted 100 acres in the Niagara Township in 1798. His Crown Grant to lot 44 in Niagara was not registered until 1825, possibly because he had neglected the lot by not building on it. Initially he had shown interest in the town, donating generously to the St. Andrew's church building fund in 1794 and becoming a member of the first Niagara Library in 1800, but after 1800 his interests were increasingly focused on developing his Township property - his 1828 will makes no mention of lot 44.

In 1800, David Hartman, a baker, was listed as the owner of lot 44 (although there is no transaction listed in the abstracts), and he probably built two houses there, those shown on the 1810 Andrew Gray plan facing Prideaux Street. Hartman filed a war losses claim listing a 24' x 24' frame house and a 20' x 16' log house, although his claim was rejected as he had deserted the Canadian regiment and was in the United States.

In 1825, part of lot 44 (104' by 36' on Gate Street) was sold by John Hartman (son of David) for £50, and this transaction finally led to the registration of the original Crown Grant and the sale to David Hartman - at this point there was likely no buildings on the property, as the two buildings mentioned earlier were burned in 1813. In 1826 the land at the corner of Gate & Prideaux Streets was purchased by George Winterbottom for £100. A hatter by trade, Winterbottom likely worked for Jared Stocking, owner of a well-known hat shop on Gate St near Queen Street. In 1847, George Winterbottom 'sold' his lot to Miss Pamela

Winterbottom, who took over his role as head of the family of six, and he died in 1856 of dysentery at the age of 65 and was buried in St. Mark's cemetery.

Records indicate that by 1837 there were probably 5 wooden buildings on the ½ acre lot, at least one of them built by Winterbottom, who rented the property out. Pamela Winterbottom continued renting the dwelling to several tenants, including Bridget Roddy, a feisty Irishwoman and innkeeper, popularly known as Biddy. From 1870 to 1885, Miss Jane Winterbottom was listed as the owner, who rented the property as well.

In 1886, at a low price probably reflecting the neglect from years of tenancy, the property was sold for \$100 to Julia Murphy, who mortgaged the property, had it seized, but was soon after able to purchase it back by selling other land. In 1888 the corner lot was sold again to Marion Long, wife of William Long, the proprietor of Long's Hotel at the corner of Queen and King Streets, who had already purchased abutting land on Prideaux St, adding depth to the corner lot. They may have intended to develop the lot as a hotel, but neglected to do this, and in 1899, due to William Long's ill health after a stroke, the property sold to Marian Elizabeth Ball (1853-1933) for \$250.

## 233 Gate Street



This building is a reproduction post-Colonial Williamsburg 1818 house built for John Brook and his wife Catherine E. MacKinnon in 1975. The Williamsburg cooperage from which it is taken is referred to as The Cole House. It is Georgian style with a brick foundation. The storm cellar is next to the street entrance. The interior architect was John Hinrichs, and the landscape architect was Victor Bohus. Generous windows and walkouts create a light-filled spaciousness that belies the house's 1,400 square foot size.

## 240 Gate Street, MacMonigle-Craik House, or the Homestead



The house at 240 Gate Street sits on lot 99, originally granted to Peter O’Karr (or O’Carr) in 1798, about whom little is known. The property was sold in 1810 by O’Karr to William Johnson Kerr (1792-1845), the son of Dr. Robert Kerr (1755-1824) and grandson of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), and John Clark, the son of James Clark, who sold the property to a carpenter, Joseph Adnams the following year. There was most likely a building on the lot at this point – Adnams’ war losses claim lists “one dwelling house built with logs, one story high, valued as per certificate annexed at £25.0.0.” Furthermore, Gray’s 1810 plan of the town shows a building on the site at the corner facing Johnson Street. Who built the house is unclear – the 1810 and 1811 transactions were for £50 and £75 respectively, suggesting Kerr and Clark may have improved the lot.

This house, however, would have been destroyed by the fire of 1813, leaving the lot empty once again. In 1816 Adnams began to sell the lot in pieces, with  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre at the corner being sold to John MacMonigle for £25, by which point Adnams had already built a small house on, which was likely enlarged by MacMonigle. The property changed hands several times before being sold to William Curtis in 1839 (now only  $\frac{1}{8}$  acre) for £100. Curtis was a shoemaker, and so the property is now often referred to as the ‘Shoemaker’s Cottage’. Curtis’ descendants occupied the property for nearly a century. During the 1850s, the house was enlarged again to the south – it was originally only two rooms downstairs and one on the upper floor.

The house was restored during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Mrs. Kathleen Drope, who also restored the Greenlees House on Johnson Street. Architecturally, the structure has changed considerably from its original form with a series of expansions. The chimney and fireplace use to be at the south end of the house, a rather unique design. It has since been moved to the north, incorporating a fireplace from an old house that was dismantled to build the last Welland Canal.

## 243 Gate Street, Slave Cottage



This house on Lot no. 98 is written down in the town records as “The Slave Cabin”, though it is a puzzle why. The earliest owners were families of British descent and the first Black man to own it was Daniel Waters (1813-1899), who was one of the most prominent local businessmen of his era, and was never enslaved. He purchased the house in 1872, the same year that he bought the Promenade House on Prideaux Street to be the base for his livery stable.

The original patentee of this corner lot was John McKay, maker of spinning wheels, who arrived in Niagara before 1793. He quickly acquired land in the town at several locations, but probably resided at the far end of Queen Street. After the end of the 1812 war, he conveyed this property to his son-in-law, Edward Goodson, who sold off half the land while retaining half an acre for his family. Edward built this house early in the 1820’s and it remained in the Goodson family until 1842, when his widow Phoebe and son James sold it to Frederick Gibbs for 180 pounds sterling.

The house is a small and modest saltbox, with a neoclassical front. Its appearance has changed very little since its construction. A small creek flows through the side and back of the lot, and its abundant waterside shrubbery blocks the view and gives the house an air of seclusion.

## 418 Gate Street, Parliament Cottage



Parliament Cottage B&B was opened in 1999 in a house that had been constructed in 1840. Major renovations to the house had been done in 1903 and the late 1970s. The interior of the house, although modernized, has the original floorboards, posts, beams, wooden pegs, transom window – all visible to the visitor. Behind the house is an early stone cabin, with windows at each end. This cabin, which was later used as a root cellar, was also renovated and a new roof added in 1999.

The house was constructed on land received by Peter Bradt (1767-1824) by Crown grant in August 1795. Peter Bradt was a Lieutenant and interpreter in the Butlers Rangers, who settled in the Niagara area in 1783 and were disbanded in 1784. In 1818, Peter Bradt sold the property to Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846) who made a five-fold profit on the house when he sold it to Claudius Shaw (1791-1875) in 1823. From this time and for many years, this property was a part of the thriving black neighbourhood of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The black population in this village was about 200 during a period of about sixty years, and the houses and cabins stretched north-south from John Street to William Street and east-west from King Street to Butler Street. The neighbourhood was referred to locally as “the coloured village”. Some of original deeds of this and other properties in the area show the “mark” of early black owners and the official stamp of Upper Canada. An example of these is displayed in the front lounge of this house. Some of the black property owners on this lot are believed to have been Claudius Smith, Joshua Struthers, James Frager and John McGuilay.

In the early days this property was owned by two illustrious gentlemen. Peter Bradt was one of best-known members of the Loyalist family, the son of Captain Andrew Bradt (1705-1748). In 1792 he married Mercy Burtch (1776-1850), the daughter of Colonel Burtch, another Loyalist, and had 12 children. Peter Bradt

was a Government interpreter for the aboriginals with whom he negotiated on the friendliest terms. When Peter realized that a company of aboriginals were set to support the American troops at the battle of Stoney Creek, he secretly entered their overnight encampment in the valley of Six Mile Creek and persuaded them in their own language to return to the USA, thus saving many women and children from a terrible fate and tilting the Battle in favour of the British and Canadian troops. His final days were as a farmer in Louth, Ontario.

The other gentleman, William Dickson, was a property developer, lawyer, Justice of the Peace and politician. He invested in numerous properties in Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston. He arrived from Scotland in 1785 to join his cousin, Robert Hamilton (1753-1809) – the leading trader in the area. Using his profits from merchandising, Dickson became one of the largest land speculators in Upper Canada, often in conjunction with Hamilton and his other cousin Thomas Clark. He speculated in such places as the Grand River, Galt (or Cambridge) and back in Scotland. Dickson married Augusta Charlotte Adlam (1771-1826) in 1794; they had three sons, including Hon. Walter Hamilton Dickson (1806-1885) who lived in Niagara-on-the-Lake with his wife Augusta Marie Geale (1815-1855).

## 429 Gate Street



The original Crown grant for this property was made in July 1799 to Colin McNabb (1761-1810), the whole of Lot 274 being one acre. After the War of 1812 this property passed through the hands of some prominent locals: James Muirhead (1765-1834), George McCann, Daniel McDougal (1782-1866), Robert Dickson (1796-1846), Walter Dickson (1806-1885) and James Boyd. In 1841 the property was mortgaged for £143.5.0 by Robert Jane to build a small house. By 1855 it came into the hands of the Thornton family. In 1921 it was gifted for one dollar to William James Thornton (1898-1959) by his two sisters who had jointly inherited it sometime before.

William had been a black soldier over in England during WW1; he met his bride there and brought her back to Niagara-on-the-Lake. With the gift of the house, and to start of a family, he built the kitchen and utility room from the lumber of a barn in the rear of the property. The Thorntons raised six children in this small house. In September 1976, after being in the Thornton family for 120 years, a run-down cottage was listed for sale by widow Amy Annie Fisher Thornton.

In the mid 1800s, much of the area south of William Street was known as the Coloured Village due to the large population of people of African descent that lived in this area. The Baptist Church and Burial Ground, formerly known as the "Negro Burial Ground" is just around the corner on Mississauga, south of Mary Street. It is estimated that there were about 200 people of African descent in Niagara-on-the-Lake in the 1830s. These families have long since left Niagara, but their history lives on in the numerous houses and graves left behind.

In this cottage, the original house room sizes, stairway to the upstairs and small main floor bedroom remain exact, and the original frame and floor joists have been retained. The original box locks are on the interior doors and the period



mouldings for trimming the house have been duplicated in the renovations of the late 1970s. The kitchen keeping area was not part of the original 1843 structure but was added in 1921 by Bill Thornton. On the exterior, the board and batton was renovated right around the house, to return it to the pre-1921 structure with a lean-to kitchen.

The cottage was originally constructed slightly to the north of its current position. When late 20<sup>th</sup> century renovations were undertaken, a basement was added and the cottage moved south onto the new basement.



**SOME NOTES ON  
PRE-1840 STRUCTURES  
IN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE  
OLD TOWN**

**PART 2**

**STREETS H-P**

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## 176 John Street, The Dickson-Rand House or "Randwood"



This large house, barely visible through the trees and over the substantial brick wall, was once the home of the Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846), one of early Niagara's wealthiest and most prominent residents. Well outside the original block of 1-acre surveyed lots, it was part of a large 160-acre tract of land on the southern boundary of the Fort George Military Reserve that was granted in 1796 to the Hon. Peter Russell, the successor of John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) as Administrator of Upper Canada. When the capital of Upper Canada was moved to York in 1797, Russell reluctantly went along, thus forced to sell his large property.

It was William Dickson who bought the property, who had originally settled in Niagara in 1790. He had made enough money as a merchant (he was a partner and cousin of Robert Hamilton, 1753-1809) that he was able shortly after to build a stately house at the corner of King and Prideaux Streets, likely the first brick house in Upper Canada. He married in 1794, and had three sons: Robert (1796-1846), William (1799-1877) and Walter (1806-1885). Dickson eventually became a lawyer, a justice of the peace, and a member of the Upper Canada legislative assembly. He is also notable for building town's second courthouse to replace the one lost in the war, where Rye Park is today.

Dickson built a brick house on this tract of land, in approximately 1811, probably around the same location as the present house. Dickson was one of those taken prisoner by the Americans in 1813, and spent much of the war Greenbush Cantonment, near Albany, New York, U.S.A. In December 1813 this house was burned by the retreating American soldiers and Canadian volunteers.

After the war, Dickson directed most of his energy towards his land holdings along the Grand River, near Galt (now Cambridge), and divided the property up amongst his sons. His eldest son, Robert, received the main parcel of land and built the 2-storey nucleus of the present house, which he called 'Woodlawn' around 1822. Another house on the western end of the property, nearer to Charlotte Street, which was possibly built by William after the war, was named Rowanwood and was inherited by Walter H., the youngest son. It was Rowanwood where William likely spent the remainder of his life after moving back from Galt. The second son, William Jr., was given the property to the east, where Brunswick Place is today.

The divided property passed out of the Dickson family's ownership when Walter H. sold Rowanwood in 1866, and later when Woodlawn (which Walter had acquired after his brother's death) was sold in 1873. The purchaser of Woodlawn was Brigadier General Henry Livingston Lansing, a veteran of the Civil War and an executive of the Buffalo and Erie Railroad. It was likely during his ownership that the third floor was added as well as the tower. During the 1870s, Niagara-on-the-Lake was recovering from the decline caused by the failure of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company, and was developing a reputation as a fashionable resort town, thus making it alluring to wealthy Americans as a summer destination.

In 1910 Woodlawn was purchased by George Rand Sr., chairman and president of a large Buffalo bank, who renamed the property Randwood. Rand would later purchase the Rowanwood property next door, thus merging the two properties into one. The house at Rowanwood was torn down, and a new house, now known as the Devonian House (#144 John Street), was built in its place. The Rand family used the house for many years as a summer retreat, and made many modifications to the property, including numerous additions and outbuildings, and significant landscaping. The family built a small private railway stop along the railroad which ran along John Street.

The Rand family's ownership continued until 1976 when the Devonian Group, a charitable group from Alberta, purchased the property to lease it to the Niagara Institute, a leadership development facility, and enable them to utilize it for seminars and lectures. The Institute had been founded in 1971 by Calvin Rand, the grandson of George Rand Sr., and several other town residents. Rand had allowed the institute to use the Randwood property during the winters when it was not being used by the family. Today the estate's future is uncertain. Now privately owned, there have been attempts to develop the property into a hotel, restaurant and artist's centre.

## 210 John Street, Brunswick Place



This stately home lies on a large tract of land which was first owned by the Hon. Peter Russell, the successor of John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) as Administrator of Upper Canada. Russell sold this property when the capital of Upper Canada was moved to York in 1797 to the Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846), one of Niagara's most prominent figures. Dickson came to Niagara in 1790 and became wealthy as a merchant, building the town's first brick house, at the corner of King and Prideaux Streets, as well as a house on this property, both of which were destroyed in the fire of 1813. Dickson later became a lawyer, a justice of the peace, and a member of the legislative assembly, and also built the town's second courthouse.

Dickson moved to Galt after the war and expended most of his energy towards his landholdings there. He divided up his large property amongst his sons, with this section (approximately 10 acres) being given to his second son, William Jr. (1799-1877). The property to the west, now known as Randwood, was given to the eldest son, Robert (1796-1846), who built the 2-storey nucleus of the present house. William Jr., however, did not develop his property, instead leaving Niagara to develop the Dickson family's land holdings there, and sold it in 1829.

The purchaser in 1829 was Robert Melville (1789-1849), who had been a captain in the 68<sup>th</sup> Regiment stationed at Fort George, and since retired. It was he who built this large home in approximately 1830, with its 3-bay design and elaborate door case. Like Randwood, this first building was the 'nucleus' of the present building which has been expanded considerably over time. He named the property Brunswick Place - most likely because he had met his wife in New Brunswick. His family included his wife, Margaret, a stepdaughter, and four sons - although three of his sons died before reaching their teens.

In 1832, Melville was elected the manager of the newly formed Niagara Harbour & Dock Company, which developed the dock area of the town's waterfront, and

was largely responsible for the town's rapid increase in prosperity in the 1830s and part of the 1840s. The Dock Company was also one of Upper Canada's largest ship building companies, and Captain Melville sailed on the trial runs of many new ships, including the steamer *Queen Victoria*. The company began to decline, however, in the 1840s, and along with it Melville's fortune. Melville died in 1849 – Melville Street, near the harbour, is named after him. After his death his wife and her daughter faced financial difficulties, and eventually the house was foreclosed upon.

Catherine Squier Coit and her husband George purchased the property some years after and owned the property until 1881 when Robert George Dickson (1845-1924), the grandson of William Dickson (the son of Walter H.) purchased the house and land, after returning from military service. He performed extensive repairs to the house and renamed it Pinehurst. Dickson was an avid golfer, having been introduced to the sport in Scotland, and was the first captain of the Niagara Golf Club. He was, however, a profligate spender, and having mortgaged the property to the hilt was forced to sell the property in 1895.

Since that time the house served for many years, like Randwood to the west, as a summer home for wealthy Americans, during which time the house's name was switched back to Brunswick Place. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Niagara-on-the-Lake had established itself as a fashionable resort town, and many of its older stately homes were purchased for this purpose. First was Herbert P. Bissell, a prominent Buffalo barrister, and his family. Then in 1922 Charles and Harriet Greiner, also from Buffalo, who likely added the sunroom additions. From 1922 to 1927 was Fred and Jennie Marsh, and from 1928 was Edward and Ruth Letchworth, who made the house a centre of the town's summer social scene for decades. Today the house is a private residence.

## 19 Johnson Street, Zoeger House



Located at the southeast corner of Johnson and King Streets and sharing an access drive and parking lot with the Irish Harp Pub, is 19 Johnson Street. This particular lot was designated as lot 104 and was designated by the Crown on 9 September 1793 as belonging to David William Smith.

David William Smith was a member (administrative) of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot located in the Niagara area in 1792. He was offered the post of Acting Deputy Surveyor in that same year by then Governor of Upper Canada John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) – a position that was unauthorized and had no salary. Mr. Smith and surveyor William Chewitt laid out the town plan in 1794 basing their calculations on a previous survey. The initial plan was to put the town centre out of range of Fort Niagara (on the US side) which was due to be returned to US control following their War of Independence. Smith managed to accumulate some 20,000 acres of land in various townships at this time, was promoted to Captain of his regiment but resigned as soon as his appointment as Surveyor General became official. He also served as Vice-President of the Agricultural Society from 1792 – 1805 and was the surveyor who signed off on the four lots in town which eventually became St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

His house on this property was described as being “large and elegant” being 80 feet long and forty feet wide with four fireplaces, two storied, a large kitchen. Mr. Smith left the Niagara area in 1799 for the capital of York (and later back to the UK in 1802) and the house was offered for sale and then to be a grammar school. This was rejected as the home was within range of American guns from Fort Niagara.

The land records themselves do not indicate that there was any official sale until 1854 when it was supposedly sold by the Office of Her Majesty's Ordinance to the Town Council of Niagara. Other sources indicate that this property was used

as a "Government Reserve". We are inclined to suggest that this property became the responsibility of government officials as this property was undoubtedly destroyed during the December retreat of American forces in December of 1813 and there was no request for compensation. This indicates that the property was not in private hands as there is no request in the documents reviewed that a claim for reparations was made.

Today this house is a substantial residence with a hipped roof and one-storey addition with a spacious garden enclosed by a wrought iron fence. It was probably stuccoed around 1900. The house was purchased by local business owner William J. Zoeger (1910-1997) around 1944-45 where he raised a family of five children (four daughters and one son) with his wife, Edna Glebe Zoeger (1912-2004).

## 46 Johnson Street, Barker Hall



The 1-acre lot on which this house stands, #106, was not registered as a grant until 1820, to Isabella Hill, widow. However, a list of lot ownership from 1800 suggests that Isabella owned it at that time. Isabella was the wife of Major George Hill, who was in 1795 (a year before it was finally ceded to the Americans) Fort Adjutant at Fort Niagara. Hill left Niagara for the UK in 1799, and died in 1809, but not before being granted lot 147 in 1796, the lot adjacent to this one at the corner of Regent and Gage Streets. Hill built a house on that lot, which is recorded in the widow Isabella's war losses claim, being burnt in the fire of 1813. It is very possible that Isabella stayed in Niagara after her husband left, since her name is registered as having owned lot 106 in 1800.

Lot 106 remained empty through the war, until it was sold in 1830 by the widow Isabella to John Barker for £110, 10s. The current house was built by Barker shortly after, most likely 1831. John Barker was a prominent official in Niagara, the captain of the Niagara Fire Company. He played a small role in the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion. This is described in William Kirby's *Annals of Niagara*:

There was at that time a splendid fire company in Niagara, composed of the most respectable and active men in the town, under the command of their captain, Mr. John Barker, a sturdy English Loyalist. He summoned the fire company, explained the danger Toronto stood in, and the whole company of about fifty men volunteered their services to the Government.

Janet Carnochan notes that Barker "was complimented after the Rebellion for the readiness with which he and his company took their share in helping to suppress the rising."

In 1864, Barker sold the property to Thomasin Barker, his son (b. 1839) along with half of lot 147 (the lot on which the Hills had built their house which he had acquired after Isabella's death) for £100, a low price possibly reflecting the

recession that had hit Niagara-on-the-Lake following the Welland Canal and the collapse of the Dock Company

Thomasin operated a boarding house there, and in 1866 received an interesting boarder. After the American Civil War, Niagara became a refuge for several confederate politicians, in large part due to the fact that Britain and the Confederacy shared a common enemy. One of these was Jubal Early, who boarded at Mr. Barkers in 1866 and 1867. Early had risen in rank considerably during the war, and served under Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, and commanded the infantry of the Army of Northern Virginia. He was heavily involved in the Gettysburg campaigns, and commanded the Valley Campaigns of 1864, the confederacy's last invasion of the North.

After the war, he fled first to Mexico, then to Cuba and then to Canada. After living in Niagara briefly, he moved to Toronto and published his memoir. He was pardoned in 1868 by President Andrew Johnson and moved back to Virginia where he spent his last years.



## 58 Johnson Street, Jones-Eckersley-McEwen-Brownell House



The house at 58 John Street sits on original lot 107, which was granted by the Crown to George Young (1759-1825) in 1795. Young was one of the first settlers in Niagara, and was a master carpenter who supervised the construction and repair of various military fortifications in the area, including Fort Erie, Fort York and Fort George. He served as a private in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia during the War of 1812. He was also a member of St. Andrew's Church, and of the Niagara Library.

Whether Young built a house on the lot before the 1813 fire is unclear. No house is shown on Gray's 1810 plan of the town, although he may have built at least a small structure on the lot to claim it. A letter dated 1796 indicates that Young moved to the Long Point settlement and may have lived there for some time. We do know that he built a house in the south end of Niagara in 1816, near the second Court House, which his wife used as a school. This house still stands today at 630 King Street.

Young sold the lot in 1817 to James Jones, and the property changed hands several times up until 1835 when  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre was sold to Edward McMullen, a butcher. It was McMullen who most likely built the current house shortly after. He willed the property to his children in 1843. During the 1870s, the original house was expanded upon by Robert Fizette, a ship's carpenter and builder. During recent restorations several \$10 bills, dated 1863 and 1875, were found nailed to the wall frame behind the plaster, most likely put there by Fizette. Fizette held the role of chief constable from 1866 to 1875.

In 1901 the house was acquired by John Eckersley, formerly a customs collector at Halifax, and his family occupied the house up until the 1960s, when the house changed ownership and was extensively restored. This house had a porch that was removed in 1907 because it encroached on the sidewalk.

## 85 & 89 Johnson Street, Savage-Scheffel House and Savage House(s)



The two houses here – the one-and-a-half storey house at #89 and the yellow two-storey house at #85, were both owned at some point by John Savage, and will be thus be treated as one entry. They together occupy part of lot #101, first granted by the Crown in 1805 to James Russell, along with lot 102 (on the Regent Street corner). Russell did not settle in Niagara and in 1807 sold both lots to John Jones, a tailor. Jones had served with the Butler's Rangers in the Revolution and became a Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia in 1811, and in 1812 became Captain of the No. 3 Battalion Company. He died during the War of 1812, leaving his widow, Jane. He had built two houses on lot 101, as shown on Andrew Gray's 1810 plan of the town, both of which would have been destroyed in the fire of 1813.

The widow Jane began to subdivide the lot, with the Johnson/Victoria corner being eventually acquired by James Blain, a mason who is worked on St. Andrew's United Church and several other buildings. Blain built the brick house at the corner in 1835, which is now the Post House, notable for its keystone on which its construction date is inscribed.

It was John Savage who acquired much of the remainder of lot 101, in various pieces, in the years following. First, in 1838, he acquired 1976 sq. ft for £125. This is the section where #89 Johnson Street now is. Savage purchased it from Alexander Grey, who himself purchased it from Blain a year earlier for £240. The drop-in price is difficult to explain – in the 1830s Niagara was experiencing a building boom due to the prosperity of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company which saw property values increase considerably. There may have been a house on the lot that had been destroyed by fire during Grey's ownership. Thus, it is probably Savage himself who built the house at #85 sometime around 1838. Savage acquired a smaller 1248 sq. ft. section from Blain in 1844.

The second large piece of land was acquired by Savage in 1842. This was approximately a ¼ acre lot, purchased from Edward McMullen who had

purchased it himself from the Jones estate. This is the section where #85, the larger house, is. He probably built that house sometime around 1843. He may have lived in one of these houses, and rented out the other, as was common at the time.

John Savage was born in England in 1791 and was a Colour Sergeant in the British Army. This was a rank introduced during the Napoleonic Wars to reward sergeants for bravery and length of service. Savage's age suggests he would have fought with the British Army in the War of 1812. He probably acquired the rank of Colour Sergeant in the 1830s. Savage died in 1870 at the age of 79. He sold all of his property on lot 101 in 1855 to Robert M. Wilson for £500, a substantial price indicating the development undertaken by Savage in his time of ownership.

## 92 Johnson Street, Painter House



The 2-storey house at 92 Johnson Street is located on lot #108, a 1-acre lot originally granted in 1797 to John van Voist. This grant reverted back to the crown and was granted in turn to Andrew Heron (1762-1848), a prominent merchant in Niagara, who would become well known as the publisher of the *Niagara Gleaner*. The property was purchased by Edward Vanderlip (1793-1874), the son of a loyalist family that had arrived from Pennsylvania, in 1808. Vanderlip built the house next door at #96, which is often referred to as the Vanderlip/Painter house, for the Painter family who occupied it from 1840 until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The lot was sold to Thomas Norman in 1818 for a price of £625, a high price reflecting the presence of the Vanderlip house. Norman mortgaged the lot to John Strange, who proceeded to divide the property and sold the southeast part of the lot. Thus, it is unclear who built the house at #92 – it may have been leased to someone who built the house, or Strange may have had someone build it as an investment. In any case, the architecture suggests that the house was built approximately 1825.

The mortgage of the north half of the property changed hands several times up until the acquisition by Joseph Painter family in 1840. Painter was a butcher, a Methodist whose wife was Margaret, a Roman Catholic, and was later elected as a Town Councillor. The property at #92 eventually split off, and was acquired in 1895 by Margaret Painter, presumably a descendant of Joseph Painter. It has since changed hands numerous times up until the present day.

Its design, built with the gable perpendicular to the street rather than parallel, is fairly atypical, although seen occasionally in houses such as the Savage house across the street (#85). It has undergone many alterations over the years, but retains its original stone foundation, and double-hung windows, among other original features.

## 95 Johnson Street, Blain-Lansing House or Post House



This house, at the corner of Johnson and Victoria Streets, sits on part of Lot 101, originally granted by the Crown to James Russell in 1805 (along with Lot 102). Russell had also been granted a larger tract of land on Lake Erie before 1800 and decided to move there instead. In 1807 he sold both Niagara lots to John Jones, a tailor. John built two houses on Lot 101, both of which were burned during the War of 1812-14. Jones, who had served with the Butler's Rangers in the Revolutionary War, had become Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia in 1811, and in 1812 became Captain of the No.3 Battalion Company (South Grantham). He died in the War in 1813, leaving his widow, Jane, who submitted a War Losses Claim, the estate being valued at £750.

Around this time, the lot began being subdivided into smaller lots, with some of the Victoria Street frontage being sold off and Jane Jones retaining the Johnson Street frontage. In 1833, the Johnson Street frontage where the house now stands was sold in parts, one to Danny Leeper, a yeoman, the other to Samuel Street (1775-1844), a businessman, both for £26.17.

After 1833, property values began to rise considerably due to the prosperity of the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company (which was chartered in 1831), and both of these lots were sold to James Blain for £42.10 and £62.10 respectively. Blain, a recent immigrant from England, was a brick layer and stone mason, who is credited with masonry work for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and several other brick buildings in Niagara. It was he who built the brick house at the corner of Johnson and Victoria in 1835, which remains today, along with the coach house and other outbuildings. This house is one of the few with a firm known construction date, inscribed in the keystone over its front door.

James Blain moved to Galt (Cambridge) sometime before 1854, leaving William Blain to sell the property, which remained unsold for some time, probably due to the economic slow-down following the opening of the second Welland Canal,

and the decline of the Dock Company. During this period, the house was used as the town's first Post Office, which is why it is known today as the Post House.

The Blain family's ownership of 95 Johnson Street ended in 1893 when the property was sold to William Hall, a former British soldier, for \$1000. It has since changed hands several times up to the present day - first to James Herbert Sandham (1858-1923), then to Alexander Muir (1918-1995), a descendant of the Muir Brothers shipbuilding family), then to several others. It has also undergone some modifications, including the addition of the gray frame structure to the main house, moving the coach house to its present location along Victoria Street, and another frame section connecting the latter to the main house. It is currently used as a B&B.

## 96 Johnson Street, Vanderlip-Marcy House, or Painter House



There are still questions remaining about which houses burnt in the fire of 1813 and which, if any, survived. One of these was, for a long time, thought to be the Vanderlip/Painter House at 96 Johnson Street. It was theorized the house was built either between 1775 and 1780 or 1790 and 1795 and served as the location where Indians came to collect their treaty money, and also as an Officers' quarters from 1801 to 1814. More recent research suggests this is not the case and the house was built after the war, most likely around 1816.

The lot on which it stands, #108, was originally granted by the Crown in 1797 to John van Voist, presumably a loyalist, about whom little is known. The grant reverted back to the crown shortly after and was then granted again to Andrew Heron (1762-1848), a prominent merchant in Niagara who would later become well-known as the publisher of the *Niagara Gleaner*. Heron owned the lot until 1808 when he sold the lot to Edward Vanderlip (1793-1874) – the price is not recorded.

He was a Captain in the Lincoln Militia in the War of 1812, and the son of William Vanderlip (1759-1840), originally from Wyoming, Pennsylvania, who arrived with his family in 1779 from a Loyalist refugee camp near Montreal. Janet Carnochan's *History of Niagara* records that a Miss Vanderlip rescued two of William Jarvis' children when the latter's house burned in 1796 – this may very well have been one of Edward's older sisters (Anna or Jenny). Nonetheless it was Vanderlip who built the current house on this lot as a one-and-a-half storey dwelling.

Vanderlip sold the property in 1818 to Thomas Norman for £625, a high price reflecting the existence of the house on the lot, after which it changed hands numerous times. Some notable owners were Major Joseph Clement (1790-1867) and Ralph Morden Clement (1812-1854), who owned, at different times, the brick house at 144 Johnson Street. In 1840, it was acquired by Joseph Painter. The

house was occupied by the Painter family (sometimes called Paynter) and the related Gilmour family for about a century after that, and it is after this family the house is often named.

The house was restored by Mr. and Mrs. Oppenheimer of Buffalo in the 1940s. Many of the original beams are still visible in the living room, and an original bake oven that was restored still exists in the house. Some changes have been made for convenience - the 2<sup>nd</sup> storey windows were added sometime in the 1960s to provide better lighting and access to the upper floor bedrooms.



**105 Johnson Street, Varey-Hendrie House or Varey-Middleditch House;  
115-119 Johnson Street, Varey-Tremain House or Varey-Thalman House**



The large house at 105 Johnson Street dates to about 1810. Burned in the War of 1812 and rebuilt by George Varey Sr. (1787-1861) in about 1837, this Varey-Hendrie House (as it later became known) has a private sitting room for guests, with Victorian furnishings. The dining room also has a wood-burning fireplace. Antique washstands and period furniture are in some bedrooms, one of which has a crewel-covered tester bed. The house was built on the fire-damaged foundation of a pre-1812 house.

George Varey Sr. was a very successful Montreal-trained tailor, supplying well-made and expensive clothes to both military and civilian clients. He had his workroom and shop on the ground floor of the Regency style house, with stucco and a low-pitched hipped roof, standing at 105 Johnson Street. This property remained in the Varey family from before the 1812 War until 1899. The Times newspaper of 8 September 1899 recorded a fine house with three "tenements" nearby, which sold for \$1,500. These tenements were, of course, the humble terrace houses still standing at 115-119 Johnson Street, that George Varey had also built in the 1840s to house workers of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. It is fortunate that a terrace building with humble beginnings has survived and has been faithfully preserved.

From his earliest days in Niagara-on-the-Lake George Varey Sr. accumulated property. In 1827 he acquired one acre (Lot 110) at Johnson and Gate Streets from Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834); three-quarters of an acre (on Lot 100) at Johnson and Victoria in 1832 from Robert Easton Burns (1805-1863); and 15 acres (Lot 70) of Corus property in Niagara Township on the south side of East-West Line, including the Corus House. This latter purchase made the Vareys both tradesmen and farmers. In 1857, George also purchased a quarter acre of adjacent land (Lot 99) from Thomas Wilson to bring his earlier purchase of most of Lot 100 up to one acre.

George Varey was a devout Wesleyan Methodist, and his family kept that creed for generations to follow. He was born in England but emigrated in 1823 to Montreal where he honed his professional training. He was also a player of the bass viol at the Methodist Church, which has not been moved from the cemetery a couple of blocks south to 155 Gate Street, where it has been converted into a residence. George and Sarah, his first wife and mother of his children, are buried in the Methodist Cemetery on Gate Street.

His eldest son, Eli (1818-1885) remained at 105 Johnson Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake and was willed all these lands and houses in Niagara-on-the-Lake by his father in 1861. He married Ann Fisher (1817-1850), who died childless; however, his second wife Eliza Sophia Sweetman (1824-1893) gave him six sons and one daughter. Eli's younger brother, George Jr. (1819-aft 1901), a chemist and druggist, returned to Montreal, married Mary Ann Purcell Muckle (1818-aft 1901) and had four surviving children. Eli Varey was well-known in the mid 1800s in Niagara-on-the-Lake for his peach growing capabilities, and for the agricultural competitions he won.

One of Eli's sons, Charlie (1863-1926) spent a summer in the Town in later years accompanied by his wife, Carrie, a rather portly lady who was born in Norway in 1871. Charlie had a tricycle with a carriage hitched on behind and was seen puffing up the Dock Hill with his ample spouse in tow. She seemed to enjoy it though. There were no automobiles then, of course.

In the late 1800s the 105 Johnson Street property was owned by William Hendrie (1831-1906), the wealthy Scottish businessman and horse-breeder. He founded a railway cartage firm which developed a monopoly in supplying cartage and rolling stock for Great Western Railway and the Canada Southern Railway. He had successful investments in Detroit banks at the dawn of automobile production and he speculated in real estate. He founded the Hamilton Bridge and Tool Company for railway and highway bridges, and his firm built the 2,000-passenger *Chippewa* steamship in 1894 for tourist runs across Lake Ontario. Horse breeding, which grew from his cartage business, also allowed him to indulge in racing and breeding of thoroughbreds. His first wife, Margaret Walker (1836-1873), gave him four sons and four daughters.

By the early 1900s Joe Walker acquired the house and lived there in his declining years. Joe, in earlier days, was the Customs Officer at Queenston. He lived in Town after his retirement and served seven years in Council to make himself useful. His nephew, Frank of Virgil, came into the property from time to time. Various tenants occupied both this house and the three tenement houses next door for many years during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Varey-Hendrie House was the home of Alec and Dorothy Middleditch, who are buried in St. Mark's Cemetery.

## 118 Johnson Street, Sign of the Crown or Lyall-Twining House



This property was received as a royal grant by Peter Benville in 1796, in recognition of his services in the Provincial Marine. The land remained unimproved for several years, until it was acquired by Robert and Peter McDougall, who built the present house in or near 1820.

Before long, they sold out to Jared Stocking, a maker of fashionable hats, and a successful merchant, who at the same time acquired the unimproved lot directly across Johnson Street, in 1830. Stocking was an American immigrant who arrived in 1815 and had acquired enough social standing to serve in the militia as a captain. Whatever plans Stocking may have had for his Johnson Street properties, he sold everything off in 1836, this house passing into the hands of William Moffat (1798-1864). By now, and for a long time to come, it was commonly referred to as the "Jared Stocking House".

William Moffatt, however, turned it into a hotel, which he dubbed "The Sign of the Crown" - above the door of this former inn. It is dated 1836 with a clasped hand insignia -- an original fire insurance marker. In the previous year, he had commenced construction on Picton Street of the Moffatt House, an establishment that still stands as one of the oldest hotels in Niagara on the Lake. Resemblance between the two structures is strong enough to suggest that Moffat took the Jared Stocking house as the model for his new hotel.

Both buildings are examples of Georgian architecture, with a gable roof and a balanced five-bay façade, twinned chimneys and white clapboard siding, and are of almost identical size.

With a brief hiatus, Moffat continued to operate the Sign of the Crown as a hotel until 1864, when it was sold to Sarah Secord (1834-1900), and returned to use as a private residence.

She sold the house in 1872 to Charles Camidge, a Crimean War veteran, who was invited to Niagara as principal of the High School but decided to resign that post and open a private academy in his own home. His York Academy continued until his death in 1895.

More recently, it was the home of W.E. Lyall, town clerk of Niagara, and his daughter Jessie. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the house has had several owners as a private residence, until being recast as a Bed and Breakfast in 2011.

## 126 Johnson Street, Clarkson-Platt House



The house at 126 Johnson Street is notable for being occupied by the Platt family who operated a carriage-making factory. It sits on lot 110, whose first owner was Daniel Servos (1738-1803). Servos fought with the Butler's Rangers and was one of the original Loyalist families to settle in Niagara - he built a mill complex called Palatine Hill near Four Mile Creek. By 1800, records indicate the lot was owned by Colin McNabb (1761-1810), who was formally granted the land by the Crown in 1804 - the first transaction for the lot registered in town records. McNabb was another prominent Loyalist, originally from Virginia, who moved to Quebec, then Nova Scotia where he enlisted with the Loyal Nova Scotia Volunteers. He was living in Niagara by 1787 and became a collector of customs.

An 1810 plan of the town shows two houses on the lot in that year, one at the Gate Street corner (roughly where 144 Johnson Street now is) and one at the edge of lot 109, roughly where this house now is. These were likely built by McNabb and would have been destroyed in the fire of 1813. McNabb's war losses claim lists a house, but it is unclear which lot it refers to. In 1824, the property was seized by the Sheriff, and transferred to Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834), a prominent surgeon who built the stately home at 28 Prideaux Street. Muirhead sold the lot several years later to George Varey (1787-1861), a tailor. Varey is best known for building the house at 105 Johnson as well as the red townhouses across the street, and it is likely that Varey built this house as well sometime around 1828.

The property changed hands frequently in the next few decades and began to be subdivided. 17,888 sq. ft. were acquired in 1843 by Hezekiah Platt for £172,10s, and the property remained in the Platt family until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Platts operated a carriage-making factory on the site - the shops were eventually torn down (early 20<sup>th</sup> century) but would have occupied the space where #134 Johnson Street now is. The business was continued by Hezekiah's son, Willard, for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Willard Platt was a Methodist Church member, and

his business grew to include a blacksmith shop as well. The Platt's business was, for many years, an important part of life in Niagara for many residents.

Architecturally, the house is a fairly typical Georgian design, of 3-bay construction and with a clapboard exterior. Since the Platt family's ownership, the house has changed hands several times up until the present day. The house's rear wing is a recent addition.

## 135 Johnson Street



The house at 135 Johnson Street shares its early history with that at 140 Gate Street around the corner, both occupying a part of original town lot 99, granted Peter O’Karr (or O’Carr) in 1798. Briefly owned by Lt. Col. William Johnson Kerr (1792-1845), the son of Dr. Robert Kerr (1755-1824) and grandson of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), it was sold to Joseph Adnams, a carpenter. A house stood on the lot by 1810, as shown by a plan of the town, at the corner facing Johnson Street, which would have been destroyed by the 1813 fire.

In 1816, the section of the lot where this house stands was sold to John MacMonigle, a gardener and yeoman (i.e., a land-owning farmer), and then a smaller section to George Greenlees in 1821, who would later add the Johnson Street corner in 1829. It was Greenlees, also a yeoman, who built this house around 1822. Greenlees had moved to Niagara in 1821, while adding farmland to his large township property. The productivity of his farmland is what likely allowed him to purchase the second part of this lot in 1829. Greenlees and his wife Mary had at least three children in the 1820s, all of whom were baptized at St. Mark’s Church.

In 1833 Greenlees sold both parts to Lewis Donnally for £200, who operated one of Niagara’s many inns there for a brief period. Charles Latham Hall (1812-1849), a wealthy lawyer who owned many properties in Niagara and lived in the house at 187 Queen Street, acquired the property in 1842, and rented it out, as did his daughters who acquired the property after his death. One of the tenants was Noble Keith, who operated a tavern near Butler’s Burying Ground called the Rising Sun.

Architecturally, the house is slightly asymmetrical, allowing greater room for the rooms on the right, which was useful for an inn. The chimneys on either end indicate there were four working fireplaces, which still remain. The house has been restored by Mrs. Kathleen Drope, who also restored the Gate Street house around the corner.

## 144 Johnson Street, Ralph Clement House or Walsh House



In 1804, a grant for lot 110 (as well as lot 143 to the south) was given to Colin McNabb (1761-1810). McNabb's main land holdings (950 acres) were in Grantham Township, near 8 Mile Creek, where he had settled in the early 1790s, but took land in town as well for winter use, as was commonly done at the time, and built a house there. McNabb died in 1810, and his widow in 1813, and the house was burned in the fire of December 1813. After the war, his estate claimed £250, one of the smaller war claims submitted. McNabb's heir, John, did not rebuild on the lot after the war, but by 1823 was considerably in debt, and had his property seized.

Lot 110 was then sold to Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834), a surgeon who was married to Deborah Butler (1764-1844), daughter of Colonel John Butler (1728-1796). Muirhead's own house was on Prideaux Street between King and Regent Street, which burned in the fire of 1813 and was rebuilt in 1817. He may have intended to build a house for his eldest child, John Butler Muirhead (1796-1824), after he married, but John Butler died at a young age. The lot temporarily passed out of the Muirhead's possession, to the local tailor George Varey Sr. (1787-1861) but was reacquired soon after.

The lot was purchased by Ralph Morden Clement (1812-1854), a Niagara merchant, for £257.10 in 1840, a high price which indicated the current house probably existed on the lot at that time. Clement proceeded to divide the lot several times, including a sale of some land to innkeeper Lewis Donnelly, but retained the Johnson/Gate corner where the house currently stands. After



changing hands several times, the property was acquired by Major Joseph Clement (1790-1867) from 1849 onwards. Major Clement rented the property out to several different tenants, and eventually left the property to his son, Joseph (1827-1917), colloquially known as Major Joe. Joseph II also rented the house to a number of tenants, including Daniel Servos Waters (1813-1899) and William Henry Curtis (1833-1894) in the 1870s, John Cortlandt Secord (1831-1881) and John Ellison (1844-1921, a builder) in the 1880s, and Russell Wilkinson and Edward O'Melia in the 1890s.

Improvements were probably made to the house in 1892, including a front verandah. Joseph II died in 1917, leaving it to his one child, Ella Louise (1879-1938) who married Capt. Thomas Edward Hiscott in 1918. On her death Ella Louise left the property in turn to her only child, Catherine Mary Hiscott (1920-1991). Catherine sold the property to George Keeler, a painter, for \$2000 in 1946. During the 1940s, the house was given a major facelift by Andy Melbourn, a Niagara Falls businessman, which included the addition of the porch on the Gate Street side of the house.

## 234 Johnson Street, Clench-Hahn House



This 5-bay home, currently under restoration, was built around 1824 by Ralfe (or Ralph) Clench (1762-1828), a former officer in the Butler's Rangers. It replaced the earlier house built before the war on lot 114, which was granted by the Crown to Clench in 1796.

Clench was born in Schenectady, New York, and married Elizabeth Johnson (1772-1850), a granddaughter of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), with whom he had at least 12 children. Clench served in several different units during the Revolutionary War, including eventually Captain William Caldwell's Company of Butler's Rangers. After the war he settled in Niagara, as did many of the disbanded Rangers, and held various offices in Niagara. He was the first town clerk, later appointed a judge of the surrogate court in 1803, and then a member of the provincial parliament (at that time in York) from 1806 to 1812. He also belonged to the Masonic Lodge, the Niagara Library, and to St. Andrew's Church. He commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia at the Battle of Queenston Heights and was later captured by American forces and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner in Vermont.

Interestingly, Clench's house was one of the very few which was not burned in the fire of December 1813. In a cruel ironic twist, however, it was burned several years later in 1820 by sparks from a wash day fire. Clench wrote about this event in a letter from 1823: "...unfortunately in the month of February, 1820 the house I then lived in with my family was accidentally burnt down and we lost almost the whole of the little we were then possessed of together with all my private papers, commissions, Deeds and other documents..."

The current house, which replaced it, was one of the finest and most elaborate in Niagara. It features an intricate doorway with fanlight and sidelights, and fluted pilasters with Ionic caps, reminiscent of other houses in Niagara such as the Breakenridge-Hawley house. Built perpendicular to the road, an unusual design, it faces the garden and the 1-mile Creek which flows through the 2-acre property.

Lot 113, at the Simcoe/Johnson corner was acquired in 1819 by Elizabeth, sold to her by her mother, Sarah Johnson, the widow of Brant Johnson (the son of Sir William) who had originally been granted the lot. Across the creek is the Butler House, built by (most likely) a brother of Col. John Butler (1728-1796), although that house was moved to its current location much later. Nonetheless it is fitting that these two houses are nearby each other as Butler and Clench had a close relationship.

When Ralfe Clench died, he left the property to his wife. The property stayed in the hands of the Clench family until 1889 when John Geale Dickson (1845-1931) purchased it and did some renovations. The extensions at the back of the house towards Mississauga Street are all 20<sup>th</sup> century additions. The front porch was likely added by Charles Hahn, who purchased the house in the 1940s. The house is currently undergoing extensive restorations by its present owner.

## 292 Johnson Street, Grauer House



The lot on which 292 Johnson Street now sits, 116, was granted in 1797 to Edward McMichael (1755-1800). McMichael was a prosperous merchant in Philadelphia, PA, who initially fought with the rebels in the revolutionary war but switched sides in August 1776. As a result of this, he was 'blacklisted' by the state of Pennsylvania after the war, and his property confiscated as he fled to Niagara. As a captain in the British Army, he was entitled to 3000 acres, which he was eventually granted, although the location took some time to determine. Soon after, McMichael and his family moved to the new Long Point settlement but retained their 1-acre town lot in Niagara until 1820, when it passed out of the family to Jacob Caniff, a watchmaker and silversmith. At this point there is no evidence of a house being built on the lot, in fact the land west of Simcoe Street would not be developed until later in the 1820s.

Caniff was a recent arrival in Niagara, and later that year purchased a second 1-acre lot on Queen Street (lot 69), and very likely built on both lots (there is no definitive evidence of a house on the lot until 1837, but it was likely built earlier). By 1827, Canniff was preparing to move to Port Robinson, the southern terminal of the new Welland Canal, and sold both lots, 116 being sold for £150. The lot was purchased by Patrick McBride, a schoolmaster, who possibly operated a school out of the house. Eventually the lot was reacquired by Caniff and was used as a rental property. Caniff died in 1863 in Pelham Township, leaving the property to his wife, and in turn to his children, the oldest of which, Joseph, conveyed the lot back to his mother, who continued to rent the property.

The property declined in value considerably in the 1860s, but may have been enlarged during this period, possibly with the upper story and/or extra wing, as rental records indicate it accommodated John Thompson's family of 8 in 1873 as tenants. Later, in 1877, Thomas Hologhan, a shoemaker, rented the property with his family, but in 1880, the property was sold by Susan Caniff to Herman Metke,

a printer, of Buffalo and his wife, for \$150. After purchasing some surrounding land and upgrading the house somewhat, the Metke's moved in 1892, although the home may have been only their summer residence as tax records show their primary address as Buffalo.

In 1898, the property was sold to Jane Orr, wife of Robert Orr, a farmer, for \$500. The lot remained intact until 1935, when 78' of Johnson Street frontage was sold off, and then following Jane Orr's death, the remainder (including the current house) was probated to one of her descendants as per her will, and then quickly sold off again to the family of the present owners.

## 66 King Street, Whale Inn or Elliott House



Although there are needless to say no whales in Niagara or anywhere near it, the Whale Inn, later known as the Elliott House, gets its name from its history as a hostel and tavern for fishermen and sailors who frequented the town's harbour. The house is just outside the original boundaries of the original town survey (King Street being the eastern boundary) and is thus not one of the many lots granted in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to Loyalists. The land on which it sits was originally part of the Fort George Military Reserve, and the location of a guard house at the foot of King Street. In 1831, a large strip of land along the river was transferred to the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company by the Crown, who began reclaiming the marshland to turn it into the extensive docks that were integral to the town's growing prosperity.

The construction date for the house is either 1835 or 1838, with 1835 being the more likely date. Walter Elliott (1798-1858) was the first owner, a native of Scotland who came to Niagara around 1829 with his wife Mary and two children. At first, the inn was a thriving business as the Dock Company prospered, but the company began to decline in the 1850s. Elliott lobbied for the construction of a canal from Niagara to Thorold in 1850 to preserve the town's success, but was eventually forced to change careers, leaving the inn to be managed by his wife.

At this point, Elliott most likely had a lease agreement with the Dock Company, which entitled him to use the land at his discretion, without formal ownership. The Elliott's did not own the property outright until 1870 when the land was sold to Walter's son, Thomas Elliott when the Dock Company was divesting itself of land to compensate for the failure of their business.

After Walter's death in 1858, his wife and his son, Thomas continued to manage the inn. At some point the inn stopped selling alcohol and became a guest house. After 1870, the business was managed by Jane Orr (1829-1908), Thomas' wife, and her daughter, while Thomas became a fisherman. The business flourished again in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century during the tourist boom. Their two unmarried daughters, Adelaide Mary (1866-1941) and Sarah Jane (1870-1936) continued the business.

The Elliot family's ownership came to an end after Adelaide died, and her cousin, Frank Thomas, moved into the house, before selling it to Mrs. Oppenheimer of Buffalo. By the 1950s, the house had deteriorated considerably, but Mrs. Oppenheimer hired a local craftsman to restore it, and since then the house has remained in excellent condition, changing ownership several times until the present day.

A beautiful watercolour painting by Francis Granger, circa 1856, shows the foot of King Street as seen from the river's edge. King Street was very wide at that point and extended all the way to the water's edge. The guardhouse is shown right in the middle of the widened street. The Elliott House is shown at the left, and across the street were the *Niagara Gleaner* printing office, and the Oates Tavern. These buildings were later demolished to make way for the Queen's Royal Hotel which opened in 186 and paved the way for the late 19<sup>th</sup> century tourist boom. The Elliott house benefitted from its construction considerably and would often cater to Queen's Royal guests. This hotel was itself demolished, and today Queen's Royal Park which stands on the same land is named after it.

## 143 King Street, Bernard Gray Hall



The corner of King Street and Prideaux Street has always been an important location in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Prior to 1812, this was the location of the Newark jail house.

The land registry shows entries from 1817 when this parcel of land was considered crown land and was bought and sold a few times as "the lot" until 1831 when John Graham purchased the land and built a tavern here called the John Graham Tavern and a period after it was named Black Swan Inn. John Graham lost the property sometime before 1845 for taxes unpaid.

From 1845 to 1893, the activities of this parcel of land and building are not clear, but there are rumors that it was also a bakery at sometime before 1890. In 1893 the land registry again documents the land as being sold by the town for unpaid taxes to Fanny Rowley. Fanny Rowley then sold the property to Emma Brown (a spinster) in 1906. Emma Josephine Brown (1856-1916) left Niagara for Toronto in 1913 and left the estate to her brother Albert Henry Brown (1863-1922) who had moved to Texas during this period; the record states that he was unmarried.

During renovation over the years, a marking was discovered on the staircase wall that was dated 1911 by the plasterers, this was during Emma Brown's ownership. Emma Brown also owned other parcels of land as there are records showing Miss Brown selling off other parcels of land near the corner of King Street and Prideaux Street in 1907.

In 1916, Dr. James Frederick Rigg, the town medical examiner, purchased the property from Albert Brown. Dr. Rigg increased the size of this building by adding an office for his practice and a large master bedroom suite above the office on the Prideaux Street side of the building. His son, Dr. Charles Bruce Rigg (1915-1990), took over the property in 1942 and ran his medical practice here until 1965. There are many town folks who still remember going to see Dr. Bruce Rigg at the corner of King Street and Prideaux Street.



## 153 King Street, Masonic Lodge



The history of Freemasonry in Niagara is as old as the town itself – with the first lodge being established in 1791. That wooden building was one of the first substantial buildings in the town (at that time called Lenox), which at that time was merely a scattered collection of cottages of those farming the land to supply Fort Niagara. The lodge building was said to host the first meeting of the legislative assembly of Upper Canada after Lieut. Gov. John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) arrived to develop the capital (which he called Newark). The remainder of the legislative assembly sessions were held in the Butler’s Rangers barracks (not those which stand today but rather the original barracks, long destroyed, near Navy Hall).

This first lodge building was used for various purposes, including as a courthouse, a ballroom, and a meeting place for the Newark Agricultural Society. It was also used by Dr. Robert Addison (1754-1829) to conduct religious services, given that there was no church building at that time (St. Mark’s Church did not hold its first service until 1809). While this may seem a strange contrast, Addison and others saw no contradiction between Masonry and Christian theology. Indeed, many of the town’s most prominent residents were Masons, including Col. John Butler (1728-1796, who was the first Master), William Jarvis (1751-1817), Col. Ralfe Clench (1762-1828), Dr. Robert Kerr (1755-1824), James Secord (1773-1841), as well as Simcoe himself.

In December 1813, this first lodge was burned, along with the rest of the town, by American soldiers and Canadian turncoats as they abandoned the town. After the war, with their building gone, the Niagara Masons used various temporary locations to hold their meetings. The land on which the lodge was built was lot #33, a ½ acre lot that had originally been granted to William Dickson (1769-1846), a prosperous merchant and one of the town’s most prosperous residents, who is well known for his Randwood estate on John St. At some point the property came into the possession of John Eagleson, also a merchant. It is Eagleson who,

sometime around 1816, built the existing building on the same spot as the destroyed lodge, this time out of stone rather than wood, and likely from the rubble left from the fire.

This stone building served in a number of different roles in the decades following the war. It was at various points a store, a private school, a hotel, and a military barracks (used during the 1837 Rebellion and the Fenian Raids), hence it is often referred to as the 'stone barracks'. In 1860 a fire destroyed the temporary location of the Niagara Lodge No. 2 A.F. & A.M., in which many of the society's jewels, regalia and documents were lost. They then began to rent the stone barracks here, which thus were restored to their original purpose. In 1877, they purchased the building, and have used it as their lodge ever since. The upper floor is where the meetings take place, while the lower floor functions as a gallery.

## 244 King Street, Moore-Bishop-Stokes House



This house is located in the 'New Survey' that was granted to James Crooks (1778-1860) in 1822, in exchange for lands he had owned around Fort Mississauga (the present-day golf course) in order to build the new fort to replace Fort George. These lands included the four 4-acre blocks between King Street, Castlereagh, Wellington and Picton, along with 5 ½ acres elsewhere. Crooks gradually sold off most of this property, with this 50 x 100' section being sold to Francis Moore, a yeoman, in 1828. Moore mortgaged the property from Crooks and built this house sometime between 1828 and 1831 – making it likely the oldest house in the new survey.

Moore was a farmer and had also been a private in the 68<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and married Sarah Oakes in 1821. Moore owned the property until 1848 when it was sold by his heir, William D. Moore to Thomas Dorrity (or Dority), who also purchased an adjoining ¼ acre directly from Crooks that same year. Eventually the house was owned by Dorrity's son, John, a painter. The house was used for a time as a boarding school, and also as a lodging house. Thomas Dorrity built the addition on the rear of the house and his signature appears on a pane of glass in one of its sash windows.

In the 1860s, this house was one of those which harboured Confederate refugees for a brief period, in this case the Rev. Dr. William T. Leacock. Leacock arrived in Niagara sooner than most and was there from 1864 to 1865. A friend of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who would visit Niagara several years later, he had been the rector of an Episcopal Church in New Orleans but was banished from the United States for refusing to pray for the President of the United States, thus going into exile in Canada. During his brief stay in Niagara he officiated at St. Mark's Anglican Church for over a year while the Rev. Dr. William McMurray (1810-1894) was away in England. After the U.S. Civil War he returned to the United States.

In 1892 the house was purchased by Jack Bishop (1842-1902); he and his family ran a grocery business and owned the house for over 70 years. More recently, the house was owned by restoration architect Dr. Peter John Stokes (1925-2013), who has been involved with the restoration of many Niagara-on-the-Lake homes. He restored many of the original features of this house. One curious feature of this house is that the addition to the rear was built at a different height than the rest of the house, requiring steps between the two elevations.

## 255 King Street, Burns House



In 1791 two young brothers from Scotland, James Crooks (1778-1860) and William Crooks (1776-1837), set up business as merchants supplying Fort Niagara with necessities. After five years at the Fort, they moved across the river in 1796 to make this lot their residence, emporium and storehouse. Ambitious and successful, they went into the transport business in 1810, ordering built a schooner, *The Lord Nelson*. On the eve of the war, an American warship captured the ship, charging it with violation of a temporary embargo on trade. In Sackett's Harbor, its cargo forfeited, *The Lord Nelson* was fitted out as a vessel of war, rechristened *The Scourge*, and added to the American naval forces on Lake Ontario.

The Crooks' heavy loss was aggravated when the town burned in 1813, destroying all their buildings and trade goods. In total they made claims of nearly 10,000 pounds, but received only half that, being directed by the compensation board to sue the American government for the losses incurred by the illegal seizure of *The Lord Nelson*. This they duly did, but the claim wound its way through proceedings that far outlasted the Crooks brothers; it was finally paid to their heirs in 1930.

James, the registered owner of the property, was an eminent citizen in the early days, serving in peacetime as the town postmaster, and in the war of 1812 as an officer in the militia. He fought at Queenston Heights and served as a jurymen at the notorious Ancaster Assizes, where eight "traitors" were hanged in 1814. James built this house in 1818, just before transferring the core of his business to Hamilton. In 1833 he severed the house and grounds from the one-acre plot, and sold it to Dick Howard, proprietor of the Old Angel Inn. Howard ran the place as a hotel until 1846, then sold it to a new owner, Mary Flynn. As a hotel, the house has undergone numerous additions and expansions.

After some years the property was bought in 1887 as a family home by Joseph Rae Burns (1858- ) and has since been known as "The Burns House". Joe Burns was only 29 years old at the time of purchase; he went on to become town clerk, and in 1910 Collector of Customs. He was well known in town as a prominent curler, bowler, and singer in the church choir.

## 266 King Street, Eedson-Fyfe House



The small one-storey house at 266 King is one of those in the town's 'New Survey.' These were a series of four 4-acre blocks granted to James Crooks (1778-1860), a wealthy merchant. Crooks was granted these in 1823 in exchange for lands confiscated from him around Fort Mississauga, which was built after the War of 1812 to replace Fort George. He gradually sold off much of this land, although the section where this house is was not sold until 1849.

The purchaser was Rebecca Eedson, a Common School teacher. Her brother Thomas acquired some land adjoining the lot, between it and Platoff Street. It was most likely Thomas who built the house on Rebecca's lot, in 1850 or the few years thereafter. The Eedsons' father, John Eedson, was originally from the United States, and had settled in Nova Scotia after the Revolution, marrying a U.E.L., Salome Crane. Thomas Eedson was the first of the family to move to Niagara, in the 1830s, and established himself there in the 1840s. He was one of the workers who built the Presbytery for St. Vincent de Paul Church, and later assisted in restoring St. Andrew's Church in 1855. His sisters joined him in Niagara soon after.

The Eedson family were also Methodists and attending the Methodist meeting house that was then at the corner of Gate and Gage Streets but has since been moved to 155 Gate Street. They were heavily involved in the temperance movement in the 1840s, the meetings of which were also held in the meeting house. Rebecca and some of her children were also involved in church music and were members of the Niagara Choral Society.

Rebecca Eedson married widower John Burns, an Irish-born shoemaker, and eventually required a larger house due to their growing family, and thus rented out the King Street house for much of the 1850s. In 1859, the house was sold for

£125 to Joseph Painter. Painter was at that time a butcher, himself a Methodist but married to Margaret, a Roman Catholic. He had been elected Town Councillor in 1852. Painter rented the house himself to several tenants, including to Rebecca Burns from 1862 to 1865, after her husband's death. Burns by then had resumed her career, teaching at a private school.

One other notable 19<sup>th</sup> century owner of the house was Charles Camidge, who purchased the property in 1882. Camidge had come to Niagara in 1869 as Headmaster of the Niagara Grammar School, and in 1871 had opened the York Academy on Johnson Street, another private school. Camidge committed suicide in 1895, after a considerable dispute with the town over its water works project. The house at 266 King Street has changed hands several times up until the present day.



## 407 King Street, The Wilderness (Claus)



This remarkable property – four heavily forested acres in the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake--has passed intact through many hands since its origin as a crown grant to a veteran of Butler’s Rangers in 1796.

The first private purchaser was Robert Pilkington, a military engineer in the intimate circle of John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), who assigned Pilkington numerous commissions to erect fortifications and public buildings in Upper Canada. After only a year of ownership, Pilkington conveyed the property in 1799 to Ann Johnson Claus (1745-1801), in a most unusual transaction.

Ann Claus was the daughter of the colonial magnate Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), the widow of Johnson’s chief assistant in the Indian Department, and the mother of William Claus (1765-1826) who in 1796 succeeded John Butler (1728-1796) as deputy Indian commissioner for the Six Nations reserve. According to the records, the purchase money was obtained by the sale of reserve land, the tribes then conveying the town property to Ann Claus in gratitude for her (deceased) husband’s “many kindnesses”, a piece of business which could have been transacted only with the permission and guidance of her son William, the financial trustee of the Six Nations.

William built the first house, but it was destroyed by the American army in 1813, when its root cellar provided winter refuge for the family of an officer at Fort George. The house was rebuilt, and William lived there until his death in 1826. He often received his Indian wards there, who camped by the banks of One-Mile-Creek, which flows through the property. The present house consists of considerable extensions upon the original 1816-17 construction and is shielded from view by a forest which includes some extraordinarily tall and broad trees, some of them centuries old. Claus was a pioneering arborist, who planted the

very tall stand of sycamores which line the property on its King Street boundary. He also introduced soft-fruit cultivation to Niagara, with an orchard of nectarines and peaches; today, only a single ancient pear tree survives from that orchard.

In the 1850's the property was sold to yet another family prominent in the pioneer annals of Niagara, the Dicksons. Walter Hamilton Dickson (1806-1885) was the only son of Niagara's richest man, William Dickson (1769-1846), whose magnificent home was burned in 1813 when Walter was seven, and William was away in a prisoner of war camp. The family fortune began with trade, but grew mightily through land speculation throughout the province, and Walter lived as a lawyer and Conservative politician until his appointment to the first Canadian Senate, in 1867. After his death in 1885, the property passed out of his family.

### 433 King Street, Powell-Cavers House or Powell-Wisch House or Brockamour Manor



The house at 433 King Street has a long and interesting history. The 1-acre Lot 280 on which it stands was originally granted by the Crown in 1796 to Benjamin VanEvery (1759-1796), the son of McGregor VanEvery (1723-1786) who had served in Captain John McDonnell's Company of Butler's Rangers. In 1800, the lot was sold by Robert Pilkington, an engineer with extensive landholdings, to Joseph Brant (1743-1807), although no transaction is listed in which the property is sold to Pilkington. A Mohawk from the province of New York, Brant was a pivotal figure in the history of Upper Canada, having fought with the Loyalists in the Revolutionary War, and then petitioning for a land grant for a Mohawk reserve near the Grand River. He was also a close companion of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), the influential Superintendent of Indian Affairs, as his sister, Molly/Mary Brant (1735-1796) was married to Johnson. Brant may have been interested in this lot due to its proximity to the Indian Department Council House.

In 1805, the lot was purchased by John Powell (1776-1827), son of Chief Justice William Dummer Powell (1755-1834). Powell was the Registrar of the District of Niagara, a Clerk to the Legislative Council, as well as a Captain of Militia, and also commanded the Artillery Company. He was wounded in May 1813, taken prisoner in Vermont, but was rescued and was present at the Battle of Lundy's Lane in 1814. It was Powell who built the present house, likely in 1816. There is some evidence that part of the original house (built sometime after 1805) survived the fire of 1813, likely the kitchen wing.

One of the notable residents of 433 King Street was Miss Sophia Shaw (1792-1872), a sister-in-law of Powell, who local gossip claimed had been engaged to Major-General Sir Isaac Brock (1769-1812) at the time of his death - hence the name 'Brock-amour'. John Powell sold the property to Thomas McCormick,

along with adjoining lot 279 which he had also acquired, in 1824. In 1836 it was acquired by James Boulton, a barrister, who did substantial renovations, including a ballroom wing with a nursery on the second floor. Other notable owners of the house include Duncan Milloy (1824-1871), one of three brothers well-known for sailing on the Great Lakes, during the 1860's.

At present, the house is used as a B&B. It has undergone considerable refurbishments to restore the house to its former glory, including rebuilding the ballroom wing that was demolished in the early 1900's, building a new gatehouse, and restoring interior fixtures.

## 630 King Street, Miss Young's School



The small log house at 630 King Street is the only one of its kind still remaining in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The land here was not among the original surveyed lots that were granted to Loyalists in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and only began to be developed after the War of 1812. After the destruction of the fire of 1813, the town planners attempted to move the town further south, recognizing the vulnerability of being so close to the water. Thus, the new courthouse (later to be replaced by the current structure on Queen Street) was built at the south end of King Street. The land on which it stood is now Rye Park.

Unfortunately, those who rebuilt their homes after the fire did not heed these persuasions, and the majority of houses built between 1815 and 1820 were along Johnson, Queen and Prideaux Streets, and the land in this area was never developed to the extent the planners would have liked. Eventually the land would begin to be developed by a wave of immigrants in the 1830s and 1840s, particularly those escaping the Irish potato famine, and thus the area is still often referred to as 'Irishtown.'

Among the exceptions was George Young (1759-1825), who built this house sometime around 1816, out of which his widow, Elizabeth, operated a school. We know that Young had other property, including lot 107 at the corner of Johnson and Regent Streets, although he did not build on that lot. Young was one of the first settlers in Niagara, a master carpenter who had supervised the construction and repair of various military fortifications, including Fort Erie, Fort York and Fort George. He had been a private in the Lincoln Militia during the War of 1812, and was also a member of St. Andrew's Church, and was among those who founded it. Miss Young was a Sunday school teacher at that church as well.

George Young sought a pension from the government in 1815, referring to his years of service (since 1776) as a carpenter, as well as to the hardships suffered by his being taken prisoner in 1813 as many Niagara residents were. His war-losses claim from 1815 lists many household goods, including furniture, clothing, and numerous books including "Smollets History of England," "Wilson's Egypt," and "Charles [Rupa] and Percival's Ceylon," but does not include a house, suggesting he may have rented prior to the war.

Miss Young's school is mentioned in Janet Carnochan's *History of Niagara*: "The oldest building now standing which served as a schoolhouse is that near the Western Home, built in 1816 by George Young. Here, in 1827, Miss Young taught a large private school." The 'Western Home' referred to is that which was operated by Miss Maria Rye, in the building that was formerly the second courthouse. This was a home for poor and/or orphaned girls from Britain who were taught domestic skills before being placed with families.

This small house seems an unlikely candidate for a school of the type we think of today, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century schools such as these were often small-scale operations more akin to private tutorship. The building has been preserved for the most part in its original state, although the dovetail logs have since been covered up by clapboard. There was a wing at the back that has since been removed. Its centre chimney stack, with its four fireplaces, still exists at the centre of the house.

**646 King Street, Cappon-Cash House. Moved from 66 Picton Street**



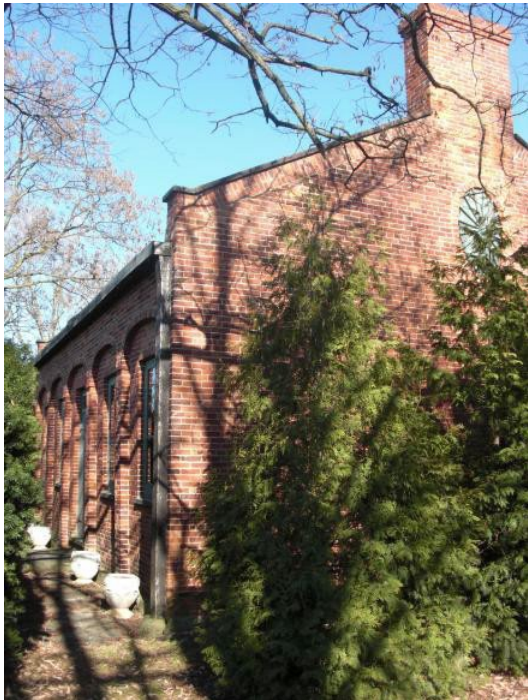
Town records identify this as the Cash-Cappon House. The Cappons were the last owners prior to the house being moved from the business district, in 2005. They emigrated from Belgium arriving in Niagara before 1957 and spent their lives as owners and operators of a downtown restaurant.

The present location is either the third or fourth for this modest cottage, whose original builder remains unknown. Until recently it stood on Picton Street in the downtown area of Niagara on the Lake; in turn it had been moved to that spot at some earlier time from somewhere on the Military Reservation---either at Fort George, or on the Commons, with perhaps an interval on the lands of St. Vincent De Paul church. As such, it is representative of a number of small frame dwellings that early residents of the town thriftily shifted, rather than tear down. Its architectural style is distinctly Regency, much favoured by British officers in colonial service during the 1830's and 40's, which comports well with the probability of its construction at or near Fort George, and allows us to date the original structure to the 1840's, or a trifle earlier.

Many original features of the original house, both external and internal, have survived time and the rigours of moving. Externally, the clapboard cladding and hip roof are original, together with the window trim, shutters, and three-light transom over the front door. The verandah, although a feature of Regency style, is quite new, replacing a much smaller original porch.

Clearly the more expensive features of Regency (French windows, verandah) were more indicated, than fully realized. This small wooden structure was created by a builder with limited funds, but refined taste. At low cost he achieved a house which was sturdy enough to endure for 170 years, yet pleasing enough to project a successful impression of the fashionable taste of that age.

## 708 King Street, Cameron-Farren-Stokes House



The property was on the Military Reserve in Niagara-on-the-Lake prior to the War of 1812.

Alexander Cameron (1779-1820) graduated as an attorney in 1809 and moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, or Newark as it was. At the start of the War of 1812 he was then the Junior Captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> Lincoln Artillery, at the time when John Powell (1776-1827) was the Senior Captain. John Powell was taken prisoner by the Americans in June 1813 and marched to the East Greenbush camp near Albany, New York. Cameron then became the Captain of the Provincial Incorporated Artillery in 1813.

After the War of 1812, Cameron was appointed Clerk for the Land Claims Commission, and he took depositions and reassigned titles of land for those living locally. In 1817 he had a house built at the south end of King Street, now known as the Cameron House. He was forever in debt and could not control his cash flow. Sadly, he died intestate in 1820 leaving a widow, Catherine Butler Cameron (1787-1854) and two young daughters, Ann Jennet and Anna Deborah. Another daughter has predeceased him. His widow tried unsuccessfully to sort out his affairs, but soon remarried to Peter Pawling. She died here in 1854 and is buried in Butler's Burying Ground.

The Cameron House was sold, and the new owner added a stable and carriage-house. In 1871 it became a part of Our Western Home, run by Miss Maria Rye for



poor children who were sent to Canada to get them off England's city streets. It became the Matron's home and the residence for those children who were returned by their employers to Ms. Rye. The house was expanded with a back wing to adapt it to this new use.

The Rye Home was closed early in World War One, and this house became officers' quarters for the Polish Army in training at Camp Niagara. After the War the property was sold to William Leonard Farren (1882-1966) in 1921; the Farren family had this house until the early 1970s. The next owner allowed the house to deteriorate considerably, after which it was purchased by Peter John Stokes (1925-2013), a renovation architect. Finally, the present owner purchased the property in 1982 and has completed an excellent renovation and the addition of a log cabin extension to the house.

Architecturally, the house features brick arcading similar to that on the town's second courthouse, which would later become the aforementioned Rye Home – the two buildings may have featured the work of the same craftsman. After the War of 1812 town planners attempted to relocate the town further away from the water, hence the courthouse was built at the south end of King Street. Nonetheless, most residents ignored this advice and rebuilt on the original locations, and this house is one of the very few early homes developed here. The Rye home was demolished in 1923 but would have stood where Rye Park is today. The house also features exquisite interior detail, no doubt the work of a skilled carpenter-joiner.

## 46 Market Street, The Angel Inn & Tavern



The Angel Inn is one of several buildings in Niagara-on-the-Lake that was at one time thought to have survived the fire of 1813, but more recent research suggests this is probably not the case. Nonetheless, the inn has a great deal of interesting history, and provides a window into the social life of Niagara in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The land on which it sits was originally owned by David William Smith, along with the other three lots forming the Queen/King/Johnson/Regent block. Smith was the acting surveyor general of Upper Canada, as well as a member of the legislative assembly, but returned to England in 1802. The property reverted to Crown land, and the large house he had built facing King Street became Government House and was destroyed in the fire of 1813. A plan of the 4-acre parcel of land shows that the strip of land along Queen Street where this building is now located was a series of 8 formal gardens. It is possible that there may have been an outbuilding on or near this site. After the war the property was leased in small sections by the government to private developers.

The current building was probably built sometime between 1815 and 1825 by John Ross, who gave the inn its name. 20<sup>th</sup> century restorations have shown that charred timber from the 1813 fire was used in its construction. He advertised it for sale in 1826, describing it as “that excellent tavern and stand known by the sign of the Angel Inn ... at the corner of the Market Square.” The purchaser was Richard Howard, who also operated a hotel on Prideaux Street, the Promenade House or Howard’s Hotel. In 1846 it was purchased by John Fraser, a sailmaker originally from Scotland, who changed its name first to the Mansion House, and then to Fraser’s Hotel. It would eventually revert back to its original name.

It is important to recognize that inns of this time were much different than those we think of today. They did not feature private rooms, but rather dormitories or shared rooms, although there were different quarters for men and women. They served an important function in the social life of the town, serving as places for

meetings, entertainment, and sometimes auctions and trials. They would generally feature a taproom on the main floor, where the men would drink (and where women were excluded from). Often town residents gathered at inns such as these for news and gossip.

Many famous guests are said to have stayed at this inn, including Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), Alexander Mackenzie, the explorer; and Prince Edward, the father of the future Queen Victoria. The inn was also reputed to be a meeting place for freemasons.

A popular local ghost story holds that a soldier by the name of Swayze, having heard of the impending American invasion in 1813, rushed to the inn to take his sweetheart out of harm's way. Having arrived just too late, he escaped to the cellar and hid in a wine barrel, as the Americans searched the building. Unfortunately, he was stabbed by a bayonet and his ghost is said to haunt the cellar. Given that the current building did not exist at the time, of course, this story is likely an invention. Moreover, there were several Swayze's in Niagara before the war, but all are recorded as having survived.

## 46 Mary Street, Miller-MacTaggart or Miller-Taylor House



46 Mary Street is one of the older houses in the town, situated on lot 282 at the corner of Mary and Regent Streets – plans date it to 1817, only a few years after the war's end. The original grant of the lot was to Walter Slingerland, in 1802, but eventually it came to be owned by William Duff Miller (1786-1859), although the transaction is not registered. Slingerland had built a small house on the property facing Regent Street shown on the Gray 1810 plan, which was destroyed along with the rest of the town in 1813. The 1817 building date of the house is established by a letter indicating that W.D. Miller's son, Richard (1816-1889) was born in a different house in 1816, because his Mary Street house was not yet constructed, and an 1817 plan showing the new house's footprint.

The property was listed in the probate of his will, made in 1856, which left the property to his wife, Ann Vansickle Miller (1786-1861), along with adjoining lots 323 and 324 (facing John Street) all of which he owned by the time of his death in 1859. The will stipulated that lots 282 and 323 be sold, with lot 324 to be occupied by his brother Robert, with his 3 sons as executors. After Ann Vansickle Miller died, her brother-in-law Robert lived in the house for a few years, but by 1866 the house was empty.

The property was sold to Charles S. Wilson and James Rose, merchants from Montreal, for \$1200 in 1868, and then in 1871 a Trust Deed was issued to the wife and children of Capt. Edwin H. Hewgill (1815-1883), noting that the money to acquire the estate had been raised in England by contributions from friends. The trust was transferred in 1874 to Kenneth McKenzie and G. Mercer Adam, a Toronto bookseller. Edwin Hewgill's surviving children sold the property to James Robinson, a gardener at the nearby Barbary Lodge for \$1500, who acquired the remaining interest of the trustees in 1907.

During these 90 years, the house was only occupied by two families – the Millers and the Hewgills – and underwent little in terms of alteration, leaving features such as the original fireplace and trim intact. In 1912, Robinson sold lots 323 and

324 (those facing John Street which were sold in parcel with 282) to Dominion Canners Ltd., who operated a canning factory there. Apparently, one neighbour was so incensed at the prospect of a canning factory in the neighbourhood that he sold his house and left town forever. The cannery has been converted into the Pillar & Post Inn, which now occupies the majority of the land on lots 281, 282, 323, and 324.

## 67 Mary Street, Skyehaven B&B. Slave Cottage



The 2-storey saltbox house is notable historically because the present structure incorporates the small cabin that was built originally on this site. This cabin was probably built by Nathaniel Barnum sometime around 1787 to 1789. At this point, the land around this structure was still wilderness, and no streets had yet been laid out. There is a theory that the cabin was temporarily used as a meeting place for the Butler's Rangers, but this is difficult to confirm. As it was so small, the cabin would not have been included in early maps of the town.

The land on which the cabin stood, lot 278, was granted to Barnum formally in 1794, and very soon after sold to Thomas Ridout, as Barnum settled near Long Point, Ontario. Ridout was a well-known figure in early Niagara, at that time a clerk in the surveyor-general's office and later a member of the legislative assembly. The property changed hands several times after that, first to the Rev. Edmund Burke, an Irish priest who stayed in Niagara briefly around that time, and then to Robert Pilkington, a Royal Engineer who was known for rebuilding military fortifications. Pilkington owned considerable property in Niagara, and likely purchased this lot only for investment value, not to build on.

During the War of 1812, the cabin was likely unoccupied, and was spared the fire of December 1813. It is possible that the Americans and Canadian turncoats did not feel it was worth their time to burn such a small structure. After the war, the lot was sold by Pilkington to John Eagleson, a prominent merchant in Niagara, in 1822. Eagleson, who is best known for having rebuilt the Masonic Lodge in 1818, is thought to have enlarged this cabin sometime around 1814-1815, so he may have rented the property before he bought the lot. He added another room on the main floor, and two rooms above with a set of stairs rising from the present front door.

Since then the house has seen a number of alterations. The salt-box lean-to was added sometime in the 1860s, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the original barn and out-house were removed and the garage constructed, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom was added. A fireplace was added to the living room using bricks from a school demolished in St. Catharines. The original one-room cabin was where the present living room is, and underneath the main floor one can find scorched wood that was salvaged from the 1813 fire.

## 76 Mary Street, Jennings House



The 2-storey stucco house at 76 Mary Street sits on lot 284, originally granted by the Crown in 1798 to Michael Wardell. Wardell had served with the Second Battalion of New Jersey Volunteers in the Revolutionary War, and after the war was resettled in New Brunswick. He left for Upper Canada in 1790, and received 500 acres of farmland, as well as this lot in Newark, although he eventually settled in Elgin County. He nonetheless held on to this land until after the War of 1812 and sold the land to William Dickson (1769-1846) for £10, a low price indicating there were no substantial buildings on the lot. William Dickson was a prosperous merchant, and one of the town's wealthiest residents, well-known for his estate on John Street now known as Randwood. He was also involved in the town as a justice of the peace, a lawyer, and later a member of the legislative assembly.

Dickson began to subdivide the 1-acre property into 4 ¼ acre lots with 52' Mary Street frontages, each being sold to a different person. In west-to-east order starting from Victoria, the first was sold to Elias Green, another to Emmanuel Bess and soon after resold to Warner Johnson, and another to James Thompson. The ¼ acre where this house now stands was the furthest from Victoria and was sold to Moses Evans in 1828 for £12.10s. The registry abstracts indicate that in 1834 Evans sold Dickson 1/8 of an acre in the same lot for only 5 shillings, most likely the back part of the lot. It was Evans, then, who is the most likely builder of the current house, although this is difficult to confirm for certain. The date of the house's construction is also difficult to ascertain with certainty, but sometime in the 1830s seems the most likely timeframe.

Evans, along with the others who purchased these lots, was very likely a member of Niagara's African American population. The "coloured village," as it was then known, was settled in the area south of Mary Street. This was generally a less-developed area of town, away from the major commercial streets, indicative of



the social status of these residents. Many of these had been brought as slaves by Loyalists who moved to Upper Canada. John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) had abolished slavery in 1793, but existing slaves were not freed – nevertheless, they gradually earned their freedom and by the 1830s the majority of the black population were wage earners. Others were freed slaves from the United States, and others were loyalists who were rewarded for fighting with the British by land grants.

It is unclear how long Evans held on to his tract of land – the registry lists no further transactions until 1878 when Christina Chapman (1819-1891) quit-claimed the lot, indicating she had occupied for some time before that. Since then the house has seen a number of different owners and occupants until the present day. One of these was Mary Thomas, along with her children. One son, Reginald, was killed in November 1917 while serving in France, only 20 years old. Another, Doris, worked at ‘Our Western Home’ operated by Miss Maria Rye, where Rye Park is today.

## 307 Mississagua Street, Camp-Thompson House or Camp-Orders House



The house at 307 Mississagua Street has an interesting history, which begins in 1816 with a Crown grant of lot 159 to Col. John Dease Servos (1784-1847). This is a rather late year for a patent, probably partly explained by the house's less desirable location away from the centre of town. John D. Servos was the son of Daniel Servos (1738-1803) and Elizabeth Johnson Powell (1749-1821). Daniel Servos was a pivotal figure in the history of Loyalists in Niagara and was a lieutenant in the Indian Department. John D. Servos was the captain of the 10<sup>th</sup> Company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Lincoln Militia in the War of 1812. He was wounded at Black Rock in December 1813 and commanded the Militia at Chippewa in 1837/1838.

We know that by 1818 the property was owned by Garry Camp, as he mortgaged the property in that year to Robert and Peter McDougall, merchants from York. Little is known about camp, other than that he was a millwright and cabinet maker, and presumably had some business relationship with John Servos as he used him as a reference. It is possible that Camp may have built some of the equipment that Servos used in the family grist mill at Palatine Hill near 4-mile Creek. An advertisement from the *Niagara Spectator* in 1818 reads:

"Garry Camp, Mill-Wright, Has established himself in the town of Niagara, where those wishing to transact business in his line can see him as his Cabinet Factory. [...] Any persons wishing to satisfy themselves as to his qualification in the said business, will please to call on Mr. John D. Servos, at the Four Mile Creek, or Mr. Peter Robinson at New-Market in the Home District, where they may inspect for themselves."

Again, in that year Camp sold the property to the McDougall's (the mortgage holders) for £250, double what he mortgaged it for, suggesting he probably improved the lot by building a house, thus making 1818 the probable building

date. After changing hands several times, the house and lot was purchased by John Willson (1772-1837), the son of Irish John Willson (1738-1798, who had attached the 'Irish' to his name to differentiate him from all the other John Willson's) a Loyalist from New Jersey. The transaction is not listed, but we know he owned it by 1833 as it was willed to a descendent. Willson, the younger, rose to prominence in the town of Niagara, operating an inn on River Road, now known as the McIntyre Farm, as well the Exchange Hotel in the town, at the corner of Queen and Gate Streets. He married three times - his second wife was Ann McFarland (1793-1819), the daughter of John McFarland (1752-1815), whose home is now known as McFarland House on River Road/The Parkway.

Other notable occupants were Horatio Nelson Phillips, and his son Thomas D. Phillips. T.D. Phillips first purchased the house in 1854, selling it to his father in 1861, who subsequently mortgaged it back to T.D. H.N. Phillips operated a boarding school out of this house, the same one taught at by Dr. John Whitelaw, whose term had ended in 1851. This was a predecessor of the Niagara High School, which operated out of the current Niagara Historical Museum building from 1875, although Mr. Phillips is known for having his students sign their exercises 'Senior County Grammar School'. T.D. Phillips served as his father's assistant, and was known as a famous international cricket player, and the school cricket club started while Phillips taught there.

The structure of the house has changed since its construction - it is likely that the ell (the wing facing Gage Street) was added later, probably in the 1830s to house the school, most likely with the schoolhouse below and the dormitories above. Several architectural features remain from its use as a school, including recessed cupboards above the mantels on the second floor that were likely used as book cupboards by students.

### 392 Mississauga Street, Breakenridge-Hawley House



The beautiful restored house at 392 Mississauga Street has a long and interesting history that begins in 1796 with a Crown grant to Arent Bradt (1732-1796) of 1-acre lot 227. Brant's family were Loyalists who had fled from the Mohawk Valley in New York. His sister, Catherine (1735-1793), had married Col. John Butler (1728-1796), and his oldest son, Andrew (1755-1830), was a captain in the Butler's Rangers, one of the more active officers who commanded expeditions into the Ohio Country, and led raids against Wheeling, West Virginia, some of the last military actions of the Revolution.

Arent Bradt died that same year, 1796, leaving the property to Andrew. Andrew and his wife, Rachel Ryckman Bradt (1758-1830), may have built a house here, but if so it would have been burned in the fire of 1813. In 1818, Andrew sold the lot to John Breakenridge (1789-1828), a lawyer, for £27/10s. Breakenridge had several different property holdings, and had also built the Thomas Creen house on Simcoe Street in the same block. His obituary notes that he had built "several of the most elegant and tasty houses in town."

Breakenridge sold the lot in 1824 to Thomas Dickson (1775-1825) for £425, by which time they would have moved into another home, at the corner of Mississauga and Centre Streets. Dickson was a Scottish-born businessman who had established himself in Queenston and was notable for being among those who assisted the Rev. Robert Addison (1754-1829) in distributing aid to those who had lost possessions during the war. He died shortly thereafter (his wife, Eliza, having died in 1802) but the house remained in the possession his family and their descendants. In 1835, Mary Theresa Dickson (1813-1866) sold the property to Walter H. Dickson (1806-1885) for £400, a prominent man in the Niagara community, and it was during his ownership that the addition at the back of the house is thought to have been added.

In 1843, the house passed out of the ownership of the Dickson family to James Boulton, a lawyer, who purchased it for £500. Boulton was well known for his

dramatic courtroom style and loquacious presentations. Boulton sold the property in turn to Isabella Powell (1787-1850), a widow, for £300 in 1850 (the reason for the decline in value is unclear – it is possible that Powell may have assumed some of the mortgage as well). Since that time, the house has changed hands several times. One occupant of note was Major Charles Stanley Herring, who had retired from the British army after service in India, before eventually moving back to England. One notable guest was the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) who visited the house in 1876. It is said that he autographed a pane of glass in the house, as was his custom at the time.

In 1954, the house was purchased by Frank Hawley, who was looking for a Georgian house to restore. The restoration took considerable effort and time but has restored the house faithfully to its resplendent past. It is notable for the ionic capitals at the top of the fluted pilasters, and for its beautiful doorway. The coach-house at back was converted as well. The house is also unique in that it is set back from the street somewhat, in contrast to most houses of the era.

## 519 Mississagua Street, The Rising Sun



519 Mississagua Street is situated on Niagara Town Lot 335 on an acre of land that was deeded by the Crown to Jacob Ball in 1798. Jacob Ball Jr. inherited this property and built a home here in 1818. In the 1840's Noble Keith ran the property as an inn called The Rising Sun.

There were many owners of this property over the next few years. Charles Stevenson, a licensed recess keeper, ran a House of Public Entertainment at this property even though he also lived in the house in 1850.

William Kingsmill, a career soldier and Sheriff of Niagara, owned the house from 1851-1856. During this time the property was purchased by L.W. Mercer, Kingsmill's deputy sheriff, and at that time the house was occupied by a tenant, George Wesley, one of the town's Black Community leaders.

In 1856, John Gill, an Innkeeper from Toronto, purchased the home. The house was leased as a residence for the 20 years that he owned this property. In 1877, George Wesley and Thomas Warfield purchased the property and both families (9 people) lived there for several years. After many disputes George Wesley's family took over the house and upon his death his widow sold the property in 1901.

The property changed hands several times after this up until the Great Depression when the house was abandoned. Over time the property deteriorated and was uninhabitable. In 1945, the lot and crumbling home was purchased by John and Ann Nelson who restored the house keeping the hand-hewn ceiling beams, the wide pine plank floors in the kitchen, dining area and hallways, and

using as much material of the old house that could be used in the restoration. The Nelsons kept the property until 1965.

In 1965, Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson purchased the property but then sold it that same year to Dr. and Mrs. Haig. The Haig's lived in the home until 2008 when they sold the home to Fans and Lois Stevens who are the current owners and run a B&B at this property appropriately named the Rising Sun.

## 60 Picton Street, Moffat's Hotel, 1835



In exchange for land confiscated in the Military Reserve after the War of 1812, for building Fort Mississauga (now on the north side of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Golf Course), the Crown granted James Crooks (1778-1860) much of the land east of King Street. After 1825 this land was carved up into residential properties and sold by the Crooks family to various owners. Richard Moffat (1778-1858) purchased the lot for an Inn on the corner with Davy Street in 1834 - one of 28 taverns in Niagara-on-the-Lake at that time. Built the next year, the Inn became known as the Moffat's Hotel by 1855. In the mid 1830s Niagara was still a prosperous community and people built fine houses or renovated home interiors of those built after the War of 1812 and before 1825. The first Welland Canal development drew many to this area.

Richard Moffat's Inn and James Miller's Hotel (to the immediate west of the Inn) were both built in 1835. By the end of the century Jimmy Doyle owned both hotels. The Moffat still operates as an inn, now a part of the Prince of Wales Hotel. Jay Doyle tore down the Miller building in the 1930's. Moffat's Hotel is an example of simple, ordered vernacular of Upper Canada in this period, with a centre door. Clapboard was the original finish and stucco was added later. There is an extension at the rear and the original kitchen was in the basement with cooking hearth and bake-oven. In the early days there were large fireplaces in the hotel. Sashes, for the most part, have survived to the present day.

The stagecoaches for Hamilton, St. Catharines and Fort Erie stopped at this hotel daily in the mid 1800s. A livery stable connected with the house. The present-day Coach & Horses Pub next to the main building offers onsite and take-away food options.

The Moffat family moved from England to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the early 1830s. The father, Richard Sr. a widower, moved here in his mid 60s with his two



sons William (1798-1864) and Richard (1802-1855) and one daughter, Mary (1803-1872). Carpentry and boat-building were trades that ran in their family; Richard Moffat Jr. married in 1830 to Ann Taylor (1805-aft 1855, born in Ireland) in St. Mark's Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake. They had one son, Richard William Moffatt (1842-aft 1901, born in Niagara-on-the-Lake), who with his wife Margaret and four children moved to London, Ontario. With the exception of these descendants, Richard Moffat's family are buried in St. Mark's Cemetery.

## 73 Picton Street, St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church



Catholicism has a long history in Niagara, beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the French began to maintain a small outpost which eventually grew into Fort Niagara. In the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> and the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, religious life here was dominated by Anglicans and Presbyterians, as the area was under British control. Catholics were very few in number, most of whom were soldiers (the Irish were permitted to join the British army starting in 1793). The military order was officially English, and all soldiers were required to attend Anglican worship, but Catholics were allowed to attend Mass in addition.

A number of temporary chaplains came and went – among them was Father Edmund Burke, who came to Niagara in the late 1790s. Burke was thought of well among the town's government officials, and was granted several lots (including #227 and #278, where 433 Regent Street and 67 Mary Street were eventually built) but failed to build a church on either one. Burke left Niagara in 1800. One notable Catholic in this early time period was the Lieutenant-Colonel John Macdonell (1785-1812), the Attorney General of Upper Canada and later General Brock's Aide-de-Camp. Macdonell was killed at the Battle of Queenston Heights and was buried along with the famous general.

It was not until the 1830s that Niagara's Catholic community was able to build a permanent home. The population increased in that decade in large part due to Irish immigration, most of whom settled on and around the southern part of King Street. In 1832, the Crown granted the Catholic Church Block 24 of the Town of Niagara (which had only recently been extended beyond King Street), bounded by Picton, Wellington, Byron and Davy Streets.

The church was built between 1832 and 1834, a frame building 40' x 60' with a 50' steeple. The building contained ten large Gothic stained-glass windows, and three altars. The Pastor at the time of the building was Father Edward Gordon, and the first Mass was given on November 9, 1835 by Bishop Macdonnell of the Kingston Diocese, who also named the church. On November 15, Father Gordon gave the first mass to all parishioners. The Diocese of Kingston was divided in 1841, and St. Vincent de Paul became part of the Toronto Diocese, which would later become the Archdiocese of Toronto.

The church served as a home for Niagara-on-the-Lake's Catholics in its original design until 1965 when a growing population necessitated an expansion. The addition and restoration was carried out at the impetus of Mr. R.O. Petman, and with the guidance of heritage architect Dr. Peter Stokes. The front wall and steeple were removed, facilitating the addition of the polygonal extension to the nave that visually defines the church today. New Gothic windows match those in the older section as much as possible, and a new steeple was added to the extension, being lowered into place from a crane. The old church is still well preserved - a line in the floor demarcates the old and new sections.

The original Presbytery was constructed at the same time as the original church. In 1890, in need of restoration, it was sold and moved to Platoff Street. It was replaced by the much larger house that exists today to the west of the church. Some of the 1823 4-acre land grant was set aside as a cemetery - prior to that Catholics had been buried at St. Mark's. Of the early gravestones there, one item of note is that most lack the references to professional standing that characterize those at St. Andrew's and St. Mark's, as well as references to Loyalist history. At the north end of the cemetery is a Polish Enclosure, where Polish soldiers being trained in Canada in 1818 and 1819 who died from the Spanish Influenza are interred. It also includes a memorial to those who died for the freedom of Poland during World Wars I and II.

## 10 Platoff Street, Malcomson-Delie House



Prior to 1823, land south east of King Street was part of the Fort George Military reserve and, therefore, not available for private development. In 1823, a committee of the Executive Council of Upper Canada determined that land owned by Hon. James Crooks (1778-1860) near Fort Mississauga was essential for the defense of the town. To provide land to offer Crooks in exchange, the committee ordered a survey of the M.R. Land south east of King Street. The four-acre Block 39 was part of this New Survey land given to Crooks in 1823. These were the 4 blocks surrounded by King, Picton, Wellington and Castlereagh Streets. The land on the east side of King Street had not been developed yet, which is why streets continuing across King have different names (Johnson - Platoff etc.)

In 1814, Crooks had moved his operations to West Flamborough where he focused his attention on developing stores and mills, and would eventually sell off most of his Niagara land. He gradually sold off this land in smaller parcels. A piece of Block 39, approximately a  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre at the corner of King and Platoff Streets was sold by Crooks in 1835 to Henry Sewell (1782-1838), a carpenter and bookbinder from England for £150. Henry Sewell died three years later and left the property to his son, Thomas Sewell (1805-1842), a printer, bookbinder, and publisher of the Niagara Reporter as well as of David Thompson's notable *History of the War of 1812*, and of a Literary & Debating Society pamphlet. He also printed the Farmers & Mechanics Almanac.

In 1838 Thomas Sewell, along with his wife Bessie and mother Nannie, sold his newly acquired property to Peter Baikie, a shipwright employed at the nearby Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. Baikie had purchased the lot for £26 and then sold it for £37 5s. a price increase which may indicate there were the beginnings of a house on the lot at the time of transfer. Baikie is better known as the builder of the Davy House at 230 Davy Street.

It is James Malcomson, a mariner who purchased the property in 1841, who is generally credited with building 10 Platoff Street, but who probably had help from his father, Stewart who appears to have occupied the house more than James. The Malcomsons appeared in Niagara approximately 1841, attracted by jobs at the Dock Company (as was Peter Baikie), and included his father Stewart, his wife, their son Samuel, as well as James and his son Thomas, and possibly several other members. Malcomson was a first mate on the steamer *Magnet*, a ship built at the Dock Company harbour in Niagara and which sailed between Hamilton, Montreal, Kingston and other ports on and around Lake Ontario – he was later a captain of several different vessels. Malcomson was a member of the Niagara Fire Company in 1850 and a member of the Niagara Mechanics Institute, along with many other notable Niagara residents. This organization, which sought to promote scientific knowledge, was the ancestor of today's Niagara-on-the-Lake library.

The Malcomson's moved to Hamilton in 1853 and invested in the "new and splendid" steamer *Clifton*, built at the Chippawa yard of the Dock Co, and sold the property to Walter J. Meneilley (1831-1902), and engineer, for £80. Meneilley, born in Niagara-on-the-Lake to James and Isabella Meneilley, was part of a large family of Irish entrepreneurs who settled in Niagara in the late 1820s. He owned a larger house on King Street, which he was living in by 1865. Meneilley acquired the property at the beginning of a lengthy recession, and through the 1870s the property was frequently empty and declined in value considerably. For a brief period in 1873 and 1874, it was rented to Francis Hincks Granger, an artist who had moved to Niagara to paint stencils and decorative scenes on railway cars built at the Dock Company, as well as watercolours of the area. Some of his paintings are in the collection of the NHS.

In 1874, the house was sold to W. Maria Hartley, wife of James Hartley, a carpenter, for \$200, who occupied the house till their deaths in 1924. It is possible that James may have made some improvements to the building. Hartley came to the town in 1864 as a volunteer with the Scarborough Rifles, and served with them during the Fenian Raids, after which he became a volunteer with the famed "Niagara #1 Company" After the deaths of the Hartley's (who died within several days of each other) the property was sold several times before being acquired by the Gordon family, who improved the formerly neglected property considerably. For most of its existence, neighbours and occupants recall that the house had neither a fireplace nor a furnace and was heated solely by a stove whose pipe exited through the roof. The house has undergone more improvements in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its exterior was very recently restored in 2007/2008.

Note: For "16 Platoff Street, Malcomson-Walker House" see 10 Platoff Street.

## 20 Platoff Street, Dover-Daly House



Thomas Dover, a ship's carpenter, born in Ireland in 1807, purchased a small piece of land from Thomas Sewell (1805-1842). In 1838 he built this humble, yet attractive board-and-batten-cottage.

Dwelling in his house until 1842, Dover sold it to Edward Dixon, who resold it in 1844 to Thomas Eedson; both Dixon and Eedson were carpenters. Eedson must have been prosperous, for he owned the adjacent corner property at King and Platoff. When he in turn resold the house in 1856, he detached a quarter acre from his main holding, and added it to the 30x50 foot plot on which the house originally stood. In an age before city water and sewer services, 1500 square feet made an uncomfortably small footprint, and the discomfort could only grow as the city environment matured and degraded.

For more than a century the house sheltered many families of modest income. By the 1960's it had so deteriorated that demolition was considered, but it was rescued and refurbished by Mr. Greenburger of Buffalo, who accomplished a complete restoration in the spirit of the original structure.

The house is a classic saltbox, with 1¼ storeys. The board fabric is probably not original, but the craftsman at the time of restoration were able to salvage certain features of the interior, such as the mantelpiece and trim. Mr. Greenburger's efforts were rewarded in 1982, when the Town Council designated the Dover House as a heritage property.

By this time, the house had been purchased by George Daly, hence was known as the Dover-Daly house. Mr. Daly arrived in 1981 and lived the last ten years of his life here. He was a talented artist and musician, well known in the town, and dubbed "Captain Highliner" for his bluff and hearty manner.

## 40 Platoff Street, Niagara Public School



This red brick 5-bay house was originally the Niagara Public School, the town's first permanent public school. It sits on Block 39 of the 'New Survey', 16 acres of land granted to James Crooks (1778-1860) in 1823 in exchange for lands around Fort Mississauga he had previously owned (now much of the present-day Golf Course). While much of this land was eventually sold off by Crooks for residential development, the two 1-acre blocks along Davy Street between Platoff and Castlereagh Streets were sold to the Town Council in 1854 for the development of school facilities. Prior to then the town's common schools and grammar schools had been held in a variety of temporary locations, such as the house at 307 Mississauga Street.

In 1859, the Town Council transferred ownership of the land to the Board of School Trustees, and the present structure was built. Crooks stipulated in his will that a scholarship, to be called the 'Crooks Endowment' be given to two students from each of the public and high schools. The school, built by master mason John Thornton, had four classrooms - two on each floor. From 1872 to 1875 Janet Carnochan (1839-1926) served as the school's principal (and the first female one), before accepting the position of principal at the newly constructed high school on Castlereagh St. which opened in 1875. Carnochan would later spearhead the development of the Niagara Historical Society & Museum, which would much later occupy the vacated high school.

The building continued to function as a public school until it the Parliament Oak Public School was opened in 1948. It was originally converted into apartments, and now has been converted to a Bed & Breakfast.

## 17 Prideaux Street, Burroughs House or Burberry Cottage



This 1½ storey cottage facing Prideaux Street shares a great deal of its history with Hummingbird Hill Cottage, set much further back from the street at #21. Both of these cottages were built on ½ acre lot #31, which was granted by the Crown to George Forsyth (1779-1821). Forsyth was a businessman and partner of the wealthy Robert Hamilton (1753-1809) and participated in establishing the portage between Queenston and Chippewa which was integral in the growth of the town of Queenston. He also petitioned unsuccessfully for the establishment of a canal and road system along the same portage route.

Forsyth also owned lot 2, at the back of lot 31 facing Front Street. He built a laneway on the two lots between Prideaux and Front Streets known as “Leaders Lane.” Before the War of 1812 there were several buildings on the lot which would have been destroyed by the fire of December 1813 when retreating American soldiers and Canadian turncoats destroyed the town.

The lot was vacant after the war for several decades and passed in ownership to Forsyth’s widow after his death. Trustees of his estate sold the lot in 1838. The building date of this house is thought to be 1835, so it was probably on the lot at that point. Who built the house, however, is difficult to determine. The purchaser of the property in 1838 was Frederick Wilson Gibbs, a butcher, and Gibbs sold it the following year to Duncan Forbes. Forbes was a carpenter and joiner who assisted John Davidson in crafting the ornate pulpit at St. Andrew’s Church.

Later 19<sup>th</sup> century owners include Andrew and Sarah Carnochan. Andrew was the brother of Janet Carnochan, the author of the *History of Niagara* and an integral figure in the development of the Niagara Historical Society & Museum. The Carnochans sold the house to Catherine Claus and Elizabeth Barbara Comer who occupied for most of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



## 18 Prideaux Street, McKee-Dodson House



The small house at 18 Prideaux Street was built on lot 34, originally granted by the Crown to Andrew Heron (1762-1848) in 1796. Heron is an important figure in the town's history. Born in Scotland, he came Upper Canada in 1788, where he was a merchant until 1817. He was the treasurer and clerk of St. Andrew's Church, as well as a founder and librarian of the Niagara Public Library. He was among those non-combatants captured during the war of 1812, eventually released in 1814. He switched careers in 1817, and for the next 20 years would publish the newspaper *The Niagara Gleaner*. An 1810 plan of the town shows a building on the lot facing Prideaux Street, but that building would have been destroyed in the 1813 fire.

Heron sold a very small portion of the property, 1000 square feet to John Eagleson, a merchant. The rest was eventually acquired by Thomas Powis, although that transaction is not listed, and it is he who most likely built the house on this lot, although the date of construction is not known exactly. A deed poll from 1823 suggests the house may have been built by that year. In it, Powis transfers ownership of lot 34 to his granddaughters, his daughter, and son-in-law, in exchange for supporting him "during his natural life and to find and provide for him good sufficient and comfortable clothes board washing making and mending and to furnish him with a room to himself and sufficient wood and candle light and to discharge and debts that he might then owe and procure him medical aid when necessary.

Powis had operated the Niagara Coffee House, a meeting place for professional and social groups, shortly before the war, and was left ruined by the burning of the town in 1813, forced to watch his business destroyed. He was 72 at the time, thus by the time the house was built he was probably bedridden. His daughter, Sarah, and son-in-law, Alexander McKee probably occupied the house during this period. McKee is known as one of the early schoolmasters in Niagara. He too

had lost much during the war. He was one of those taken prisoner by the Americans at Fort Niagara, and when his two children died in 1813 he was allowed to attend their funeral blindfolded before being sent back to the fort.

## 21 Prideaux Street, Hummingbird Hill



The 1½ storey clapboard house set back well from the road at 21 Prideaux Street sits on a ½ acre lot, #31, that was granted by the Crown to George Forsyth (1779-1821), a businessman and partner of Robert Hamilton (1753-1809), an important merchant who was wealthy and powerful in large part because of the fur trade. Along with Hamilton and several other businessmen, Forsyth is most notable for establishing a portage on the west bank of the Niagara river between Queenston and Chippewa in 1788, which would be advantageous for their business interests. In 1799, Hamilton and Forsyth unsuccessfully petitioned the government to build a canal and road system along a similar route, a project which might have dramatically altered the history of the Niagara Peninsula had it received approval and funding. Forsyth was also a mason and was appointed Grandmaster of the Niagara Masonic Lodge the same year as his death in 1803.

Forsyth had also acquired lot 2 at the back of lot 31, facing Front Street, and there was a laneway known as “Leaders Lane” that ran between Prideaux and Front Streets. An 1810 plan of the town shows a building straddling both lots halfway between the two streets, although this house would have burned in the fire of 1813. A war-losses claim filed by his estate after the war lists a house two stories high, 44 x 32’, valued at £900, a high sum for the time period, likely due to his wealth from trade on the Queenston portage.

In 1838, the property was sold by a trustee of his family to Frederick Wilson Gibbs, a local butcher, who sold it the next year to Duncan Forbes for £162 10s. It was likely Forbes who built the present house sometime around 1840. Forbes was a carpenter and joiner, who is notable for assisting John Davidson in crafting

the ornate pulpit at St. Andrews Church, including turning and fluting the columns, turning the beads and preparing the railing. We also know that Forbes was a part of the Niagara Fire Company, through an 1850 membership list. Forbes died in 1863 after which his heirs rented the house with one of the tenants being Johnson B. Clench (1844-1923), a Lieutenant in the Niagara Volunteers and a grandson of Niagara's first Town Clerk, Ralfe Clench.

In 1869, the house was purchased by Andrew and Sarah Carnochan. Andrew was the brother of Janet Carnochan, the town's historian and founder of the Niagara Historical Museum. He was a carpenter, and may have been acquainted with Forbes through work, or through St. Andrew's Church of which they were both members. The Carnochans left for St. Catharines eventually, and the house has changed hands several times since then up to the present day.

## 28 Prideaux Street, Muirhead-McQueen House



In the early history of Niagara, Prideaux Street, not Queen Street, was the main commercial street in the town, and the most desirable lots were the two blocks north of Queen Street on either side of Prideaux. These ½ acre lots were allocated by lottery in 1791, and the recipient of lot 35, on which 28 Prideaux Street now sits, was Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834), an army surgeon born in Scotland who came to Niagara with the 16<sup>th</sup> rifles in 1790. In 1792 he signed an address of welcome to Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806), and in 1795 married Deborah (1764-1844), the only daughter of Lt. Col. John Butler at St. Marks church (at the time Deborah was probably caring for her bedridden father at the Butler homestead). The patent to lot 35 was registered in 1796, the same year he and Deborah each received additional 1200-acre grants.

Muirhead played a significant role in Niagara. He was a skilled surgeon, and one of the first to offer smallpox inoculations, and did them for free for those who couldn't afford them. He served as a magistrate, and as a Captain in the Lincoln Militia. Promoted to Major in 1800 he ran a field hospital in a stone house in Queenston where Major General Isaac Brock (1769-1812) was taken in 1812 after being shot. He was one of the four doctors in Brock's funeral procession in October 1812 and was also one of the non-combatants taken prisoner to Albany in 1813. Muirhead built the first house on the lot in 1795, which was lost in the fire of 1813, and had rebuilt by at least 1817.

The house was passed to Deborah after James' death in 1834; James was buried along with his son, John Butler Muirhead (1796-1824), in Butler's Burying Ground), and after her death was passed to their only granddaughter, Deborah Catherine (1825-1869), who married William Buell Richards (1815-1889), a Brockville lawyer who eventually became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada in 1875 and was knighted in 1877. A year after Sir William died, four surviving children sold the lot to the fifth – John Butler Richards of Pittsburgh for \$500. In 1914, Janet Carnochan noted that the only town lot “known to be in

possession of a descendant of the original owner is lot 35, still owned by Mr. Richards of Pittsburgh”.

The lot remained undivided until 1918 when Richards’ widow, Jane Bingham Richards and her daughter and husband (Theodosia Richards Frey and John Joseph Frey) sold 40’ of Prideaux Street frontage to Cortlandt Lionel Secord (1886-1972), a railroad employee of Niagara Falls New York, and then in 1920 the remaining 65’, containing the Muirhead house to Charles Edward Smith, a delivery man from Niagara for \$1025, ending the Muirhead connection with the lot.

The house (as well as a smaller house on the 40’ that was sold off) was primarily rented during the period it was owned by Muirhead’s descendants, but by the 1920’s both were owner occupied. The Muirhead house appreciated considerably during this period, indicating upgrading by Charles Smith, the new owner. In 1949 the Smiths sold the Muirhead house to Josephine Mucha for \$9000, who sold it in turn. The house has passed through several ownerships since, leading to its present owners today, who have owned it since 1977.

## 42 Prideaux Street, Stewart-McLeod-Northey House



The house at 42 Prideaux Street was built on ½ acre lot 36, which was granted by the Crown to Augustus Jones in 1796. Jones was a Loyalist from New York who had been a land surveyor and was given several large grants in reward for his services to the British Empire. He settled in Saltfleet Township (near present day Stoney Creek) and later would serve as a Captain in the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Lincoln Militia during the War of 1812. He is well known as the Deputy Surveyor General, a high position in Upper Canada, who supervised the first survey of the town of Niagara's boundaries.

The abstracts suggest that Jones owned the land until 1818 but is not altogether clear. A transaction is listed in which a Scot, Capt. Alexander Stewart (1733-1813), mortgages the property in 1800 (mortgage held by Benaiah Gibb, a Montreal tailor), but there is nothing to suggest a transfer of ownership between Jones and Stewart. Various historical accounts do refer to the property being owned by the Stewart family in the period before the war. Janet Carnochan's *History of Niagara*, states: "On the same Street [Prideaux] at the corner of Regent Street was the residence of Captain Stewart, where it is said Gen. Brock had been entertained."

Alexander Stewart was a private in the Butler's Rangers during the Revolution. He was also a lawyer and one of the founding members of the Upper Canada Law Society - he is listed as having attended a meeting of said organization in July 1797 at Wilson's Hotel, Newark. The Stewarts built on the lot before the war - there are two buildings on the lot shown on Gray's 1810 town plan, and a War Losses claim is filed by Jemima Johnson Stewart (1766-1843), Alexander's widow, for a frame house estimated at £238. Jemima was a daughter of Brant Johnson (1742-1818), also a Private in the Rangers and a granddaughter of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774).

Augustus Jones sold the property to Jemima in 1818 (again, it is unclear in what capacity the Stewarts occupied the property before then). It is Alexander Stewart, the son of Alexander and Jemima, also a lawyer, who is thought to have built the existing house. The exact built date is unclear, but most likely sometime before 1830. The house was left in Jemima Stewart's will, registered in 1843, to two of the Stewarts' daughters, Margaret and Elizabeth.

Since the Stewarts, the house at 42 Prideaux Street has had several notable owners, one in particular being John Lees Alma (1809-1890), who acquired it in 1884 for \$2000. Mrs. Emily Alma (1803-1841) was well known in the town for being a kind woman who gave gifts to local children at Christmas. In the 1960s it was renovated to restore the house to its former glory with the consultation of heritage architect Peter John Stokes (1925-2013).

Architecturally, the house is notable for its beautiful spiral staircase, as well as the fact that it is only one room deep with fireplaces against the rear wall (with a later extension built out the back). Its exterior design is notable for the brick arcading that was popular at the time of its construction, although somewhat unique in that the arcading was only done on the second level, and not both levels.



## 55 Prideaux Street, Promenade House



The first landowner on this site, Lot No. 28, was Elizabeth Thompson who, as daughter of one loyalist soldier, widow of another, and wife of a third, had multiple claims for land grants. She received this one in 1796 and built a substantial wooden residence with outbuildings, which disappeared with the burning of the town in 1813. She rebuilt, and the present residence was finished by 1820; its quality bricks, fabricated into Flemish bond, made it an ornament to the neighbourhood.

Shortly after, Ms. Thompson lost control of her finances, and eventually of her house, which was taken for taxes by the town in 1823, sold by the sheriff to a local attorney, and then resold to an ambitious innkeeper, David Botsford. With the addition of extensive outbuildings and stables, the house assumed its career as a hotel, the Promenade House, in 1827. But before long, the restless Botsford moved to Toronto, to take in charge a large waterfront hotel there, and leased out the inn. One of the lessees, William Press, played a prominent role as an exculpatory witness in the 1841 Utica, N.Y. trial of Canadian Alex McLeod for the murder of Amos Durfee, a follower of William Lyon MacKenzie. This was the famous *Caroline* affair, which momentarily brought Britain and America near to war.

In those pre-Victorian years, the Promenade House enjoyed a reputation as a pleasant retreat where gentlemen might seek the company of single and congenial women, but the routine operations of a hotel were carried on just the same. In 1846 the property was acquired by a local hotelier, Richard Howard, owner of the Angel Inn and other hotel properties in town, who desired larger premises for his business. In the 1870's, Promenade house was sold to a local tradesman, and in subsequent years was a private residence for a number of successive owners.

In 1917 the house was pressed into service as a temporary barracks for the soldiers of the Polish Army, who trained on the commons in the winter of 1917-1918 before being sent overseas.

## 66 Prideaux Street, Old Pacific B&B (formerly part of the rail station)



The house here at 66 Prideaux Street has a somewhat unusual history – the house here was actually part of a larger structure on King Street, and then severed and moved to its present location. The original location of the house was the corner of King Street and Market Street, on lot #65. This lot, and the other three bounded by King, Queen, Regent and Johnson Streets, were originally owned by David William Smith, acting surveyor general, and the builder of what would later become Government House. Smith left for England in 1802, and his elaborate house was burned in the fire of 1813. After the war the government leased most of the land in these four blocks.

The exact building date of the house is difficult to determine, as registry records for these ‘market lots’ are largely incomplete. Sometime in the late 1820s is probably the most likely date; in any case it was operated by the 1850s as an inn and tavern by James Goslin, who later sold it to John Goslin, presumably a brother. This inn was for some time known as ‘The Pacific Hotel.’ In 1865 James and John Goslin were sued over the lot by John McCulloch.

In 1872, the building was purchased by Billy Diamond, and converted to a boarding house. During Diamond’s ownership, the house developed a somewhat dodgy reputation – one town resident recalls that it was a “hangout for all the bums and loafers of the Town.” Diamond, a widower, was recalled as a “good-natured, easy going chap,” however. In 1887 the building was converted again, into 3 rental units. The apartment that occupied much of the current house was occupied by Alfred Armstrong, a tinsmith. Armstrong was born in 1865, and was married to Mary, and together his family had seven children.

Major changes occurred in 1913 when the Niagara, St. Catharines & Toronto Railway (or NS&T) was extended to Niagara-on-the-Lake. The NS&T was created in 1899 and was an electric railway that was based in St. Catharines. Besides Niagara-on-the-Lake, the railway extended to Port Dalhousie, Niagara Falls, Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne. When the extension was built here,

the railway leased the site for a railway construction, and the town compensated the occupants of the building to move. The house was severed, and two of the apartments were moved further along Market St, while Armstrong's section was moved here to Prideaux Street.

The new location of the structure was lot 38, granted originally to William Johnson Butler (1760-1812), the son of Col. John Butler (1728-1796), who commanded his 'Butler's Rangers' during the Revolutionary War. A fairly significant structure is shown on the lot on an 1810 plan of the town, which would have been destroyed by the 1813 fire. The property changed hands after the war several times - notable owners include William McKean, a merchant, and Matthew Dobie, a blacksmith, who built a small house on the other side of Prideaux Street. It was Mary Armstrong, Alfred's wife, who purchased the lot here after being forced to move.

Today the house is operated as a B&B, called the Historic Pacific in homage to the old Pacific Hotel. The train station built in 1913 still stands at 223 King Street and is the home of a coffee shop.

## 69 Prideaux Street, Kerr-Wooll House, or Demeath



69 Prideaux Street sits on lot 27, a ½ acre lot originally granted by the Crown to John McKay, a merchant and spinning wheel maker who was also granted 1200 acres of rural property (the patent is not registered until 1801). We know that by 1793 the property was owned by Dr. Robert Kerr (1755-1824), as a transaction is listed in which Kerr mortgages the property. Kerr built the original house there by at least 1792, thus being one of the first three houses in the fledgling capital. Presumably, this is the larger one shown on the 1810 Gray plan roughly at the location of the current house. Kerr submitted a War Losses Claim after the 1813 fire for a total of £1705, including a "two story wooden frame house, filled in with Brick, forty-eight feet long by twenty-four feet Wide, with two wings twenty-four feet long by twenty feet wide, each one of the wings furnished with black walnut, in all ninety-six feet front: with stables and other outhouses and etc."

Kerr was an important figure in early Newark/Niagara. One of the first to settle there, he was a surgeon to the Loyalists and then to the Indian Department, and played a significant role as a surgeon in the War of 1812, including being part of the entourage for General Brock's funeral. He married the daughter, Elizabeth (1761-1794), of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774), the influential Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New York (and superior to and companion of Lt. Col. John Butler) and Molly Brant (1735-1796), the older sister of Joseph Brant (1743-1807). He was one of the physicians, along with Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834), who first administered smallpox inoculations (for free to those who couldn't afford them), was active in several posts, including being a member of the Freemasons, and a founding member of the First Presbyterian Church.

Kerr sold the property, before moving to Albany in 1822, in 1816 to John and Daniel P. Ross for £145, at which point most accounts put the present house on

the property, probably built in 1815 on the foundations of the original house. The house changed hands several times during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, eventually being acquired by the Ker family (having no relation to the original Kerr family) in 1883. At some point in this period, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the house was used as the location of the Grammer School, one of the oldest high schools in the province. The house was passed down to descendants of the Kers, before being acquired by Mrs. C.H.E. Smith, who gave the house the name *Demeth*, and did many of the extensive restorations, both inside and out, that have helped transform it into what it is today. The house has seen several more changes in ownership up until the present day.

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Nestled on a leafy side street in Old Town between Regent and Victoria Streets stands the magnificent building at number 69 Prideaux Street. This house is known locally as the Demeth or the Kerr House. (As an aside, Prideaux Street was named after British General John Prideaux who was killed at the siege of Fort Niagara on July 20, 1759 during the Seven Year's War. This fort, located in Lewiston, New York, was at that time controlled by France.)

Robert Kerr was born in Scotland circa 1755, immigrated to Canada at the age of 21 as a "hospital mate" with the British Army and became a surgeon with the Indian Department in 1788. Dr. Kerr moved to the Niagara Region the following year. It has been said that the Niagara Region has benefited from the presence of excellent physicians since the area was first settled (which continues to this day) and Dr. Robert Kerr certainly qualifies as a member of this esteemed group. In addition to his medical practice, he was appointed a judge of the Surrogate Court for the Niagara District starting in 1792, was a member of the local land board, a commissioner of the peace, a trustee for public schools, and in 1822 was appointed as a member of the Medical Board of Upper Canada. As a physician and surgeon, his secondary duties would have included being a veterinarian, a dentist and a pharmacist. Given the small population base at the time and the lack of professional acumen in the area, it would not be at all unusual to hold multiple professions. During the smallpox epidemic of 1797, the two local physicians advertised the availability of smallpox inoculations at a very reasonable price to those who would pay and given gratis to those who had insufficient funds. Dr. Kerr had been a prominent member of the Masonic Lodge in York (Toronto) and upon moving to Niagara, formed a splinter group and rose to the rank of Grand Master. He was held in such esteem that he remained an honoured member of the Lodge following the reunion of the groups in 1822.

This property and the property next door were owned by Dr. Kerr for a number of years starting in 1793. Dr. Kerr eventually sold the property at 69 Prideaux

Street in 1817 to the Ross Family and this property remained in their hands well into the 1860s.

Dr. Kerr played an active role during the War of 1812, despite being in his late 50's. He was chosen to be a member of the formal entourage in Sir Isaac Brock's funeral procession, performed medical duties as far afield as Hamilton and treated the wounded following the battle at Chippewa in 1814. Along with the vast majority of homes in the area, his house and contents were burned by retreating American forces during the evening of December 10, 1813. His claim for reparations submitted to government officials in York totaled some 1227 pounds; however, as this claim was paid out at the rate of 25%, his heirs received some 306 pounds when things were settled in 1824.

Like other prominent men of the time, Dr. Kerr strove to support his family through land acquisition. By 1795, he was said to have acquired approximately 2200 acres of land which had grown two years later to 2856 acres.

Dr. Kerr was married to Miss Elizabeth Johnson who was the daughter of Sir William Johnson and Mary Brant. They had three sons and two daughters. It is of interest that Dr. Kerr's son, William Johnson Kerr (1792-1845) married Elizabeth Brant (1796-1844) who was the daughter of the prominent Mohawk leader Joseph Brant (1743-1807).

Following the conclusion of the War of 1812, Dr. Kerr continued on with his medical duties. At the age of 68 he moved to Albany, New York where he died in February 1824. He is buried there in the cemetery of St. Peter's Episcopal Church and his tombstone praised "his social habits and kindness of heart".

## 78 Prideaux Street, Fowler-Hiscott House



This stately Georgian home is unique in that its property straddles two of the original  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre lots in original town survey, #38 and #39, although the house itself is primarily on #39. These properties were eventually merged into one 1-acre lot, with the edges then sold off in turn. Richard Hiscott (1790-1874), a soldier in the British army, lived here for many years, and lends his name to the house.

Lot #38 (the second of four lots starting from Regent) was granted by the Crown to William Johnson Butler (1760-1812), the son of Lt. Col. John Butler (1728-1796), who led his Butler's Rangers during the Revolutionary War, and later was instrumental in the settlement of the Niagara area to supply Fort Niagara across the river. At some point the property changed hands to William McKean, a merchant in a partnership with John McEwan. This lot had a good-sized dwelling on it before the War of 1812, as shown by an 1810 plan of the town.

Lot #39 (the third from Regent) was granted to Barnabas Cain (1771-1839) in 1796 and soon after sold to Andrew Heron (1762-1848) in 1798. Heron was a prosperous merchant who would later become notable for printing the *Niagara Gleaner*. This lot, too, was built upon before the war – an 1810 plan shows several buildings, including a house. All of these houses would have been destroyed in the fire of 1813.

The house that stands today was very likely built by McKean, in approximately 1817, making it one of the older homes in the town. By 1829 both lots were owned by Mathew Dobie, a blacksmith notable for building the small house at 83 Prideaux Street. In 1839, Dobie mortgaged both lots to Richard Hiscott, thus beginning the Hiscott family's long occupancy of the house.

The Hiscott family had come to Niagara in 1829 from England. Richard Hiscott served in the British Army from a fairly young age, and fought in the Napoleonic



Wars, and very likely was one of those British regulars who were sent to North America in 1814 to fight in the War of 1812 after Napoleon was defeated. His gravestone at St. Mark's describes his life and legacy:

In memory of Richard Hiscott, born in Wiltshire, England, 1790, died at Niagara, Canada, 1874. Deservedly esteemed both as a citizen and a soldier. In early life he served with honor in H.M. 76<sup>th</sup> Regiment of foot, and was in many battles of the Peninsular War and in Canada. He settled in Niagara, where a large family of his descendants and numerous friends lament his death.

Hiscott also operated a farm on a tract of land which he had been granted from the Military Reserve. The house eventually passed to his son, Thomas Hiscott (1826-1903), also a Major in the military. Major Hiscott was also a member of the Niagara Historical Society and was present at the opening of Memorial Hall.

## 83 Prideaux Street, Dobie-Campbell House



The small house which now sits at 83 Prideaux Street was built on land that was originally granted to Dr. Robert Kerr (1755-1824) in 1803. Kerr, an important figure in the history of the early town, was the builder of the stately brick house at 69 Prideaux Street, two houses down, as well as its replacement after the fire of 1813 which stands today. This much more modest house at #83 is a notable contrast to #69, having much to do with the wealth of those who built them and lived in them. Kerr sold this property in 1817, by which time there is no evidence a house existed on the lot, to William McKean and John McEwan, two Niagara merchants and business partners who owned several properties in the town. McEwan was a commander of a Flank Company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia, and was one of those taken prisoner by the Americans in 1813 and subsequently released in 1814.

In 1833 the lot was purchased by Matthew Dobie (1797-aft 1861), a Scottish blacksmith who attended St. Andrew's Church and was single; in 1851 Sarah Dobie, aged 17 was living with him. He sold the property again in 1839 for a considerably higher price, suggesting it was he who built the house that stands today, most likely sometime around 1835. The purchaser of the property in 1839 was John Davidson, the house's most notable resident.

Davidson (1808-aft 1861), from Scotland, was well-known in the town for his skills as a carpenter and is particularly known for being the main builder of the ornate pulpit at St. Andrew's Church in 1840. He was a member there but did carpentry work on other churches including St. Mark's and St. Vincent de Paul. He is thought to have done a great deal of complicated carpentry work in Niagara around that time, being particularly noted as a builder of spiral staircases.

## 87 Prideaux Street



This small house shares much of its history with its neighbour at #83 Prideaux. It occupies the same lot, #26, which was granted by the Crown to Dr. Robert Kerr (1755-1824), who is notable for building the stately brick house at #69 Prideaux. Kerr was one of the first to settle in Niagara and was a surgeon during the War of 1812. Kerr sold this property in 1817 to business partners William McKean and John McEwan. McKean and McEwan owned a number of properties around Niagara and likely purchased the property as an investment. There is no evidence of a house existing on the lot at that time, or before the War of 1812.

The lot was purchased by Matthew Dobie, a blacksmith, in 1833, and it was Dobie who built the house at #83 sometime in the 1830s. In 1839, John Davidson purchased the house, and while living there built this house, now #87, sometime in the 1840s. Davidson is notable for his skills as a carpenter and was the builder of the ornate pulpit at St. Andrew's Church in 1840, along with work done at other churches including St. Mark's and St. Vincent de Paul. He is also particularly notable for building several of the complex spiral staircases that grace some of Niagara-on-the-Lake's older homes.

Architecturally the house is notable for being built perpendicular to the street, with the gable facing outward, a somewhat unusual configuration. The side ell was added during renovations in the 1860s by a later owner, probably John Torrance who acquired the property in 1853, along with some of the Victorian trim detail.

## 94 Prideaux Street, Tranter House or Thomas Burke House



94 Prideaux Street sits on the  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre lot 40, which was originally granted to Matthew Kemp in 1801. A year later it was sold to Andrew Heron (1762-1848), a Scottish immigrant, and a prominent merchant and entrepreneur, and a founding member of both St. Andrew's Church and of the Niagara Library. Heron was captured in the War of 1812, but was released in 1814 as a non-combatant. The 1810 Gray plan shows a building on the site that would have been destroyed in the fire of December 1813, and town plan from 1821 shows that Heron did not rebuild while occupying the lot. In 1821, the NE corner of the lot was purchased by Benjamin Hughes, a baker and innkeeper, for £100, who soon after mortgaged the property to Heron, presumably in order to build. By 1826, the present house was constructed, and was advertised for sale in the *Niagara Gleaner*, which was published by Heron at the time (he had switched careers in 1817).

The house failed to find a buyer, forcing Hughes to mortgage again - with the property eventually landing in the possession of William Porter, a yeoman (a land-owning farmer) who purchased it for £200 in 1830. During this period, Hughes occupied the house and used it as an inn and tavern, with Hughes as innkeeper. Porter attempted to sell the property, but was unable to do so until 1836, when British immigrant Henry Telford purchased it for £250. The property was sold in turn by Telford's relatives after his death in 1854 for £210 to Thomas Burk, who at that time was already the occupying innkeeper.

Four generations of the Burk family were associated with 94 Prideaux Street from 1854 until the 1920's, and the property became known as the Burk House. However, the property did pass out of the family's ownership in 1890, due to a missed mortgage payment, but was later purchased by Dr. Frank E. Crysler (1857-1923), a dentist and husband of Elizabeth Burk Crysler (1858-1905) for \$700, renewing the Burk connection. After being conveyed to Dr. Crysler's children, the property was sold to Ray Leo Adolphus Hardison (1888-1929), and his wife Marion Elizabeth Davey (1886-1949), in about 1925. By this time the

1820's brick oven in the basement had deteriorated considerably, and was removed, but the footprint of the oven remains. The house has been passed down to several other owners; it was used for a time as a dental surgery and was remodelled considerably. Today it is used as a B&B.



**SOME NOTES ON  
PRE-1840 STRUCTURES  
IN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE  
OLD TOWN**

**PART 3**

**STREETS Q-Z**

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## 5 Queen Street, The Apothecary



At the corner of King and Queen Streets lies the Niagara Apothecary Museum - easily recognizable by the "Golden Mortar and Pestle" displayed prominently on the front of the building. The building itself was restored in 1971 to reflect the structure as it was in 1869 and is a designated Ontario Heritage Trust site and is currently operated by the Ontario College of Pharmacists. The original designation for this piece of property was Lot 64 and was deeded by the Crown in 1796 to Mr. William Dickson (1769-1846). William Dickson was a colourful character whose activities included land speculation, being a lawyer, member of the Niagara Horticultural Society, member of the Niagara Library, Justice of the Peace and a figure of the economic elite that dominated the Niagara Peninsula. This prime property then passed through the hands of a number of very prominent members of Niagara society including William Crooks (1776-1837) and his brother James Crooks (1778-1860), Reverend John Burns, and Judge Edward Clarke Campbell (1806-1860).

The importance of pharmacists in early Niagara on the Lake cannot be overstressed. The first pharmacy opened circa 1820 on Prideaux Street (paralleling Queen Street) and would have been mainly a general store dispensing only whatever drugs, usually in short supply, were then available. Following a move to another part of Queen Street, the owner (Rodman Starkwather) offered whiskey by the barrel, dry goods, paints and patent medicines.

Mr. Starkwather sold his store in 1833 to James Harvey (1812-1851), who was a prominent member of Niagara society as a Justice of the Peace, member of the Board of Police, a Charter member of the Niagara Mechanics Institute (which became the town library) and secretary of the Niagara Fire Company. He was

also a member of the first municipal council when Niagara was incorporated as a town in 1845. Mr. Harvey died of what was then called "consumption" - now known as pulmonary tuberculosis. Much of the artifacts on display in the museum are thought to have been purchased by Mr. Harvey's father from Cornwall, England during his relatively short duration as town pharmacist.

The business then was eventually sold by Mr. Harvey's heirs to an apprentice, Henry Paffard (1824-1912), in early 1852. Paffard purchased the current Queen and King corner location in 1869 from lawyer, later Judge Edward Clarke Campbell. The building was completely re-vamped under Paffard's instruction which included the floor being lowered, the ceilings raised, installing black walnut counters and an elaborate dispensary. Paffard was a controversial figure. During his first term as Lord Mayor, his activities resulted in threats that sparked the burning of both his home and pharmacy in 1866 (not the current location). He was the Town's longest-serving Lord Mayor, from 1863 to 1896. During this time, Paffard supported the creation of a local fire department, served as Treasurer and Secretary of the Mechanics Institute (Public Library), Charter member and vice-president of the Niagara Historical Society, President of the Niagara Choral Society in 1880 and president of the provisional directors of the then Royal Niagara Hotel on the waterfront. In addition to his mayoral duties, Paffard was an accomplished gardener, providing fresh figs to the then Duke and Duchess of Cornwall (later George V and Queen Mary). Records indicate that the Apothecary was profitable with Paffard's clientele including townsmen, members of the military and persons from surrounding areas.

The Apothecary was purchased in 1898 by an apprentice of Henry Paffard, John DeWolfe Randall (1864-1914). Randall was also Mayor of Niagara between 1907 and 1909 and again during 1912 as well as being a member of the local Masonic Lodge, Chief Magistrate in 1913 and President of the Liberal Association of Niagara. He was also a graduate of the Ontario College of Pharmacy and would be what is termed as a "go getter" trying to have Simcoe Park established and Queen Street paved (he was unsuccessful in both instances) but did have cement sidewalks installed. The steam train from Fort Erie (started in 1854) and the electric tram from St Catharine's both ran past the Randall's pharmacy. The pharmacy also sold train/tram tickets as a business sideline. He died suddenly, probably of a stroke on March 13, 1914.

The next purchaser was Arthur James Coyne (1885-aft 1971) who operated the pharmacy from 1914 to 1922 - a relatively short period of time. He also owned a pharmacy in nearby St. Catharines where he spent most of his time and effort. He simply found operating both businesses too much of a strain. Upon the sale of the property in 1922, Mr. Coyne took with him the bottles purchased by James Harvey many years previously. These would later be returned.

Erland William Jacob Field (1889-1965) purchased the pharmacy from Arthur Coyne in 1922 and ran the business until it closed in 1964 as a result of his ill health. He followed the usual custom of having his name inserted into the centre window. Field had apprenticed with Randall and also graduated from the Ontario College of Pharmacists in 1913. He served with the Canadian Forces during World War 1 and was a founding member of the local Legion in 1928. Failing health necessitated his giving up his practice in 1964 and he died the following year. He is buried in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church cemetery on Simcoe Street not far from his former place of work; however, prior to his death, he granted the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Niagara Foundation first right of purchase.

The Apothecary was restored to the look and field as it was in 1869 when it first was opened as a pharmacy. Generously, the bottles that were taken by Arthur Coyne when he sold the building in 1922 were returned to the restorers. The pharmacists in the Niagara-on-the-Lake had been an essential and integral part of life in the Niagara region.

## 16 Queen Street, The Owl and the Pussycat – The Sign of the Pineapple



The plot of land fronting Queen Street between King Street and Regent Street were originally granted by the Crown in 1821 as Lots 65 and 66 with Lot 65 being designated as the “Market House”. As was the case of most of the lots along the commercial section of Queen Street, this single acre lot was subdivided over the years in order to house the various business ventures that were a necessary function of a burgeoning Niagara-on-the-Lake economy and increase in population and were leased from the Niagara-on-the-Lake’s Market Commissioners.

Undoubtedly, the most recognizable building in this section is located at 16 Queen Street with a prominent “pineapple” located between the second and third floors. For much of its history, this heavy timbered building was a grocery store with the upper floor serving as a storage loft for the merchant's goods, in earlier times representing as much as a year's supply. Its ownership passed from Steve H. Follett (1818-1887) to Fred Best Jr., Dick Allen (1858-1927), Fred Matthews (1887-1967), and H. Reid & Son. Older photographs clearly show a centre door on the third floor with a crane beam protruding from the gable plus a hook used to hoist goods from ground level to the storage level. The sign of the pineapple is above the front door of this heavy frame-timbered, three-storey store. Architecturally, in the 1970s, the front of the building was added in a Gothic Revival style to replace the structure when a penny arcade briefly



occupied this space. The site is currently houses "The Owl and the Pussycat" - a clothing retailer.

The third storey has also served as a lodge room for the United Workmen, and a little theatre. In the 1980s this building housed a toy store.

On Sunday, 25 October 2009, fire ripped through two buildings immediately adjacent to 16 Queen Street destroying what was the Copper Leaf Company (10 Queen Street) and four businesses including the Butterfly Gallery, Sotheby Realty and the Shaw Leather companies located at 12 Queen Street. The fire lasted for many hours as the Copper Leaf Company was located in a hundred year-old building which held a former fire hall - the floors were especially reinforced with thick planks of wood to withstand the weight of horses and fire equipment. Fire fighters liberally sprayed the side of 16 Queen Street in order to prevent the spread of the fire and scorch marks are still visible on the side of the building.

In general terms, the store fronts along Queen Street are designated as being "informal" as opposed to "formal". The essential difference between the two is that the informal label denotes a unique and individual style with elegance, grace and panache rather than in the somewhat more boring or blah common or uniform manner.

The pineapple itself is noteworthy in that it is a symbol of welcome and hospitality. The first western account to mention this symbol was that of Christopher Columbus who received one from the indigenous tribe living on the island of Guadeloupe during his second voyage to the Americas in 1493. As the fruit resembled a pine cone, the Spaniards named it "pina"; later, the English, noting the same similarity, called it the "pineapple".

## 20 Queen Street, Miller House



The LCBO at 20 Queen Street, right next to the majestic Court House, may very well be one of the most historic liquor stores in the province. It is also one of the oldest historic buildings in the town's business district. It sits on lot #65, which was owned as early as 1795 by David William Smith. Smith was the son of Lt. Col. John Smith, who was at one time Commandant at Fort Niagara. He was the acting surveyor general of Upper Canada, as well as a member of the assembly, but returned to England in 1802. During this period he owned the entire 4-acre block bounded by Queen, King, Johnson and Regent Streets. He built a large home here, facing King Street, which after the block was sold to the Crown in 1803 became Government House (which was destroyed in the fire of 1813). The strip of land facing Queen Street is shown by a plan drawn by Robert Pilkington to be a series of 8 formal gardens.

The building here today was most likely constructed around 1817 by William Duff Miller (1786-1869), a merchant who used the building to sell stationary. Miller was involved in the town in a number of different capacities along with his business – he was at various times a coroner, a clerk, and inspector, an officer in the militia, and an elder of St. Andrew's Church. His house at 46 Mary Street still stands today, although a fair distance away from his business here. This is likely because of his duties at the Courthouse, which at that time was located on Rye St, at the southeast corner of town. Interestingly, his house on Mary Street is more-or-less equidistant from these three places – the Courthouse, St. Andrew's, and his business on Queen Street. The town reoriented itself after the destruction of 1813 with the major commercial zone being along Queen Street, whereas

before Prideaux had been the main street, and the location of Miller's business no doubt reflected this change.

At the time of its construction, the building had only one storey. In the 1840s the town constructed the present Courthouse, in a last-ditch effort to improve its fortunes and prevent the county seat from moving to St. Catharines, an effort which eventually failed. The new monumental structure overshadowed this small building next door, and it was then that the second storey was added, explaining the slightly different shades of brick used.

Since that time, the building has seen a number of different businesses come and go. It was for a time the premises of St. John and Ferguson, druggist and watchmaker, then as a drug store under William Johnson Campbell (1881-1951). In the 1920s the store was an ice-cream parlour run by Leo Henneghan, a favourite gathering place for the town's youth, before 1930 when it began being used as a liquor store for Niagara-on-the-Lake, as it is today.

The building has seen considerable renovations over the years and has changed considerably from its original form. During renovations much of the original structure was found, including the beam ceilings, long since covered up. Its conversion to the LCBO required considerable structural support to hold the weight of all the liquid, which meant installing a series of steel beams which are well hidden. It has been restored to look as period appropriate as possible, but converting it to exactly how it looked in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century has been impossible as little is known about it.

## 26 Queen Street, Niagara District Court House



This magnificent building is, in fact, the town's third courthouse. The first was built in approximately 1792 just after the town was officially surveyed and became the capital of Upper Canada under John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806). This building, along with a prison, was built on lot 32, at the northwest corner of King and Prideaux Streets, but was a victim of the fire of December 1813. The second courthouse was built by the Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846), in the southeast part of town near the end of Rye and Cottage Streets (where Rye Park is today). After the war town planners decided to develop the town away from the water so as to be less vulnerable to attack, but most of the town residents ignored this directive and rebuilt where their houses had formerly stood along Queen, Prideaux and surrounding streets. Thus, the area around the second courthouse remained largely undeveloped. That building would later be used by Miss Maria Rye as an orphanage called 'Our Western Home,' before being demolished in 1923.

The land on which this most recent courthouse was built part of land initially owned by David William Smith, the Acting Surveyor General who completed the first official town survey. He built his large house on the 4-acre lot (bounded by Queen/King/Johnson/Regent) facing King Street, which later became Government House after he left Upper Canada in 1802. That house burned in the fire of 1813, after which the Crown granted various portions of the land for various civic purposes. Lots 65 and 66 were granted to William Dickson, William Claus (1765-1826) and James Muirhead (1765-1834), three of the town's wealthiest residents, in order to build a market house.

In order to understand the origins of this particular building, which would be built on lot 66, one must first understand the context of Niagara in the 1840s. The

1830s had been a prosperous decade for the town, in large part due to the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company which reclaimed the marshland along the Niagara River and built a thriving business facilitating maritime trade. In the 1840s the business, along with the town's fortunes, began to decline. This was in large part due to the construction of the first Welland Canal, which substantially reduced Niagara's importance as a trade route.

The impetus for building a new courthouse was in part the fear that St. Catharines would replace Niagara as the seat of government for the united counties of Lincoln, Welland and Haldimand, as well as the inadequacy of the existing facilities at the second courthouse. Hoping that the new building would cement Niagara's place as the centre of civic importance in the region, the new courthouse was constructed starting in 1846 and completed in 1847.

The architect of the courthouse was William Thomas, a prominent architect notable for many important civic buildings including St. Lawrence Hall in Toronto and the Halifax Old County Court House, as well as churches, including St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto. It was Thomas who designed the second Brock Monument at Queenston Heights, and who also designed the Methodist church in Niagara, now Grace United on Victoria Street. The courthouse building was designed in a Neoclassical style, and built of Queenston limestone. Its design featured two wings: one larger wing, towards Queen Street, which included the courtroom itself, and a smaller wing to the south towards Market Street, joined by a narrow connecting wing.

In 1963, the seat of government was moved to St. Catharines, despite these attempts. A new courthouse was built there in 1849, which still stands in downtown St. Catharines today, although is used for different purposes. The Town of Niagara was compensated for this loss to the tune of \$8000, although the building had cost \$30,000 to build. The building, no longer needed as a courtroom, was then utilized for municipal purposes. Niagara entered a period of decline in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was abated somewhat by becoming known as a resort town in the 1880s and 1890s. During this period the building has served numerous different purposes, and has housed the Imperial Bank, the Chamber of Commerce, the police station, jail, post office and library.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the former courthouse was further reduced in function when the Town and Townships of Niagara were merged and the municipal government facilities were moved to Virgil. The Niagara Public Library, which was held in the building since 1848, moved to its new location in 2000. In 1961, however, the fledgling Shaw Festival began to use the upper rooms of the main wing, and in 1973 built a new theatre. The Court House Theatre is today the building's primary occupant. In the 1980s the building underwent a major restoration, which has restored much of the building's former glory.

## 29 Queen Street



This land was one of many parcels awarded to Peter Secord (1725-1818) at the founding of the town. It passed through several hands, serving as a business property in the midst of Niagara's commercial centre. By the 1880's, the town barbershop was here, owned and operated by Lewis Ross, a black immigrant from the American South. His family lived above the shop.

In 1886 disaster struck, as a major fire destroyed six stores on this section of Queen Street. The town fire engine suffered mechanical failure, and heroic efforts to quench the blaze by means of a bucket brigade from the river proved inadequate. This site would remain an empty lot for almost 10 years. The building transplanted to this spot was once the law office of Judge Edward Clarke Campbell (1806-1860), whose elegant residence stood on the present site of Parliament Oak School, a few blocks south on King street. The law office itself, a much more modest building, was around the corner from here, a few steps north on King Street.

Judge Edward Campbell was the son of a Scots soldier, Major Donald Campbell (1755-1812), who served for some years at Fort George. He was studying law with Robert Dickson (1796-1846) in 1830; within twelve years he had served a year in the provincial Parliament and been appointed county judge. He acquired the King Street property in 1835; probably the house already stood on it, perhaps since 1825. Judge Campbell was one of the leading citizens of Niagara, serving on a variety of committees and heading the Mechanics' Institute for ten years.

After his death, his unmarried daughters, Eleanor Sarah (1831-1911) and Elizabeth Frances (1843-aft 1880) occupied the house long enough for it to acquire the sobriquet "Campbell House". In 1895 the property was acquired by S.B. Rowley of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a manufacturer of mason jars. Rowley wanted to build a house for his new wife, the daughter of Ross the barber, who still owned the vacant lot at 29 Queen Street. And so it was that the old law office was moved to this location, while Rowley completed the extravagant Victorian residence which still stands just across from Simcoe Park.

### 34-36 Queen Street, Sherlock Block



This building, notable for its 'boomtown' front, was actually built as two separate buildings, sometime around 1850. These buildings each had a gable roof with the end facing the street, and at some point were merged with the space between being used to provide access to the second floor. The two gables were joined together, and the false front was then constructed to hide this ungainly arrangement. The building is known as the Sherlock Block for a 20<sup>th</sup> century owner, Stephen Sherlock.

The land on which it sits is lot 66, one of two lots (the other being #65 at the King Street corner) that were granted by the Crown to three of the town's wealthy residents, William Claus (1765-1826, of the Dept. of Indian Affairs), William Dickson (1769-1846, then a merchant), and Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834, a surgeon). It was granted to them in order for them to construct a market house, as the original town survey indicated. This building was later replaced by Robert Dickson (1796-1846, the son of William Dickson), John Johnson Claus (1800-1873, the son of William Claus) and Lewis Clement (1787-1879) sometime after 1839. This market house existed for a long time at the back of the present courthouse, where Market Street is today.

Prior to the War of 1812, these two lots, along with the 2 to the south, were in the possession of David William Smith, the Acting Surveyor General of the Province who completed the first official town survey. These lots were where he built his stately home, which became Government House after he left for England in 1802. This house burned in the fire of 1813, after which the Crown granted various portions of the land for various civic purposes, as described above.

It is unclear who exactly built these two buildings - most of the transactions listed in the Registry Office abstracts are simply mortgages of the property. At



one time Walter Hamilton Dickson (1806-1885, another son of William Dickson) held the mortgage. Over the years these buildings have been the location of many different stores. It was, for many years, the site of Bishop's Grocery and Butcher Shop (with the grocery store at the front and the butcher shop at the rear) first operated by Jack Bishop (1842-1902) and then his son Peter Bishop (1882-1964). Jack Bishop is notable for spending 24 years on the Town Council and was Mayor for one year. Other businesses included an undertaking parlour, a poolroom and a bakery.

## 38-42 Queen Street, The Irish Shop



This property was acquired by Simon Walsh (1785-1853), a successful local blacksmith, in about 1840. Walsh was an Irish immigrant who settled in Niagara-on-the-Lake just after the War of 1812. His life in Niagara-on-the-Lake was to span the boom days for the building of the Welland Canal, when many Irish workers came to this area. The building he had constructed on the property was half shop and half house. After his days, his wife Ann Shaw (1800-1874) was deeded the property, and she, in turn, passed it to her second son James Walsh (1829-1895) who turned it into Walsh's Hotel. In 1855 James, a quiet man who minded his own business, married Catherine Toal (or O'Toole) (1835-1909), another Irish immigrant to Niagara. Catherine was the eldest of five girls and one kid brother whose father had died when they were in their teens. James had already started in management of a small inn in Niagara-on-the-Lake and used his income to convert the building on Queen Street into a hotel, between the Sherlock Block with its red and green "boomtown" front and McMillan's three-storey shop and dwelling. Walsh's Hotel was managed by James and Catherine for many years; their son Frank (Francis Percy Walsh, 1876-1946) in the latter part of the nineteenth century. By 1865, his wife Catherine had also acquired another property in Lot 5 in the Market Place. James and Catherine had five sons and four daughters between 1859 and 1877; nevertheless, Catherine also appears to have found the time to take good care of her mother-in-law, Ann Shaw Walsh. When her mother-in-law died in 1874, Catherine was deeded the quarter-acre piece on which the Niagara-on-the-Lake house stands for five shillings and "love and natural affection" in 1874.

James and Catherine had nine children who were well known in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their daughter Mary (1866-1956) was a successful Music Teacher and she played the organ in St. Vincent de Paul for years. Their son Herb (1869-1947), who married Nina Bishop (1874-1931), was probably the most well-known to Niagara residents; in his earlier days he was a Telegraph Operator by profession. He was then in the Customs Service for a time and became a self-educated accountant. He served as one of the Town Auditors for several years; and his last employment was at the McClelland Store as Cashier and Bookkeeper. His quiet, gentlemanly and efficient demeanour was all that could be desired. Herb's eldest brother, Simon C. Walsh (1859-1942) was much like Herb. He had the same quiet manner and was fond of music. In his earlier days he was employed by McGaw and Winnett in the hotel business. This firm had three hotels: the Queen's Royal Hotel in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Queen's in Toronto and the Tecumseh House in London, Ontario. Simon C. Walsh served in all three at different times and, in the latter days, took over the Tecumseh House and ran it until his retirement. Herb's son, Jerry (1900-1968) was the Superintendent of The Niagara Hydro Electric Commission for about a quarter century.

By the early 1900s the property was divided into two stores fronting on Queen Street, and display windows were added. The layout of the two shops became much as you see them today. Kurtz and Beau Chapeau are the current occupants of the building originally owned by the Walsh family.

#### 44-46 Queen Street, Daly-Alma Store



This building was one of several stores erected by merchants along Queen Street on land leased from the town. The 4-acre block bounded by Queen, King, Johnson and Regent Streets was originally owned by David William Smith, the Acting Surveyor General of Upper Canada, who is known for completing the first official town survey. On this land, facing King Street, Smith constructed a stately home, which became Government House after Smith left Canada in 1802, and eventually burned down in the fire of 1813. The remainder of the land was a series of gardens and outbuildings.

After the war, the land was granted to three of the town's most prominent residents, William Claus (1765-1826), William Dickson (1769-1846) and Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834), in order for the land to be developed as a market, hence the leased blocks were referred to as 'market blocks'. This particular store is likely one of the first built in this row of store along Queen Street, with a probable building date of 1825. The store was built for John J. Daly, who sold dry goods.

After Daly, the store was operated by John Lees Alma (1806-1890) and his family, who were also general merchants. The Alma family were friends of Robert Jameson, the Attorney General of Upper Canada, and entertained him and his wife, Anna, a writer, several times. In a letter Jameson congratulated Alma's son Edward (1833-1854) on winning a prize in English history. The Alma's also hosted several officers of the Canadian Militia involved in protecting Canada against the Fenian Raids. The Alma family lived in Niagara for many years, and later lived in the Stewart house at 42 Prideaux Street.

Architecturally the store features a brick arcaded front, a popular style at the time, reminiscent of the McDougal/Harrison house further down Queen Street at number 165. The building was reconstructed in the 1980s, although the arcaded façade was faithfully preserved. Now three dormers exist on the roof gable, while before reconstruction there had been a single perpendicular gable with a crane beam that was used to haul goods to the second storey for storage.

## 45 Queen Street, The Stagecoach



This commercial building stands on a half-acre lot originally granted to James Ramsay, an ailing veteran of Butler's Rangers, in 1796. The property was soon acquired by John Young, a Scots merchant who did business on both sides of the river, and whose American store was the nucleus of the future Youngstown, New York.

Young maintained his residence on the Canadian side, building a house on this site which was burnt by the American army in 1813. His war loss claims show extensive losses of merchandise, as well as the house and accompanying orchard, for a total of more than a thousand pounds.

In the meantime, Young acquired the property next door, plus the full lot directly across Queen Street, giving him a total of two acres in the very centre of the rebuilding town of Niagara. A new building of a commercial character was erected on this site. Note the pulley high aloft over the front door, designed to move heavy goods into the upper story of the building.

Young died at sea in 1840, and his properties passed to new owners. From the second half of the nineteenth century this building has been used as a Chinese laundry, a barber shop, several shoe stores, a photography shop, and the real estate office of the Kirby family, son and grandson of our first local historian, William Kirby (1817-1906).

## 54-58 Queen Street, Dee Building



Unlike the land south of Queen Street opposite Regent Street which was leased by the town, the land on the west side of Regent Street was free-owned from the beginning. The grant to Lot #67 was registered in 1802 to John Jones, who had served in Lieutenant Jacob Ball's Company of Butler's Rangers. He lived in Niagara until 1798, then moved to Ancaster where he became Captain of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia. He moved back to Niagara in 1810, working as a tailor for several years, and became Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment in 1811. He was taken as a prisoner of war during the War of 1812 and died in captivity in 1813.

An 1810 plan of the town shows several significant buildings on the lot facing Queen Street, and particularly one here at the Queen/Regent corner, which would have been destroyed in the fire of December 1813. These were most likely not built by Jones, however, as he was not living in Niagara at the time. They may have been built by James Dunlop – an executor of his estate sold the property in 1818 to Francis Crooks, the first post-war transaction. (The sale from Jones to Dunlop is not registered.) Crooks sold the lot soon after to John Young.

Young owned the property for many years and in the 1830s leased it to James Lockhart, an official of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. Lockhart operated a branch of the Commercial Bank in a two-storey building at the location of the present building. In 1840, Young sold the property, still an undivided 1-acre lot, to merchant William H. Dee for whom the building is now known. Dee mortgaged the property in 1843 for a substantial sum, indicating that he was spending considerable money improving the property and building upon it. Thus, it is likely Dee built or at least renovated the current building.

In 1848 Dee moved to Stamford (near Niagara Falls) and the property was transferred to Elizabeth Dee, widow, presumably a relative. Elizabeth Dee sold

the property in 1865 to Henry Paffard, the Mayor of Niagara at the time. Paffard was also a chemist who would later operate his pharmacy business out of the well-known building at 5 Queen Street, the Niagara Apothecary. The store has seen many different uses since then, including a grocery store, a liquor store, a bakery and a shoe store.



## 59 Queen Street



In 1796 the corner lot (no. 60) here was granted to one of Niagara's earliest settlers, Alexander Cunningham, a merchant in residence since 1778. By 1802 the land had been purchased by John Grier (1761-1833), a Scottish merchant and tanner, who had his dwelling here while operating his tanyard on the river bank near the Dock area.

During the American invasion of 1813 Grier saw his business destroyed by hotshot from Fort Niagara while he himself was one of the local civilians made prisoner of war and held in Albany. With the loss of two houses and his business, Grier's war claims amounted to almost 4,000 pounds. He claimed losses not only from American depredations but also from British war measures, which led him into profound disputes with the Crown, settled only in 1819.

At that point he split the property in half, retaining the corner section for his own use and conveying this section to Col. Daniel McDougal (1782-1866), a war hero and respected citizen. Born in Inverness, Scotland, grandson of a Jacobite who died at the Battle of Culloden, Daniel came to Upper Canada at age 4, in 1786. He served as a lieutenant in the Glengarry Fencibles and saw action in many battles against the Americans. As a colonel of the militia in 1814 he led the forces which retook Niagara while the town was still burning from the American evacuation. At Lundy's Lane he took seven wounds, after which British medical boards adjudged him incapable of doing any work, and he lived the rest of his long life in pain and inconvenience. He held several public appointments, and was treasurer of Lincoln, Wellington and Haldimand counties up until his death in 1866.

This property was rented out to various businesses; a report from the 1830's mentions a hat store and a tailor's shop. Just when this building was erected is unknown, though there are architectural features which suggest sometime

around 1840, a time when its Georgian style was in vogue. This is a fine example of the genre, well preserved and with very few modern improvements. The late nineteenth century saw the coming of a bakery, and more recently McKenzie's hardware store endured so many years that the building came to be called the McKenzie Building. Much later it became The Old Bakery Restaurant.

## 80 Queen Street, Fred Greaves House



The one-acre Lot 68 was originally granted by the Crown to George Bradshaw in May 1802. After the devastation caused by retreating Americans who burned the village of Newark (where Old Town Niagara-on-the-Lake is today), Seth Bradshaw sold the property to Ralph Long and his family who held it and built structures there for the next 40 years. It was later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Queen St. streetscape evolved.

In 1927 William Greaves (1885-1981) and his wife Mabel Ruth Ball Greaves (1885-1962) moved with their five sons to Niagara-on-the-Lake, purchasing land on East-West Line and a shop at 55 Queen Street, above which the family lived. William began making pure old-fashioned jams, jellies, marmalades and condiments, using his own fruits and vegetables. Mabel was the sales lady. The boys also came into the family business: William (1911-1999) oversaw sales and operations, Gordon Claude (1914-1968) and Winston worked on the farms, and Fred (1923-1977) became the processing lead. Roy (1920-1943) worked in CIBC and then served in the Canadian Air Force, being a casualty in WW2. When his father became ill in 1943, Fred took over the processing and, with his father, purchased 80 Queen Street in 1945. He quickly built for \$5,000 a cement-block warehouse next door at 84 Queen Street (now the Epicurian Cafe).

The house at 80 Queen Street can be seen best from the west side. It used to have a verandah in front with a small lawn and picket fence. When the business was sold to Peninsula - the Wiens and Redekop families - 55 Queen Street went with the sale in 1989; Fred's wife, Miriam (1927-2010), lived on in 80 Queen Street to the mid 1990s, when it was sold and the storefront added. Today, Greaves jams (purchased at 55 Queen Street) continue to use these time-honoured recipes, hand-stirring each batch of jams in open stainless-steel kettles, to produce 35

wonderful jam and jelly preserves. No pectin or preservatives are added. The "Niagara fruit belt" is where you will find some of Canada's richest soils and Greaves' production facilities are located in the heart of this fertile land at the corner of East-West Line and Progressive Avenue.

## 106 Queen Street, McClelland's West End Store



The commercial building here, notable for the elaborate 'T' sign on its façade, has a long history as one of the town's grocery stores for over 170 years. 1-acre lot 69, on which the building resides, was granted in 1796 to David Camp (1769-aft 1820), a UEL. A fairly substantial L-shaped building is shown at the Victoria/Queen corner on Andrew Gray's 1810 plan of the town, suggesting Camp built on the lot. Nonetheless, any buildings here would have been destroyed in the fire of December 1813. Camp sold the lot in 1820 to Jacob Canniff, after which the lot began to be subdivided considerably. After the war, Queen Street became the main commercial centre of Niagara, whereas before the war it had centred on Prideaux Street. Hence, this valuable land was subdivided into much smaller lots than that further south.

The present building was built shortly after the war, probably around 1815. Its first owner was Lewis Clement (1787-1879), a lieutenant in the Lincoln Militia, the son of John Putnam Clement (1759-1845), who was involved in the Indian Department and a grandson of Ludovicus (Lewis) Cobes Clement (1725-1781), a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant in the Butler's Rangers. Initially it was leased by Balfour & Drysdale, as well as the Christie Brothers, purveyors of groceries and other provisions.

It was acquired by William Winder McClelland (1826-1911), for whom the store is named, in 1860. McClelland was an Irish immigrant, who had come to Canada a few years before. McClelland also operated a stagecoach service which departed for St. Catharines in front of this store. An ad from 1867 in the Niagara Observer notes that "The Stage will leave Niagara for St. Catharines on the

arrival of the Steamers from Toronto at 9:30 AM and 4:50 PM., arriving at St. Catharines at 11:30 AM and 7 PM.”

The McClelland’s store was passed on to succeeding generations of the family and developed a reputation as a purveyor of excellent quality goods, noted in particular for its Cheddar cheese which was aged and stored under the store. The store became a Niagara landmark. In 1865, the store celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with costumed re-enactments of what the store may have looked like in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The store finally closed its doors in 1990, and since then other businesses have operated out of this historic building.

Over the years, the McClelland family and subsequent owners have put in considerable effort to ensuring the historical nature of the store’s interior is preserved. In the rear wing was a large windlass, which was used for hauling barrels and casks of goods to the second floor for temporary storage. The building attached at the right of the store, #108 Queen Street, is an addition, circa 1880.

## 118 Queen Street, Gollop House



This 3-bay 2-storey Georgian building sits on lot #69, granted by the Crown to U.E.L. David Camp (1769-aft 1820) in 1796. Not much is known about Camp, other than that he was a loyalist who married Rebecca Ransier that same year and would eventually settle in Grimsby township. An 1810 plan of the town shows a substantial building at the corner of Queen and Victoria, possibly built by Camp or subsequent owners, that would have been destroyed during the War of 1812. After the war, the property was sold to Jacob Caniff in 1820, who subsequently began to subdivide the property. After the War of 1812, the commercial centre of the town began to grow along Queen Street (prior to the war it had been Prideaux Street) and these valuable lots were subdivided much more frequently than those away from Queen Street.

It was Caniff who most likely built the present structure, sometime around 1830, and operated it as a watchmaker's shop. In 1848, a  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre where this building is located was sold by Caniff to James Davidson. Davidson later recalled the layout of the store along Queen Street in a series of reminiscences:

Commencing at the north end of the principal street, Queen, R. M. Crysler [1796-1865] carried on an extensive store, across from that the British American Hotel, then kept by Peter Cain (1761-1818), then the store of Wilson and Charles then the watchmaker's shop of Canniff, then the Clement block of stores, first that of Lewis Clement & Sons, next Peter Drummond's, extensive grocery and that of the Laidlaw Bros., and on the corner a brick store, the fine establishment of Balfour & Drysdale.

The latter building is the McClelland's West End Store at 106 Queen Street (corner of Victoria Street).

By the end of the century the building had become a private residence. It was purchased first by Samuel Hindle (1851-1914), a building contractor, in 1894, and later in 1918 by William Gollop, a World War 1 veteran and a blacksmith who operated out of a barn at the rear of the building. It remained a private residence until very recently, when it became a store again.



## 126 Queen Street, The Customs House



The Customs House at 126 Queen Street is most notable for the coat of arms above its façade, indicating it was once a building of considerable importance. The coat of arms was missing for a time, and only restored fairly recently. It was built on Lot #69, almost at the edge of Lot #70, at the half-way point between the Victoria and Gate Street intersections. This was a 1-acre lot granted by the Crown to U.E.L. David Camp (1769-aft 1820) in 1796, and then sold Jacob Canniff, a watchmaker, in 1820. Canniff began to subdivide the land into smaller parcels as the land on Queen Street was very valuable at that time.

This building was built around 1825 and eventually served as the customs house in Niagara, where paperwork for imports and exports was filled out and tariffs and duties paid. Several different customs collectors served in this building over the years, including Thomas McCormick who was also an agent of the Bank of Upper Canada (now the Old Bank House); John Simpson (1807-1878), a businessman who served in the position from 1855-57; James Taylor, and William Kirby (1817-1906).

The latter is probably the most noteworthy – Kirby was a well-known writer who lived in Niagara for much of his life. His most famous work was *The Golden Dog*, a fictional story about New France, and he is also known for publishing one of the first comprehensive histories of the Niagara region, the *Annals of Niagara*. He served as customs collector starting with his appointment in 1871, and the position likely gave him the financial security to complete *The Golden Dog*, which he had struggled to publish until then. He served as customs collector until 1895. Kirby's house can still be seen today at 130 Front Street.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the building has undergone many changes to its façade, as well as additions at the back. It served in the 1980s as a dry-cleaning business. During this time some workmen began drilling out the keystone above the door to attach a large sign, and considerably damaged it. After a small controversy, the workmen replaced the keystone and used a much smaller sign, leaving the façade in a more original state. Several different businesses occupy the building today.

## 135 Queen Street, Candy Safari



This half acre Lot 54 on Queen Street between Gate and Victoria Streets was originally deeded by the Crown to Samuel Cassaday (1767-1850) on August 10, 1801, although Cassaday had acquired this property prior to 1801. Samuel was the son of Daniel Cassaday, a potter, who emigrated from Ireland to the William Penn Settlements, leaving his wife and Samuel in Ireland. Being a Loyalist and part of Butler's Rangers, he moved to Niagara in 1784 when the Rangers were disbanded. He then sent for his son Samuel in 1785; his wife immigrated in October 1790, but died ten months later. Daniel remarried a Quaker woman, Ann Dennis, and had a son Abner. Samuel's family owned Lots 75 and 76 near the Cross Roads (today known as Virgil) in the early days.

Samuel Cassaday is alleged to have been a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Lincoln Militia Regiment in 1812, but he became a Town Constable in Niagara in 1813. His father and half-brother were enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Lincoln Militia Regiment during the War of 1812. Following the burning of the town by retreating American forces on December 10, 1813, Cassaday submitted a claim for damages incurred totaling well over 350 pounds. This claim involved the destruction of a framed dwelling house, a slaughterhouse (giving credence to the suggestion that Cassaday was a butcher), a stable, "cow house" and various personal belongings. He also submitted a further claim for damages incurred by the destruction of property by British engineers adding up to 266 pounds. Cassaday was buried at St. Mark's Church cemetery.

This property subsequently passed through a number of different owners most notably John Wilson who is alleged to have fought the last duel in Upper Canada

in Perth, Ontario. He informed the fiancée of a fellow law student of some insulting comments made by that person, the fiancée broke off their engagement, a fist fight ensued followed by the fatal duel. Wilson and his second surrendered to local officials, were tried and acquitted of murder. Wilson was a lawyer in Niagara for a brief period of time and he and family later moved to London, Ontario. The building was sold by John Wilson to shoemaker John Burns in 1835 who may well have constructed the original structure and outbuilding. The Gothic Revival style, one and half storey building has kept the same dual function of home and shop ever since shoemaker and leatherworker John Burns had it in the mid 1800s.

The building was later known as Candy Safari. Until recently there are two occupants of the site - the Fan Court Restaurant which occupied the "Coach House" in the rear of the site and the newly-established Edward Spera Gallery which specialized in wildlife paintings and prints.

This site became a designated site under the Ontario Heritage Act on June 23, 1986 indicating that the main building was constructed circa 1835. This and other buildings in the Picton/Queen Streets Heritage District were designated "A" meaning that they are of major importance to the area as they define and support the character of the district.

## 154 Queen Street, The Doctor's House



This house, at the corner of Queen and Gate Streets, sits on Lot 71, and was granted by the Crown to Thomas McBride in 1820. This was a late patent registration; however, other documents indicate that the McBride family occupied the lot much earlier. Peter McBride (1755-1799) owned the lot in 1795 and was an Irish Protestant who had served with a British Regiment during the Revolution. According to relatives, Thomas McBride was Peter McBride's son.

A building existed on this site prior to the War of 1812. Records indicate that this building operated as a store. An 1810 plan of the town shows the store at the corner, roughly where the present house now is – it was burned by the Americans and Canadian Volunteers in the fire of December 1813.

In 1821, Thomas McBride sold three-quarters of the property to Edward William McBride, another of Peter McBride's sons. Edward had had several different careers – he was for a time the publisher of the *York Gazette*, and then an innkeeper. In 1824 he was elected to the legislative assembly representing the new constituency of Niagara. Thomas also sold 3740 sq. ft. at the corner to Ralph Morden Crysler (1796-1865), who operated a store there by 1823. An advertisement from 1832 notes that they “have recently received direct from England, Scotland and Ireland, a large and choice Assortment of Seasonable and Fashionable Goods, which they offer their customers and the Public, at the most reasonable prices, at Wholesale.”

Crysler was the grandson of Lt. Adam Crysler (1732-1793), who fought with the Butler’s Rangers. He also served with his father John J. F. Crysler (1765-1839) in

the Lincoln Militia during the War of 1812. In 1822 Crysler built the stately house at 187 Queen Street, for which he is best known. The Welland Canal's opening in the 1830s hurt Crysler's retail business, and he abandoned it in 1839, moving his family to Rochester, New York, although he moved back to Niagara before his death in 1865.

Crysler expanded his store, as well as his property ownership – by 1834 he owned 12,500 sq. ft. in addition to the original 3740 sq. ft. The store he operated on the site was not the house that exists today, however. In the 1840s, a notable Niagara lawyer, Charles Latham Hall (1812-1849), purchased Crysler's section of Lot 71 in several different transactions. It was also Hall who purchased and then lived in Crysler's house further down Queen Street. He and his wife, Amelia (1808-1869) were fixtures in Niagara's social scene and were patrons of many organizations. The house was later acquired by Hall's daughter, Sarah Campbell.

Campbell sold the property in two parcels to Henry Augustus Garrett (1850-1903) for \$500 in 1880. It was Garrett who 'assembled' the existing structure in about 1881. Presumably Crysler's store was destroyed or moved. The front portion of the house was a small house that was originally located further down Queen Street on the same lot. It is believed that this house dates approximately 1820. This may have been a store that was operated by Edward McBride (on the  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre that he owned) but it is difficult to say with certainty. The rear portion is a schoolhouse that was originally on Lot 111 at the corner of Johnson and Gate Streets.

In 1929, after several changes of ownership, the house was acquired by Dr. Arthur Bennett, and he and his heirs occupied the house for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hence the house is often referred to as the 'Doctor's House.'

## 157 Queen Street, Rogers-Blake-Harrison House



Today



c. 1900 with forwarding building attached

The 2-storey 6-bay home at 157 Queen Street is relatively unique in that it was occupied by the original family and descendants through the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century and well into the 20<sup>th</sup>. Its early history, however, is somewhat unclear. The Registry abstracts do not list any transactions until 1830, when a Crown grant is registered to John James (1813- ) and Mary Rogers in 1830. However, a document from 1795 lists John McKay as being the occupant of Lot 52. McKay, a merchant and spinning-wheel maker in Niagara, had been a Private in the Butler's Rangers, so it is possible that he was originally granted the lot, but the documentation does not exist. Moreover, Mary Rogers' obituary in 1828 documents that her family came to Niagara in 1806.

In any event, the property came into possession of the Rogers' family well before 1830. Their family was gravely affected by the war and the American occupation - having built a house, most likely on the same footprint as the existing one, that was burnt in the fire of 1813. One of the house's beautiful mantels was saved by Mrs. Rogers, who carried it out of the house, and would later install it in the new house. (A replica of this mantel is on display at the Niagara Historical Museum. John Rogers, their grandson (the son of Alexander and Agnes Rogers) was 7 years old at the time, and recalls being on the street when a cannon ball from Fort Niagara passed near him. The Rogers' had relatives among those attacking the town and could have potentially asked for their house to be spared but did not do so as they were afraid of being accused of disloyalty.

The present house, probably built around 1817, was built by James Rogers, a son of John and Mary and brother of Alexander (likely an older brother given that his name is on the patent and not Alexander's), who died shortly after in 1819. His gravestone notes that he was an innkeeper - "a bad profession for any but very sober men." The inn was later run by Alexander's widow, Agnes who was granted a license in 1823 to keep an inn there, which was called "The Anchor and the Crown". In 1844, a license was granted to John Rogers to "utter and sell

Whisky, Brandy & Rum and other spirituous liquors, by Retail, in quantities of not less than one quart, to be drunk out of his house." It also seems that John Rogers was involved in the importing and distribution of alcohol, as a letter from A.W. Crooks asks him to procure a large quantity of whisky. John, who did not marry as far as records can tell, was also the Town Clerk for a time, and was also the treasurer of St. Andrew's Church for many years. James Rogers, another son of Alexander and Agnes, was also involved in the business, as he is granted an innkeeper's license much later.

During this period, the house was mortgaged to a series of lenders. One notable lender was James Lockhart, the secretary of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company, in 1836. He later transferred the mortgage to the Dock Company in 1843. The mortgage was eventually taken over by Mary Ann Blake (1813-1897), another child of Alexander and Agnes (1786-1862), who had married John A. Blake, a merchant from Scotland. They and their children occupied the house for some time. John Blake died relatively young in c. 1845, leaving his children to be cared for by their mother and uncles, James and John.

The Harrison's, who were the last of the family to occupy the house, are descendants of William Henry Harrison (1868-1956), not the War of 1812 American general of course, but the mayor of Niagara several times (1914-1915, 1924-1928, and 1931). He married Annie Maud Blake (1875-1956), a granddaughter of John and Mary Ann.

One notable feature of this property was that for a time a 3-storey commercial building stood beside the house directly at the corner of Queen and Gate Streets. This was built by John and his brother-in-law John Blake to accommodate their successful forwarding business. It was torn down around the turn of the century.



## 165 Queen Street, MacDougal-Harrison House



165 Queen Street, a vital component of the distinguished heritage block on Queen Street between Simcoe and Gate Streets, stands on about 2/5 acres of land, part of a 1/2 acre lot, #51, granted by the Crown to Capt. Martin McClellan in December 1798.

McClellan, son of Butler's Ranger William McClellan (1740-~1833), sold his lot in 1811 - two years before he was killed at the battle of Fort George - to Elizabeth Johnson Clench (1772-1850), granddaughter of Sir William Johnson (1715-1774, a close companion of Col. John Butler, 1728-1796) and Molly Brant (1735-1796), and wife of Niagara town clerk Ralfe Clench (1762-1828) for £50. In 1820, the Clenches sold the 1/2 acre in two pieces, with 1/3 acre bought by merchant Adam Crysler (1798-1844) for £125. It is Crysler who is traditionally attributed with building 165 Queen Street in 1820, although it has been suggested that it was built before 1812, thus surviving the fire, based on evidence of a fire in the structure of the house. Nonetheless, the majority of evidence supports the 1820 build date.

Having built his house and established a business, Crysler died of consumption (i.e., tuberculosis) in 1825 at the age of 29, leaving a widow, Ellen, and two young children. They soon left town but retained ownership of the house until 1849 when Adam's son, Charles Morden Crysler of Fort Wayne, Indiana, sold to Daniel McDougal (1782-1866) for £300, a relatively low price probably influenced by the recession caused by the collapse of the Dock Company and the non-resident ownership.

McDougal, after whom the house is generally named, was at the time 67, and highly respected for his military service and leadership at St. Vincent de Paul Church. He lived at 165 Queen Street until his death in 1866 and may have added the kitchen wing to the house, as his property was usually assessed at a higher value than his immediate neighbours. The McDougal family and their descendants continued to occupy the house, often renting it, until 1921 when the property was sold to William H. Harrison (1858-1956), a prominent Niagara businessman and former mayor, connected by marriage to the Rogers/Blake family. Harrison leased a small part of lot 51 with a frame cottage to the Newtons for 30 years, which eventually became the home of William (Willie) McDougal Newton (1857-1929). The house at 165 Queen Street is still occupied today by descendants of the Harrison family.

## 175 Queen Street, Dr Anderson's house + Cottage Hospital



This house, at one point a hospital, is relatively unique in that its property straddles two of the 1791 surveyed lots, #50 and #51. These two  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre lots were granted by the Crown to George Campbell and Martin McClellan (1771-1813) respectively. Campbell had been a Sergeant in the Butler's Rangers, while McClellan was a Captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia, who would later die at the Battle of Fort George.

Campbell sold his  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre to Col. Joseph Brant Clench (1795-1857) in 1819, who sold it in turn to Charles Shaw and George Trudell. McClellan sold his lot to Ralfe Clench (1762-1828) and his wife Elizabeth Johnson Clench (1772-1850) of the Clench House at 234 Johnson Street, in 1811. The current property was fused together around 1819/1820 by Tenny Peabody, a watchmaker, who purchased  $\frac{2}{6}$  acre of lot 50 and  $\frac{1}{6}$  acre of lot 51, for £100 and £62.10s respectively, high prices reflecting the value of land on Queen Street which was becoming the commercial centre of Niagara. It was likely Peabody who built the present structure, sometime in the early 1820s.

The property changed hands a number of times after Peabody's ownership - first to John Jeremiah Daly in 1825 (for £375) then to merchant William Lockwood Daly in 1827 (for £500), who operated the building as a store. In the 1830s and early 1840s the town's prosperity grew in large part due to the activity of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Co (in the late 1840s the business began to falter), leading to a good deal of property speculation, and the house changed hands several times more in a brief period. First Alexander Stewart bought the property after Daly moved his business to Market Square in 1828, then to John Johnson Claus (1800-1873) the following year for a considerably higher price indicating the property had been 'flipped'. John Claus was the son of Col. William Claus

(1765-1826), a pivotal figure in early Niagara who was in charge of the Indian Department. Claus sold the property in turn to Thomas McCormick, who is noted for being the head of the Bank of Upper Canada (now the Old Bank House at 10 Front Street), although at a loss. Owners later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century included William Tremaine, a civil engineer, and Henry Paffard (1824-1912), in 1872, who was mayor of the town at that time.

Indeed, it is as a hospital that this house is most well-known. Around the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, there was no official hospital in Niagara-on-the-Lake, except for a series of small hospitals operating out of private homes. One of these was the 'White House' at 83 Gage Street, which, interestingly, was (probably) built by John Claus. The 1918/1919 flu epidemic made clear the need for a more substantial medical facility, leading to the establishment of the Niagara Cottage Hospital. The first facility was the Cornella House on Gate Street, now demolished (where the Oban Inn parking lot is now).

In 1920, after a considerable fundraising drive, this house became the site for the new Niagara Cottage Hospital. Its last occupant was Dr. Hedley Leeming Anderson (1845-1925), who owned the house from 1875 to 1919, and was for much of that time the town's sole physician. At the time of its opening, the new hospital had six small wards. A baby delivered on its opening night, perceived by some as a good omen. The building served in this capacity until the present hospital until 1951, when the present facility on Wellington Street was opened.

## 187 Queen Street, Roslyn Cottage or Crysler-Rigg or Crysler-Burroughs House



The land on which the house at 187 Queen Street now sits is lot 49, originally granted by the Crown in 1795 to J. Mansfield, a Loyalist about whom little is known. In 1800 the lot reverted back to the Crown, but was granted again to Peter Desjardins, who immigrated to Upper Canada as a royalist refugee from the French Revolution. He worked as a clerk for several businessmen including John McKay and James Durand. He is most notable for petitioning for and building a canal connecting Dundas to Burlington Bay, which was not completed until after his death. He left Niagara for Hamilton in 1808 but continued to own the property until 1821. It is unclear whether a house was built here – an 1810 plan of the town shows a small structure facing Simcoe Street just to the back of the current house that would have certainly been destroyed in 1813.

The purchaser of the lot in 1821 was Ralph Morden Crysler (1796-1865) who built the current house most likely in 1822, the year in which he bought the remainder of the lot from Desjardins. Ralph Morden was the son of John J.F. Crysler (1765-1839), and the grandson of noted loyalist Adam Crysler (1732-1769), a Butler's Ranger. Ralph served with his father in the Lincoln Militia during the War of 1812, after which he started a successful retail business with his brother, Adam (1798-1844). His first wife was Sarah Overfield (1806-1826), and after her death married Elsie Gansevoort (1801-1866), with whom he had several children.

His store was at the corner of Queen and Gate Streets, on the same site as the 'Doctor's House' at 154 Queen. The opening of the first Welland Canal in the 1830s hurt businesses in Niagara such as Crysler's, forcing him to abandon his

business in 1839. He then moved with his family to Rochester, NY, although he moved back to Niagara before his death in 1865. He sold lot 49 in 1839 to Charles Latham Hall (1812-1849), for the sum of £900, a considerable appreciation from the purchase price due to the construction of the house.

Hall was a lawyer, who owned several other properties in the town along with his wife Amelia B.C. Downs (1808-1869). The Halls were members of St. Mark's Church - Janet Carnochan's *History of Niagara* notes that Mrs. Hall was involved in the procurement and donation of the baptismal font. Mrs. Hall was also involved with the Oddfellows Society - she was the 'Lady Patroness' of the Oddfellows' Ball in December 1847. Mr. Hall himself was an important fixture in Niagara. From his obituary in 1849:

He was distinguished by uprightness and liberality, and evinced, in all his transactions, a refined taste, and a disposition for public improvements. His extensive possessions in town were kept in the most perfect order. A widow and two children have to mourn their irreparable loss.

It was Hall who probably improved the house during his period of ownership by adding the Greek Revival finishes, notably the pilasters with Ionic caps, along with the side porch. Architecturally, the house's design is similar to the Breakenridge-Hawley House on Mississauga Street, as well as the Clench House on Johnson. It is also likely that the house's woodwork was done by carpenter John Davidson, who is notable as the builder of St. Andrew's ornate pulpit.

## 209 Queen Street, Richardson-Kiely House or Charles Inn or Heritage Inn



Bounded by Simcoe Street, Queen Street and the Niagara on the Lake Golf Club (on two sides) is the building at 209 Queen Street, Niagara on the Lake - currently known as "The Charles Inn". The original building on this site was constructed for Charles Richardson (1805-1848) in the 1830s. The frame of the house was constructed from hand hewn white oak beams.

Charles Richardson was a lawyer and political figure in what was then Upper Canada and served in the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada from 1834 to 1841 as the representative from the Niagara Region.

Richardson was married on two occasions first to Eliza(beth) Euretta Clench (1808-1833, daughter of Niagara notable Ralfe Clench) and later to Jemima Jane Clarke (1805- ). He was also a member of the local militia and served as a clerk of the Peace for the Niagara District. He was the brother of prominent author/novelist Major John Frederick Richardson (1796-1852).

This house was later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Latham Hall (1812-1849). Mr. Hall was also a lawyer who came from the Windsor Ontario area to practice law in the Niagara Region.

The original building was enlarged in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to encompass the galleries. The main additions to the original house (guest and servant's quarters) were added in the early 1900s. The building was designated as a heritage site in 1986.

This property has had a number of names over the years - the Richardson/Kiely House, Green Acres, the Richardson/Drope House, Nenagh Hall and finally the Charles Inn.

## 228 Queen Street, Ketchum-Thomas-Phillips House or "Peace Acres"



The house represents the type of well-situated summer properties constructed by wealthy Americans who spent their summers in Niagara-on-the-Lake during the heyday of the grand summer estates that sprang up in the Town in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This was the era of the advent of mass automobile travel, when wealthy visitors came to Town for the summer bringing their extended families, friends and servants.

In October 1794 The Executive Council of Upper Canada gave a grant to James Haddick, yeoman, for Lot No. 74 in the Town. This was confirmed in June 1801. After the War of 1812, when the Town was burned, it was mortgaged and ultimately sold in 1828 to Peter McGill, of the great Montreal-based trading family. Prominent early citizens of the Town associated with this property were William Jarvis, the Provincial Secretary and Registrar in Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe's government, William McKean and John McEwen, leading Niagara merchants, and Hon. Robert Dickson (1796-1846), lawyer, Conservative MP and son of Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846). Other prominent owners of this home were Jesse II Ketchum (1782-1867) and George Ansel Sterling Ryerson (1855-1925) of the well-known Toronto family.

Jesse II Ketchum was a tanner, politician and philanthropist, who started his career in Spencertown, New York; in 1796 he ran away to join his elder brother Seneca Ketchum who was farming near Toronto in Upper Canada. Ketchum became a tannery owner and a merchant during the War of 1812, profiting greatly from sales to the British troops and Canadian militia. As a shrewd businessman, he invested his profits in town property in York and traded farms



in the county. On his philanthropic side, Ketchum subscribed to the building of the first common school in York, completed in 1818. Ketchum opposed the Family Compact and sided with William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861) in the Assembly. However, he deliberately took no part in the Mackenzie Riots of 1837. At this time he moved his tannery from York to Buffalo and lived his summers in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The property at 228 Queen Street was also associated with a number of wealthy Americans from the Buffalo area including Watts Sherman Lansing (1850-1937) whose father, Brig. Gen. Henry Lansing (1818-1889), owned the "Randwood" estate on John Street; Edwin R. Thomas who was a prominent manufacturer of early automobiles, including the Thomas Flyer that won the New York to Paris race in 1908; and George Felter Phillips (1892-1971), a Buffalo attorney whose family owned and maintained the property as their summer residence for 47 years from 1954 on.

When Edwin Thomas purchased this House in 1904, he was an early car manufacturer and by 1908 he and his car was world famous. The "Thomas Flyer" was the American entry in the 1908 New York to Paris Race. The Race was sponsored by the New York Times and La Matin (a Paris newspaper). The torturous New York to Paris Race route was: New York City, Albany, Chicago, San Francisco, Seattle, Valdez Alaska, Japan, Vladivostok, Omsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Berlin and finally Paris. The winning Thomas Flyer Team (driven by George Schuster Sr. of Buffalo) covered three continents and over 22,000 miles in 169 days. The Americans won, finishing 26 days ahead of the Germans and the Italians.

Stylistically, the building is an amalgamation of a number of revival styles including neo-Classical Revival and neo-Greek Revival with generous, light-filled reception rooms, spacious bedrooms, screened porches, open loggias of symmetrical arrangement and a multiplicity of fireplaces, columns and trims. Over the years various owners have renovated and added to the house but have always maintained and enhanced the look and character of the house as a fine building constructed to be a summer home.

Significant renovations and new residences behind the house have been added in 2012-13.

## 117 Regent Street, Evans House



On a half acre of Lot 5 is located a property on a quiet street in “Old Town” at the northwest corner of Regent and Front Streets (front door on Regent Street). Earliest records indicate that one Henry Weishuhn first owned this property from about 1796 to 1799. He had served as a Sergeant-Major in the 3rd Battalion of the British 60<sup>th</sup> Regiment, or Royal American Regiment of Foot, during the American Revolutionary War. Records indicate that prior to moving to the Niagara area, he served as a Captain in a Royal Regiment in Florida. Following the American Revolution and his move to this area, he submitted a successful petition to the Government of Upper Canada in return for his military service to the Crown. He was awarded a town house (now 117 Regent Street) and 800 acres of land outside the Town a year later. He had five children and died between 1802 and 1809.

The next owner, silversmith Ebenezer (Eban) Whiting (1760-1836), probably owned the property from 1799 to 1818. Mr. Whiting’s story is somewhat convoluted in that in October 1823, he submitted a claim for remuneration due to the loss of property suffered during the War of 1812. The specifics related to the destruction on December 10, 1813 of his one and a half framed dwelling house that measured 19 feet by 42 feet which was valued at 225 Pounds. Supporting statements to this request, attested to by his son Charles, indicated that Whiting left Upper Canada and remained in Great Barrington, Massachusetts until 1817. Further, this attestation stated that Mr. Whiting had no interest in the war and contradictorily stated that he opposed the war and was abused by local residents as a result of his stand on that war. Another statement from his spouse (Elizabeth) in 1824 stated that her husband left Upper Canada in 1799 to go to the United States to procure a patent for an invention. This effort was unsuccessful, and as a result of his lack of funds, Whiting was unable to return to Upper Canada until 1819. (There appears to be a difference between family members as

to the year of Whiting's return to Upper Canada). His claim for war reparations was refused by the government of the day as Mr. Whiting left Canada well before the commencement of the War of 1812 and returned well after its conclusion. Accordingly, he forfeited all claims for remuneration. Ebenezer Whiting was the older brother of Sarah Whiting (1762-1833), the third wife of Thomas Ingersoll and stepmother of the Canadian heroine, Laura Ingersoll Secord (1775-1868).

The next owner was Sir John Stevenson of Dublin, Ireland who came to the Niagara, New York region around 1777 and served as a Private in Ball's Company of Butler's Rangers during the American Revolution. His son, Lt. John Andrew Stevenson (1790-1832) fought in the War of 1812 as a British Regular, stayed in Niagara-on-the-Lake and submitted a claim for war reparations, sworn before a Justice of the Peace in June, 1823, for a total of 49 Pounds as a result of the war of 1812 and was given 34 pounds in remuneration. His reason for staying here became evident immediately after the War of 1812 when Lt. Stevenson married Mary Eleanor Addison (1788-1854), the younger daughter of Rev. Robert Addison (1754-1829), the pastor of St. Mark's Anglican Church; they had nine children, including a doctor and a judge. The Crown reaffirmed the younger Stevenson's claim to the property in 1818; he later moved to "Oakwood", a grander residence in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Stevenson was a petitioner in 1829 for the appointment of his father-in-law's successor, Rev. Thomas Creen (1799-1864) to be pastor of St. Mark's Church. He was also a founding member of the Debating Society in 1835.

Land records indicate that in 1819, this land was sold to Thomas Evans who also owned Lot 7, William Black and later still, in 1852, the property was eventually sold to one James Monro, blacksmith. He was a member of the Mechanics Committee whose aim was to encourage the pursuit of scientific knowledge, and the acquisition of a library. Monro is credited with building the main structure on site. This saltbox style home retains most of the original architectural style in the front rooms, with its deep windows; the basement has the original pre-War of 1812 stone. The house was rebuilt after the burning of Niagara-on-the-Lake in December 1813. The rear half of the house is of a later date.

## 167 Regent Street, The Blue House



The house at 167 Regent Street, often known as the 'Blue House', was built on lot 37, a ½ acre lot granted to Peter Michael Fortier in 1796. Little is known about Fortier, but records indicate that the land was transferred almost immediately to Andrew Heron (1762-1848), suggesting that he may have decided not to settle in Niagara or was granted land elsewhere. Heron was a prominent figure in Niagara, at that time a merchant, and later the publisher of the *Niagara Gleaner*. The 1810 Andrew Gray plan of the town shows two buildings on the lot which would have been destroyed by the 1813 fire.

The property was mortgaged in 1817 to Montreal merchants John Forsyth and John Richardson as part of a very large transaction along with other lots, for a total value of £2931 9s 1p. Ten years later Heron sold the property to the same merchants, and in 1829 they exchanged the property between themselves as Richardson sold the lot to Forsyth. Richardson and Forsyth did not live in Niagara, and it is unlikely anything was built on the lot at this point. They were important merchants who together formed the partnership Richardson, Forsyth & Company. They were also heavily involved in the fur trade and became partners in the North West Company for a time, and were also partners with Robert Hamilton (1753-1809) of Queenston.

In 1835, Forsyth sold the lot to Matthew Dobie, a blacksmith. Dobie is the probable builder of the house at 83 Prideaux Street, and so probably did not build on this lot. Dobie began to subdivide the lot, and sold 40' x 104' at the south west corner to John Fraser in 1848, who most likely built the current house sometime in the 1850's. Fraser was the owner of the Angel Inn, having purchased it in 1845, and having changed its name to the Mansion House, and then to Fraser's Hotel (it would eventually revert back to its original name). The house was occupied at some point in the 1860s by John (Jack) Bishop (1842-1902), a local butcher whose store was on Queen Street.

## 228 Regent Street, Swayzie House



This house, with a sign "Swayze's Cottage", is a property that appears to be on Lot 103. It is adjacent to the Angel Inn, which is on Lot 66 fronting on Regent Street. The Town's land records indicate that the Crown patent for this one acre of land was deeded to one David William Smith (1764-1837) on 9 September 1793.

David William Smith was a member of the 5<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot (later the Northumberland Regiment) in England. Following various administrative duties with the military, he was offered the non-salaried post of Acting Deputy Surveyor General by John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) in 1792. He and one William Chewitt laid out the town plan of Niagara in 1794 based on the 1791 Augustus Jones plan and the government's plan of 1788. He became a salaried surveyor in 1798 and received back pay for his previous six years work. It is of note that while so employed Smith submitted numerous petitions to the government of Upper Canada requesting land grants for himself based on his military and current service and other requests for his children and mother. These petitions were not only for land in the town but also larger tracts of land outside of town. He was also on the first list of licensed attorneys and sat on the Executive Council beginning in March 1796. He became disillusioned with York society and was not offered a position in the Legislative Council. He left Upper Canada to return to England in 1802. There was a whiff of a scandal involving the pregnancy of an underage girl which may have hastened his departure. David William Smith died in England in 1837.

Available land records show that the next transaction on this property was in 1854. However, information concerning David William Smith indicates that he divested himself of all properties in Upper Canada prior to his 1802 departure. There is no indication of just when this property was acquired by the next owner,

who may possibly have been Captain Isaac Swayze (1751-1828), an early settler in Niagara. Swayze was appointed inspector of 'shop, still and tavern licences' for the Niagara District, he reported that three men had broken into his house and stolen 500 pounds in licence fees. He petitioned the Assembly to be excused from restoring the money, but when his story of the theft was met with outright suspicion, he quickly withdrew his petition. Swayze's son, Francis (1807-1854), repaid the licence money in four annual installments after his father's death. This property was then used for the Town Council and School Board offices from 1854 to 1859.

Another part of Lot 103 was used for other purposes for the earliest days. This part was acquired by one John Burch (1741-1797). John Burch (also spelled Birch) settled in the Niagara area following the American Revolutionary War in the mid 1780s. He amassed large land holdings including a grist/lumber mill along the Niagara River; and had become a justice of the peace. This property was acquired by Burch in January 1795 and held by his estate until January, 1800 – some three years after his death.

### 433 Regent Street, McCartney House



433 Regent Street sits on a  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre lot, part of Lot 278, and is one of the earlier houses built after the end of the War of 1812. Lot 278 was originally granted by the Crown in 1794 to Nathan Barnum, a Loyalist originally from Connecticut. Barnum sold the lot shortly after, in 1796, to Thomas Ridout. Ridout is a well-known figure in the area's history – at the time he was a clerk in the surveyor-general's office in Newark, and was married to a Loyalist. Eventually he would move to York and become elected to the Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada.

In 1797 the lot was sold by Ridout to the Rev. Edmund Burke, one of two pioneer Irish priests in the province. A native of Ireland, Burke arrived in Newark in 1794 on his way to Catholic missions in Michigan territory, returning in 1796. He was granted, for his willingness to assist the Upper Canadian government, two lots, one in York, and the other in Newark (Lot 227) on which to build churches (or a seminary) but failed to build on either one, but stayed in town for several years after acquiring Lot 278 from Ridout (again, failing to build on it).

In 1799, a transaction is listed selling the lot from Ridout to Robert Pilkington. (There is no transaction listed selling the lot back to Ridout from Burke, so this is somewhat unclear.) Pilkington was a Royal Engineer who had seen military service both in the Canadas and overseas, and was in demand for his skills in building and rebuilding military fortifications. Pilkington had considerable land ownership in the Niagara area, of which Lot 278 was only a small piece.

In 1822, Pilkington sold Lot 278 to John Eagleson, a prominent merchant in Niagara. It is Eagleson who is thought to have built the present house there either that year or the next (the 1810 Gray plan shows a building on the lot that year that would have been lost in the fire of 1813). Eagleson is notable for being thought to have rebuilt the Masonic Lodge from bricks salvaged from the fire of 1813. In 1830, the lot was divided, with the  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre North East lot being sold to Isabella Thompson for £40, who married William Little, of York, in 1831.

(Eagleson sold both lots for £90 in total, when he had paid £60 for them 8 years earlier).

The Littles presumably occupied the lot until the 1870's, when in 1878 the lot became held in trust by the Grace Methodist Church (now Grace United). Since then, the house at 433 Regent Street has changed ownership numerous times up until its present owners. It is notable for retaining a good deal of its original architecture, including original flooring, fireplaces and staircase railings.



## 57 Ricardo Street



This house is one of many that owes its existence to the prosperity of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. This land was not part of the original town survey and was largely undeveloped prior to the company's incorporation. Directly south of Ricardo Street was the land granted to St. Mark's Church in 1928, but north of Ricardo Street was primarily marsh. The newly formed company drained the marsh, dredged the harbour, and built a series of shipbuilding facilities, wharves and warehouses. The growth of the company was key to the town's success in the 1930s and early 1940s.

A number of houses were built for Dock Company officials and workers. This house was built in approximately 1840 and was leased for life to William Cowan, along with its 2000 sq. ft. section of lot 17. The Dock Company began to flounder in the late 1840s, and by 1870 most of their lands were sold off. Nonetheless this lot remained in the Cowan family. William Cowan, a workman, left it to his widow who retained it until 1879, and it stayed in the Cowan family until 1887. In the 1890s the house was owned by fisherman William Ball, who made some changes to the house. Much more recently, the house was restored in 1999, in a renovation that was faithful to its original design.

## 164 Ricardo Street, Dock Master's House, Ball or Ansley House



This one-and-a-half storey building served for some years as offices for the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company, which operated in the 1830s and 1840s and was key to the town's growing prosperity in that time. For the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the land this side of King Street was largely undeveloped, save for Fort George and the cluster of buildings at Navy Hall, both severely damaged during the War of 1812. The land became a part of the Town in 1823, after James Crooks (1778-1860) was granted land between Picton and Castlereagh Streets in exchange for that confiscated from him around Fort Niagara.

In 1831, however, development began in earnest, when the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company was incorporated, in large part thanks to petitioning from some of Niagara's prominent and industrious residents. These included Dr. James Muirhead (1765-1834), Robert Dickson (1796-1846), Judge Thomas Butler (1779-1848), William Duff Miller (1786-1859) and Ralph Morden Crysler (1796-1865). The Company proceeded to drain the marsh north of Ricardo Street, and then dredging the basin to make it deep enough for ships. They then constructed a series of wharves, warehouses and shipbuilding facilities. The 1830s were prosperous for the company, and the town grew considerably as a result.

The building here was constructed in the early years of the company's operation, most likely between 1833 and 1835. It served as offices for the company and was where dock workers came to collect their pay. It was occupied for some time by Frederick George Nash, the secretary of the company, likely both as his house and his offices. The Dock Company flourished until the 1840s and began to decline in part due to Niagara losing importance as a trade route, and also because of the insolvency of several of its financial backers. By 1848 the company was bankrupt, and in 1853 Clark Gamble, a Toronto lawyer who had been assigned to dispose of the company's assets, sold the property to Samuel Zimmerman (1815-1857). At this point the building here at #164 Ricardo ceased to function as offices for the company, although Nash remained as occupant up

until 1868, after which a lawyer, John M. Currie (1830-1892), moved into the house.

In 1870, Block B, the land bounded by Byron, Nelson, Ricardo and Melville Streets, was sold to Duncan Milloy (1824-1871), an industrious ship owner and sailor who is notable for building what is now the Oban Inn. His family owned the property until 1895. The building is largely in its original state, with many interior features preserved, with the exception of the later-added rear wing, and a front veranda added in the 1860s. The building was acquired by Vintage Hotels, which operates the Queen's Landing, and currently contains four of the hotel's suites.

## 242 Ricardo Street

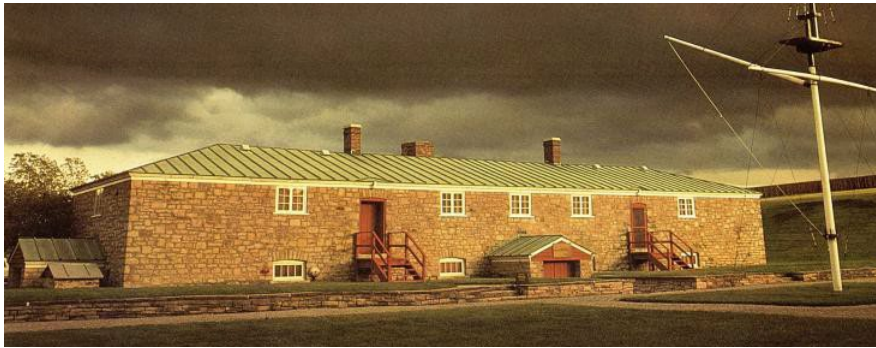


This historic 2-storey residence on Ricardo Street operated for many years as an inn and tavern. It sits on lot 18, one part of the 21 ½ acre section of land known as the 'Crooks' transfer. James Crooks (1778-1860) had been a militia captain in the War of 1812, and after the war became a prominent merchant and landowner. He owned much of the land around Fort Mississauga, which was constructed after the war as a replacement for the destroyed Fort George. The military confiscated these lands in order to prevent them from being developed in close proximity to the fort for security reasons, and in exchange granted Crooks a large block of land southeast of King Street, thus expanding the town's boundaries. 16 acres of this land is that bounded by King, Castlereagh, Wellington, and Picton Streets - the 'New Survey'.

The remainder was further away from town on the other side of what would become Niagara Harbour & Dock Company lands. These were a 1.5-acre section on the waterfront (where present-day condominiums are) and a 4-acre block bounded by Ricardo, Nelson and Byron Streets, almost to the edge of Fort George. The deed for this transfer was dated 1823. It is here that the house at 242 Ricardo Street was located, at the northeast corner of the latter 4-acre block. The house was constructed between approximately 1828 and 1832.

Crooks had moved away from Niagara after the war, settling in West Flamborough Township, but used his Niagara land grant to maintain his business interests in the area. The 'Navy Hall Inn', as it became known, was well positioned to take advantage of traffic from sailors, soldiers and others, given its proximity to Navy Hall. In the 1830s it would no doubt also take advantage of business from the prosperous Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. The land on which it stands was eventually purchased by Robert Best (1809-1894) in 1863 after James Crooks' death and has undergone several subdivisions. Today it functions as a Bed & Breakfast, known as the 'Royal Manor'.

## 315 Ricardo Street, Navy Hall



This history of this stone building, once an important military facility, begins in 1765 when Fort Niagara across the river was in British hands. Due to overcrowding, the British began to develop some facilities across the river, including a barracks and several store houses. This side of the river was also more practical from a naval point of view, as it was more sheltered and easier for ships to sail from, which merited the development of naval facilities. By 1778, a conglomeration of buildings here was collectively known as 'Navy Hall.'

During the American Revolution, the Provincial Marine wintered in one of the buildings, while the Butler's Rangers were based out of their own barracks near the site. These were the original Butler's Barracks – the ones that exist today opposite Mary Street were named for Col. John Butler (1728-1796) but were not built until after the War of 1812. The outcome of that war determined that Fort Niagara would eventually be ceded to the Americans but would remain in British hands for the present. Nonetheless, this prompted the planning of a fort above Navy Hall, which would eventually become Fort George.

In 1792, John Graves Simcoe (1752-1806) arrived to establish the town as the capital of Upper Canada, which he called Newark. Originally housed in tents on the Navy Hall site, Lieutenant Governor Simcoe eventually refurbished several of the buildings (which had fallen into disrepair) for his purposes. Simcoe and his wife, Elizabeth (1762-1850), actually preferred the tents to the damp stone buildings at Navy Hall. Many sessions of the legislative assembly were held here (but not the first), before the capital was moved to York for defensive reasons in 1796. Loyalists also went to Navy Hall to petition for land grants, and the buildings were also used for various social events. After Simcoe's departure, the buildings were once again used as a storehouse and barracks. A monument to Simcoe and his wife is also on sight here.

Much of Navy Hall was destroyed by American artillery in the fall of 1812, and the remainder was destroyed when the Americans invaded the following May and began their occupation of the town. After the war, Navy Hall was gradually

rebuilt, and one of these buildings is what survives today. At that time this was a wooden building, originally a commissariat store. After the 1837 Rebellion it was converted to a barracks able to accommodate 72 men. At that point the barracks lacked proper cooking facilities - cooking was done under an open shed in the summer, and inside the barracks in the winter. A cookhouse was eventually put up sometime during the 1840s.

In the 1860s a railway line was installed as part of the Erie & Niagara Railway, and the building was moved closer to the fort, across present-day Ricardo Street. The building fell into disrepair after the move. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the building was partially restored and used by Canadian Medical Corps in conjunction with Niagara Camp. It was reconstructed in 1937 as a depression-era make-work project (similar to Fort George), and moved back to its original location since the railway line had been removed by then. The wooden building was then encased in stone to ensure the building's longevity. Today the building is closed to the public but is available for rentals.

## 229 Simcoe Street, Fagan-Garrett-Hummel House



The house at 229 Simcoe Street shares a good deal of its early history with the larger house next door at #235, as both occupy a part of original lot 96. This 1-acre lot was granted to Provincial Secretary William Jarvis (1751-1817) in 1801, although he did not build a house on this lot before the war as his primary home was elsewhere. At a certain point, the entire 4-acre block was owned by Niagara merchant John McKay but was subdivided after McKay encountered legal troubles.

Part of lot 96, the southern half, was acquired by Robert Dickson (1796-1846), who won it at a Sheriff's auction that was held to recover the debt owed by McKay. Dickson, a lawyer and son of the Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846), subdivided the lot further, selling 1/8 acre to Michael Morley, who built the house at #235, another 1/8 acre to Henry Cleland, and this 1/8 acre to Patrick Fagan, although no record exists of that particular transaction.

Fagan had arrived in Niagara by 1825, and was a stone cutter, and an advertisement from the Niagara Gleaner (the paper published by Andrew Heron) from that year reads, "Stone Cutting. P. Fagan. Respectfully informs friends and the public that he has established the Stone Cutting business in its various branches, in the yard immediately adjoining where Robert McDougal frequently kept Store..." Like Morley next door, Fagan was a Catholic of Irish descent, baptising his children in St. Vincent de Paul Church in 1827 and 1829, although his wife, Lucy Hiskett was originally a Protestant.

An 1837 plan of the town shows 3 houses on lot 96, most likely belonging to Fagan, Morley and Cleland, although none were particularly large. Fagan most likely had a small workshop on his property as well. Fagan eventually sold this

property, although that transaction is again not registered. In 1855, a mortgage indicates that the house belonged to Hannah Jones, and an advertisement from 1854 lists the property for sale by her. She did not live there, though, and rented it out to several different owners. Since then, the house has seen several different owners, and numerous improvements to its structure.



## 235 Simcoe Street, Kerr House or Morley-Gallagher-Kerr House



235 Simcoe Street is situated on approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of land, part of lot 96 originally granted to William Jarvis (1751-1817) in 1801. Jarvis had joined John Graves Simcoe's Queen's Rangers during the American Revolution, after which was granted the position of Provincial Secretary and Registrar for Upper Canada, arriving in Newark in 1792. He was also the provincial Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge of Upper Canada, and a magistrate and deputy lieutenant of the country of York.

It is unlikely that Jarvis built on this lot before the war – in fact an 1810 plan of the town shows that this part of Simcoe Street had not yet been developed, although he may have built a barn or other structure to claim the lot. Jarvis' home at that time was on lots 3 and 4 at Front and Regent Streets. There is no transaction registered, but we know he must have sold the lot by 1817 as it was mortgaged in that year by two Niagara merchants. We also know that by 1820, the 4-acre block (95,96,73,74) was owned by Niagara merchant John McKay. McKay was a spinning-wheel maker, who had also been a Private in the Butler's Rangers and owned numerous properties in Niagara. He went through some legal troubles related to this property, however, as he did not receive a quit claim from Jarvis' heir until 1921 and was sued by Peter McGill, who he had mortgaged the lot to. The southern  $\frac{1}{2}$  of lot 96 was auctioned by the sheriff in 1824 (in order to recover money McKay owed) to Robert Dickson (1796-1846), the high bidder at £20, suggesting there was no house on the lot at that time.

Robert Dickson, a lawyer and the son of the Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846), resold some of his purchase in several parts, with  $\frac{1}{8}$  acre being sold to Michael Morley, a mason, and the probable builder of this house. Morley was an Irish immigrant, and a member of the First Niagara Fire Company, chartered in 1826.

He was one of those appointed to a committee to assist in planning a Catholic Church – St. Vincent de Paul, and probably worked on the building as well. He married Ellen Lundy in 1833, who died of cholera, and remarried in 1836.

There was a house on the lot by at least 1837 as confirmed by a plan of that year, and in 1847 tax assessments record that he owned  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre plus a 2 storey house with 3 fireplaces valued at £70. Morley likely died in the late 1860s, and Morley's widow Julia owned the house from 1867 to 1879 when her children, who had lived in the house until 1874 assumed ownership and took care of their mother. These were Julia C. Morley and Mary Ann McFaul, and son-in-law Thomas McFaul. After her death, they moved to Buffalo, but retained ownership and during this period the house was used as a boarding house, with most of its residents being Roman Catholics. In 1909 the whole property (they had enlarged it slightly by purchasing neighbouring lots) was sold to Enoch Thompson, after which the property underwent several changes in ownership up until the present day.

There is a possibility that this house was once used as an inn, which probably occupied the south side of the building, with a tavern downstairs and sleeping rooms upstairs, with the family occupying the north side of the house, most likely during the pre-1847 period. This is difficult to confirm exactly, however.

## 242 Simcoe Street



Located on Lot 97 at the southeast corner of Simcoe and Johnson Streets is a particular one-acre plot of land deeded by the Crown to Alexander Stewart (1733-1813) on September 1, 1797. Stewart served as a private in Butler's Rangers during the American Revolution and in 1797 was a founder of the Upper Canada Law Society. In 1806 this section of land was sold to one Captain Barent (or Bernard) Frey (1747-1813), an early Mennonite settler who believed in the active defence of Canada.

Bernard Frey, the youngest of three Palatine brothers, had married Hannah McMichael in Tryon County, New York in about 1770 and they had just one known surviving daughter, Margaret Hannah Frey (1800-1879). On the approach of hostilities in 1776, Frey sold his interest in the homestead to his brother, John (1740-1833), and pursued his activities as a Loyalist. He was listed as being in the Niagara frontier in the census carried out by one Captain Cruikshank in 1782; he had served in the Indian Department for two years and received a Captain's commission in Butler's Rangers during the American Revolutionary War. When the Rangers were disbanded in 1784 he moved to Canada. The Legislature awarded Frey 3,000 acres in Whitby, Ontario; and he retired from the Army on half pay. As the years passed, Frey moved to the Niagara-on-the-Lake area to be closer to his friends. He is known to have had properties in both the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and the Crossroads (now known as Virgil).

At the age of 65, Bernard Frey also served in the Servos Company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the Lincoln Militia during the War of 1812. In the spring of 1813 at Fort George the Americans and British were cannonading each other at short range across the Niagara River, the former from Fort Niagara, when Frey observed a ball plow up the ground and roll some distance beyond; and picking it up he tossed it to a British gunner near, with the exclamation; "send it back and perhaps it may kill a d-d rebel!" He had scarcely uttered the sentence, when another American shot had severed his own body. This incident was recalled by

Nicholas Steller, a native of Palatine and octogenarian, who was a boy standing by when Major John Frey (Bernard's brother) asked his friend Archibald Anderson: "Please open the letter and read it to me". Anderson did so, and after patiently hearing the letter the Major exclaimed: "Just good enough for the d-rascal, he had no business there!" Bernard Frey is buried in the Victoria Lawn Cemetery in St. Catharines.

His daughter, Margaret, married John Clement Ball (1788-1871), son of Lt. Col. Peter Mann Ball (1755-1836) and Elizabeth Showers (1764-1844), on 15 March 1814, just prior to the final season of battles in the War of 1812 with the Americans. After the War, Margaret and her husband each received 200 acres of land as the children of loyalist officers. She also sold half of Lot 97 to one John Crooks (1797-1833); land records show that the sale of this land was not registered until August 1818.

On behalf of her late father, Margaret Frey Ball submitted for reparation damages done to another property in town (Lot 264) that had been owned by Bernard Frey in the amount of £643.14s; she received £395.50s for the damages. Records indicate that Mrs. Frey submitted a claim for reparations in the amount of £300. Margaret Frey Ball, in widowhood, until age of 86 in Thorold, on the Welland Canal.

The property is currently listed as "Simcoe Manor Country Inn".

## 285 Simcoe Street, Butler House



This house was never occupied by Col. John Butler (1728-1796) but does have a historical connection to his family. It was moved here from its original site near present-day Balmoral Drive (just off Mississauga Street, opposite the Community Centre). It may have incorporated a part of the house which Col. Butler did occupy, which was on the same piece of land as this one. Col. Butler's house is marked on Andrew Gray's 1810 plan of the town near the 2-mile Creek – a cairn topped by his bust in bronze marks this spot today. This was outside the boundaries of the original town survey, and thus not one of the lots granted in the 1790s to loyalists. It was certainly one of the first surviving houses constructed in Niagara, but its origins are of some dispute.

Most histories attribute the building of the house to James Butler, the brother of Col. John Butler. Col. Butler is an integral figure to the origins of Niagara, having brought together and commanded a group of loyalist soldiers from the Mohawk valley that played a large role in the American Revolution. The Rangers disbanded in 1784 to Fort Niagara, which had been used as their base. Butler moved across the river with a number of families soon after that to start a farming settlement to provide food for Fort Niagara. In 1796, after Fort Niagara was finally ceded to the Americans, the remainder of the Rangers and loyalists moved across, and many of these families and their children were granted land in the town of Niagara. Col. Butler and much of his family are buried in Butler's Burying Ground at the end of Butler Street.

1815-1816 is generally thought to be the building date of the house, but there is some possibility the house was built prior to the War of 1812 and survived – it may have been overlooked by those burning the town in 1813 because of its location outside the town boundaries. Janet Carnochan's *History of Niagara*, states that it was called the "James Butler House," and that "reliable evidence shows that it was there on the day of the Battle of Queenston Heights." There are also

varying theories about the house's builder – it may have also been built by Mary Ann Clement (1761-1842), the widow of Thomas Butler (1755-1812), Col. Butler's son. In the 1850s it was owned by James Butler (1799-1886), the son of Thomas and Mary Ann, who altered the front of the house in a Greek Revival style.

In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the house was restored and moved to its current location. The house used to have another wing, probably added by James Butler in the 1850s, to accommodate his family, which has since been removed.

## 289 Simcoe Street, Lockhart-Moogk House or Storrington



The house at 289 Simcoe Street is known primarily for its most significant owner, James Lockhart, the secretary of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company. Lockhart's name, however, does not appear on the Registry office records and he most likely leased the land on which it stands.

Lot 140 was originally granted by the Crown in 1795 to Eliphail Hale, about whom little is known, other than that he was a bricklayer, plasterer and shoemaker who moved his family from Niagara to York in 1799. Hale mortgaged the lot that same year to Niagara merchant George Forsyth (1779-1821), who was a business associate of Robert Hamilton (1753-1809), the founder of Queenston. The mortgage was re-assigned several times, first to George Cain (1798-aft 1851), then to Christopher Vansickle, before the lot was acquired by Charles Kaune, a Niagara storekeeper.

It is difficult to tell if there was a dwelling on the lot prior to the war. The value of the house increased considerably, from £26 in 1799 to £120, suggesting there were some improvements. Gray's 1810 plan of the town shows a building on the neighbouring Lot 139, which was also owned by Kaune, and it is most likely this dwelling that is referred to on Kaune's war losses claim.

When Lockhart bought the house at 209 Queen Street, he leased this property from Kaune and most likely built the current house in 1817. Lockhart was a prominent merchant, banker and shipowner, who was involved in various capacities in Niagara. He had a small role in the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion, fitting one of his ships to transport volunteers from Niagara to Toronto to help put down the insurrection. Another ship, the steamboat *Experiment*, he sold to

the government who used it to hunt for pirate Bill Johnston in the Thousand Islands.

Lockhart would eventually become secretary/treasurer of the Niagara Harbour & Dock Company, whose fortunes brought the town considerable prosperity up until its zenith in the 1850s, and slow decline after that. Lockhart Street, near the current marina on former Dock Company land, is named after him (as are several other streets nearby named after Dock Company officials). In 1837 the property was sold by Kaune to Jane Stocking, who leased it back for life to the Kaune family.

The house has changed hands several times up until the present day, and has undergone considerable restoration.



## 322 Simcoe Street



This property on Lot 156 looks across the road to the front of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; in early days it was owned by various persons who served as officers and elders of the church. The original Crown Grant was made in 1816 to Lt. Col. Peter Mann Ball (1755-1836), Andrew Heron (1762-1848), A. Thompson et. al., all of whom were prominent members of St. Andrew's. Soon this committee transferred the land into the hands of Heron, an elder and benefactor of the church, and its official treasurer. Up until 1830, Heron seems to have used the land as a pledgable asset to raise money for the church; it probably remained the orchard that was shown in the town map of 1817 and was under mortgage much of the time.

For almost sixty years before his death in 1846 Andrew Heron was a leading citizen of Niagara. As is testified by two memorials at the foot of King Street, he was publisher of *The Gleaner*, the local newspaper which ran from 1817 to 1844, and, as well, founder and head of the town's public library. In 1813 he was one of the prominent citizens arrested and taken away as prisoner of war by the invading Americans. He is still remembered today as the husband of four wives, all of whom lie buried around his grave in St. Mark's churchyard.

During the 1820's, St. Andrew's struggled to find the funds to rebuild after the destruction of 1813, and to find a strong and permanent voice for its pulpit. The arrival of Rev. Dr. Robert McGill in 1829 solved that problem; the dedication of the new church in 1831 crowned the recovery of the congregation. At this time, a manse for Reverend McGill was constructed on the eastern half of lot 156.

In 1833, the western part of the lot bordering Simcoe Street was severed and sold to Annatje (Hannah) Patterson (1764-c. 1846), who would shortly become the fourth wife of Andrew Heron. The house was built in this period and became the

final residence of Andrew Heron, who would survive Hannah and die in 1848 at the age of 83. His testament bequeathed the house to his daughter Mary (1800-1875), whose residence was in Bradford, with her husband James Muirhead Jr., a pioneer in that place. For many years the house was rented out to Richard Allen (1826-1881), a shopkeeper on Queen Street.

Upon James Muirhead Jr.'s death in 1867, Richard Allen (1816-1881) acquired the property from widow Mary Heron Muirhead. After Richard's death, his widow Jane (1830-aft 1881) passed the property to their son Thomas. In 1912, the principal of the High School, William Wright (1873-1947) acquired the property; however, it is believed that he died around the time of World War One. The house remained in the Wright family until it was purchased by Georges and Helen Masson in 1967. The Massons have made extensive renovations to the house. They added a cellar to the east of the house and moved the house over it, about 3 metres. The house was originally L-shaped, but an extra room has been added by craftsman, Karl Banke, to complete its current rectangular shape.

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This one-and-a-half storey house, directly across from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, was built on Lot 156, whose first owner was Peter Mann Ball, the first of the prominent Ball family to come to Canada from the United States. He recruited a number of soldiers to fight in the Revolutionary War, and also served, along with his father Jacob, in the Butler's Rangers. Peter and Jacob were tried for mutiny while serving in the Rangers but were eventually acquitted.

In 1816 Ball and Andrew Heron were jointly issued a grant to the lot by the Crown. Heron was a prominent merchant, who would soon after switch careers and become the publisher of the *Niagara Gleaner*. They sold the lot several years later to John McEwen, another merchant, who then promptly resold it back to Heron. It was most likely Heron who built the house sometime between 1818 and 1826 - a Sherriff's deed from that year for a substantially higher price indicates considerable improvement to the lot. Heron owned many properties in town and may have purchased this one merely as an investment property.

The purchaser from the Sherriff's deed was Alexander Fraser, a Scottish-born regular soldier. Fraser played a heroic role in the battle of Stoney Creek in 1813 and is credited with seizing control of an American artillery position, bayonetting seven American soldiers and capturing two American generals in a matter of several minutes. Fraser sold the lot back to Heron in 1833, and Heron resold it to Ann Patterson. Since that time the house has changed hands numerous times up until the present day.

### 323 Simcoe Street, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church



This Presbyterian congregation was established in June 1794 in Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake), the first capital of Upper Canada. This was shortly after the arrival of Rev. John Dun, who was sent by the Albany, New York Presbytery as a missionary to the Niagara area. By November 1794, construction on St. Andrew's Church had begun - the first church edifice in town - but it was intentionally burned down by the occupying American army in August 1813. For eighteen years after its destruction, the congregation met for worship in their schoolhouse (c. 1802) on the north corner of the church property.

Rev. Robert McGill was introduced as the new minister of this congregation in 1829, and under his guidance the Presbyterians of Niagara built a fine new church for themselves. The foundation was laid on May 31, 1831. After a cyclone struck the sanctuary in 1855, it was rebuilt under the direction of Kivas Tully. A major restoration was undertaken in 1937, when Eric Arthur supervised the work. A further major restoration was undertaken in 1991 and the sanctuary was rededicated on September 29, 1991. Today, both the interior and the exterior of the church appear much the same as when the church was built in 1831.

The Church contains three types of pews: box, slip and table. On Communion Sundays the pews have long old pine tables placed before them, covered in white linen cloths. The Silver Communion Service of 1831 is still being used. The lofty pulpit, a fine work of art, was made by John Davidson, a member of the church. It is surmounted by a golden dove. Below the pulpit is the precentor's desk. St. Andrew's is an architectural gem. It is amongst the finest specimens of simple colonial ecclesiastical style to be found on the continent.

1792 - First meeting house built before or during 1792.

1794 - First church built.

1796 - 142 families were listed as members in the records.

1813 - (War of 1812) On May 27, after a fierce conflict near Fort Mississauga in which many men from the church were involved, the American troops occupied Niagara under the command of General McClure. In August of that year, he ordered the Presbyterian Church to be burned to the ground. The Americans justified their actions by claiming that the tower was used as an observation post by the townspeople. Rev. John Burns, along with several church members, was taken prisoner and preached to his captors. The destruction of the Presbyterian Church was nearly 3 months before the rest of the town was put to the torch by the Americans as they retreated across the river - only a few buildings escaped the fire.

The School House escaped. As well as divine service and Sunday School, a weekday school was held in the School House. The upper part was used as a school for black children of settlers who had escaped from slavery via the Underground Railroad. In 1793 the Government of Upper Canada signed into law a bill abolishing slavery, six months before Britain. Niagara became known as the "City of Refuge" to those who had followed the north star to freedom.

An account by a black woman of her schooldays in Niagara:

"I went to a black man upstairs in the schoolhouse of the Scotch church. The room was full, full of children. The benches were slabs with the flat side up and the back of the trees down, with round sticks put in slanting for legs. The children all studied aloud and the one that made the most noise was the head scholar in those days."

The present church was built in 1831 on the same site as the original church - style of the Greek Revival, based on the Temple of Theseus; 17 feet x 55 feet of yellowish red brick, and a portico of six Doric columns and a pediment. The tympanum (above the front door) had a gilt sunburst, and an octagonal steeple pointed heavenward over the front of the church. In 1831, the pews were purchased by the occupants ranging in price from 8 to 25 pounds and, in addition, an annual "ground rent" of 2 to 3 pounds was paid. The box pew on the right entering the church was reserved for the minister's family. One was called the Governor's Pew.

The interior is capable of seating 600- colonial style gallery along three sides. The pews were straight and severe each with a panelled door the same height as the pew. The pulpit & sounding board were added in 1840, beautifully fashioned in black walnut. All the rest of the woodwork as well as the walnut precentor's desk were painted white. Two curving stairs with graceful handrails led to the pulpit (6 feet above the floor) with a dove on top.

The Cemetery was opened in 1833. One headstone is in oak of 1852, one of cast iron of 1854, and one marble of 1837. The earliest date on any stone is 1829, although the body of a soldier hastily interred in 1813, has been found. The Ministers' Burying Place is marked by a plaque on the outside wall over the plots below.

The manse was built in 1836. After 100 years of occupancy, in 1937 the Manse (at 342 Simcoe Street) was restored. Its colonial architecture, its mantels, which have been called gems by architects and its old-time doors and inside shutters add to its interior dignity and comfort.

### 342 Simcoe Street, St. Andrew's Manse



The St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Manse was built in 1836 by Rev. Robert McGill as his private home. Robert McGill (born 21 May 1798 in Ayr, Scotland; married Catherine McLimont, and had at least three children; died 4 February 1856 in Montreal) was the third son of William McGill, an Ayrshire schoolteacher. Initially taught by his father, he went on to the University of Glasgow and then, aspiring to the ministry, entered divinity. In 1829 the long-established Presbyterian congregation of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Upper Canada, petitioned the Glasgow Colonial Society for a minister. The request was passed on to the Presbytery of Glasgow and McGill accepted the call with its promise of £150 per annum. After being ordained by the presbytery on 15 July 1829, he set sail for America, arriving at Niagara-on-the-Lake in October.

McGill, a powerful, fervent preacher and a conscientious pastor, enjoyed his years in Niagara. He began construction of a new church, St. Andrew's in 1831, erected a manse in 1836, organized a strong congregation, and became a leader in local affairs, in particular taking a keen interest in educational matters. Enthralled as he was by the beauty and immensity of the country, he was appalled by the paucity and isolation of its Church of Scotland ministers and incensed by the lack of government recognition of his church's claims to establishment. Full of enthusiasm, he set out to rectify the situation. It was to be his lifelong conviction that the solution lay in numbers, organization, and, during the early years, the close support of the Scottish church. He urged the Glasgow Colonial Society to send and initially support a constant stream of missionaries, since many areas were too poor to sustain a minister. Once in the Canadas, he maintained, they would soon find permanent posts.

At the same time he rallied those ministers interested in forming a colonial synod, and in June 1831 saw the foundation of the Synod of the Presbyterian

Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland. A born organizer, he played a vital role in the new body, heading or sitting upon innumerable committees and serving as synod clerk from 1831 to 1835 and as moderator in 1839. A leader of the negotiations begun in 1831 for union with other Presbyterian groups in the Canadas, he was instrumental in bringing about the union of their church and the United Synod of Upper Canada in 1840 with the help of the prominent Presbyterian layman William Morris. McGill published regularly. In March 1837 he founded the *Canadian Christian Examiner, and Presbyterian Review*, a monthly periodical intended to maintain the faith in areas without a preacher. His major work was a collection of prayers and meditations for the young, printed in Niagara in 1842. McGill left Niagara-on-the-Lake in 1844, accepting an offer by the parishioners of St Paul's in Montreal to become their pastor. He found the lure of the city irresistible. The Manse was purchased by St. Andrew's Church from McGill and has served as a Manse ever since.

The Manse served as home for succeeding ministers for the rest of the century - Revs. John Cruikshank (1845-1849), John Bower Mowat (1850-1857), Charles Campbell (1858-1878), William Cleland (1879-1883), John William Bell (1885-1888) and Nathaniel Smith (1888-1902). Rev. Nathaniel Smith drove his own buggy pulled by a grey mare, which was kept in a barn behind the Manse. In late 1928 the horse sheds by the church and at the Manse were removed as automotive transport became more commonplace. Rev. Charles Campbell was the all-time, longest-serving minister in the history of St. Andrew's Church.

In 1937, after 100 years of occupancy, 1937 the Manse was restored. Its colonial architecture, its mantels, which have been called gems by architects and its old-time doors and inside shutters add to its interior dignity and comfort.

### 363 Simcoe Street, Creen House



The house presently at 363 Simcoe Street is one of the older houses in the old town, situated on lot 201, which was originally granted to John Hitchcock in 1796, about whom is little is known other than that he was a brother of Miles Hitchcock, a loyalist. A house was built on the lot, probably around 1805, which would have burned in the fire of 1813 along with the rest of the house. In 1816, the property was purchased by John Breakenridge (1789-1828), a lawyer, who rebuilt the house with very similar dimensions to the original – a 1½ storey gabled building with a centre chimney. Breakenridge’s obituary says: “He settled here shortly after the war and built several of the most elegant and tasty houses in town. He was charitable, hospitable, and had numerous friends.”

Breakenridge sold off the property in three parts, with that part with the house on it changing hands several times until being acquired in 1828 by the Rev. Thomas Creen (1799-1864), who is the house’s most notable occupant. Creen was born in Rathfriland, Ireland, in 1799, was educated at Glasgow University. He was affiliated first with St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (which is very near to the Simcoe Street house) – they had heard him preach there in 1820, were pleased with his style, and hired him shortly after. He also, during this period, operated a private school out of this house, most likely using either the second floor, or the present dining room, as the schoolhouse. Piano lessons were also given by his wife in one of the downstairs rooms.

While he was initially affiliated with the Presbyterian Church, he eventually switched to the Anglican/Episcopal Church. We know that when the restored St. Mark’s Anglican Church was consecrated in 1828, Creen was the assistant minister at that time. The Rev. Dr. Robert Addison (1754-1829), the rector, nominated Creen to be his replacement after his death in 1829, and Creen served as rector until 1856. During Creen’s incumbency, the church was expanded,



including the addition of the transepts to the nave. The two richly carved bracket pulpits on either side of the chancel were installed in 1843 and bear his initials. Creen died in 1864, leaving the Simcoe Street property in his will to his wife and daughters.

The house as it stands today has a great deal of original architectural features, but also underwent considerable modification over its history. Its original size was 18x36' but was expanded both to the south and out the back. The massive original kitchen fireplace remains at the back of the house, although other fireplaces were added later. The house has undergone considerable restoration to preserve it as close to its original layout as possible.

## 134 Victoria Street, Winterbottom-Gullion House



The one-and-a-half storey frame house at 134 Victoria Street was built on lot 25, originally granted by the Crown to John Cain (1763-1823) in 1796. Cain was a private in the Butler's Rangers and would later serve as a sergeant in Servos' company in the 1<sup>st</sup> Lincoln Regiment during the War of 1812. He was also granted several hundred acres of Township lands in exchange for his military service.

The Land Registry abstracts do not list any transactions for that lot until 1840, but we can piece together some of the events in the meantime through the War Losses Claim of a certain William Holmes (1774-1834). What we find out from this document is that the lot was purchased from Cain shortly after he was granted it, in 1796, by Thomas Adams (1776-1854). Adams was born in Ireland, settling in New York before moving to Upper Canada during the Revolution. He lived near Twelve Mile Creek (modern day St. Catharines) but operated a distillery in Niagara, called "Thomas Adams, Distillers". That same year, Holmes was granted the deed to lot 25, in exchange for lot 146, in a swap between him and Adams.

We know that there was a house on the lot as early as 1796, as the claim references a house that was not quite finished that was being erected by Adams. Presumably this is the same house that is shown at the corner of Victoria and Prideaux on Gray's 1810 plan of the town, and would have been destroyed with the rest in 1813 by retreating American troops and Canadian turncoats.

The present house is harder to date exactly. We know that by 1840 it was owned by Samuel Winterbottom, as a will dated that year indicates that he left the house to his son, William Bowers Winterbottom, thus 1835 is a reasonable estimation of the house's building date. Samuel Winterbottom was one of those who lost a great deal during the war and was a recipient of the charity of the Loyal and Patriotic Society through the Rev. Dr. Robert Addison (1754-1829), being given £25. Carnochan's *History of Niagara* notes that "This man, very deserving, was reduced through his loyalty, the enemy making a point to distress all the loyal inhabitants."

The son, William Bowers Winterbottom was a lawyer, being called to the Bar as "barristers of all His Majesty's Courts in Upper Canada" in 1830. His early history is quite interesting - during the time the Americans were occupying the town in 1813, his mother was accosted by an Indian who was demanding liquor. The young W.B. screamed, alerting a nearby officer who struck down the Indian's tomahawk just as he was preparing to strike. In 1860, W.B. Winterbottom sold the property to Pamela and Jane Winterbottom.

One further historical note is that supposedly William Kirby (1817-1906), author of *The Annals of Niagara*, lived here during the 1850's, while the house was owned by W.B. Winterbottom, and that his son, John (1854-1916), was born in this house. This was shortly before they moved to the house at 130 Front Street popularly known as the Kirby House.

## 177 Victoria Street, Wilson-Kent House or Wilson-Guy House



177 Victoria Street, the Wilson-Guy House, occupies a part of lot 56 facing Victoria just north of Queen Street. This lot was originally granted to Andrew Templeton in 1796, about whom little is known, other than that he was a founder of the Presbyterian church at the time. Sometime before 1816, the lot was acquired by John Jones - the transaction not being listed in the register - whose executors sold the northern portion of the lot after his death in 1816 to John Willson (1772-1837) for £52.10. Willson came from New Jersey to Upper Canada with his parents in 1787/1788 and married three times - first in 1794 to Jane Adams (1776-1808), then in 1809 to Ann McFarland (1793-1819) and thirdly in 1822 to Mary Hahn Lee (1793-1854), a widow who survived him. He was the father of 8 sons, 5 daughters and 2 stepdaughters, and was a successful farmer, merchant, and the owner of the Exchange, a hotel on Queen Street near Gate that was the site of the founding of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1793. His will, made in 1834, three years before his death in 1837 lists considerable property ownership all over Upper Canada.

It was Willson who built the present house in 1816 (three years before Victoria Street was named). There has been some suggestion that part of the house pre-dates the 1813 fire, but this is unlikely as any remaining walls from burnt houses were ordered to be destroyed as a precaution against further American attack, and the purchase price suggests it was land only.

In May 1852, the lot was sold by Willson's widow, Mary, and several other related executors to two of his daughters, Mary Margaret (1803-1849), and Harriett Willson McDougal Chisholm (1800-1859), for the small sum of 5 shillings, who sold it in turn in 1853 for £150 to Rev. John Alexander, Minister of the Free Kirk, a group of former Presbyterians who broke from St. Andrew's and engaged architect William Thomas to build the brick church on Victoria Street,

now Grace United. The Alexanders lived in Niagara for only several years, leaving in 1854, after making some improvements to the house. They sold the property to Mary Ann Harris (1803-1877), the widow of Rev. Joseph Harris (~1800-1851), Alexander's predecessor as Free Kirk minister in Niagara. It is also possible that Joseph Harris was a relative of Mary Wilson, John Wilson's last wife.

Mrs. Harris mortgaged the property in 1862, and by 1873 had left for England. She sold the property to John Rogers (1809-1899) in that year, for \$300. Rogers was a member of a family of prominent innkeepers and merchants and was for many years the Town Clerk. He lived elsewhere (Queen and Gate St) and purchased the property on Victoria Street perhaps to capitalize on the town's emergence in the 1870's from a long recession. Rogers rented out the house to several tenants, before William Curtis (1833-1894), one of the holders of Rogers' mortgage, acquired the property in 1885.

William Curtis retired in 1890 and lived in the Victoria Street house until his death, after which one of his sons, James Whittaker (1867-1928) operated an undertaking business in the Victoria Street house, which was owned by William's widow, Fannie A. Whittaker (1833-1921). His horse-drawn hearse is now owned by the Niagara Foundation. Descendants of the Curtis family occupied the house up until 1969. Recent owners since then have restored the house, which was fairly run-down at that time, up until its present owners today.

## 222 Victoria Street, Grace United Church



The story of Grace United Church starts, actually, with the Methodist Church which came to Niagara sometime in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Based out of the United States, the Methodists were followers of John Wesley and his evangelistic revival movement. Methodism was established in Niagara by Major George Neal, a British soldier who converted to Methodism and began preaching here, primarily around Queenston, despite undergoing considerable persecution. The Niagara circuit was established in 1795, with the Rev. Darius Dunham being sent from New York as its first preacher.

During the War of 1812, Methodism was scorned by the Upper Canadian political and religious establishment – particularly by John Strachan – who looked down on its non-traditional spirituality of open-air preaching, circuit riders and tent revival meetings. Methodists were also questioned about their loyalty, as the movement was American-based. Nonetheless, the Methodists in Niagara continued to grow.

In 1823, their first permanent meeting house was opened, on Gate Street just south of Gage Street, where the Methodist cemetery now is. John Ryerson, who preached at the meeting house's opening, served as the leader of the group for several years, and was succeeded by his brother William soon after. John and William were brothers of Egerton Ryerson, who would later become a significant figure in defending the rights of Methodists in Canada. During this period the Methodist Church was also heavily involved in the Temperance movement, and its meeting house served to host numerous meetings of the Temperance Society.

The building we see here was constructed in 1852, on 1-acre lot 68. This lot was originally granted by the Crown to Seth Bradshaw, a blacksmith. He built a house here before the War of 1812, facing Queen Street at the corner of Victoria Street, which was destroyed in the fire of 1813. The lot changed hands several times after the war, until a trust deed was issued to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in 1851. The church was designed by William Thomas, better known for larger churches such as St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto. He also designed the second Brock Monument, and the Court House on Queen Street. Interestingly, his design for the Free Church in Niagara was primarily Romanesque, while most of his other designs were Gothic Revival or Neoclassical.

It should be noted that this church was constructed not by the Methodists, but by members of the Canada Presbyterian Church, often known as the Free Church, a small dissident off-shoot of the main Presbyterian Church. This small denomination ceased operation in 1869, with many of their members being absorbed by St. Andrew's Presbyterian, after which the building was rented by the Methodist Church, then purchased in 1875 for \$1000. This led to the old Methodist meeting house on Gate Street being abandoned. It was later moved to the corner of Gate Street and Prideaux Street, and still stands today as 155 Gate Street. The Methodist cemetery was enlarged to encompass the land the house had stood on and is still maintained to the present day by this church.

The new church underwent considerable renovations when it was acquired by the Methodists, including reconstruction of the aisles and platform, and new carpeting, pews and chandeliers. A school was proposed in 1888 which was first fiercely opposed but was eventually constructed between 1896 and 1898. By this time, the church had a small pipe organ in operation.

Major changes took place in 1925, when the United Church was formed by the merger of the Methodist Church, the Congregationalist Church, and parts of the Presbyterian Church (including some of those who had been part of the Free Church). The church here was chosen to be the main congregation of this new denomination in Niagara-on-the-Lake and was named Grace United Church. In 1826 and 1829 the original windows were replaced with the current memorial windows. Since then, Grace United has been an important part of Niagara-on-the-Lake's religious landscape.

## 223 Victoria Street, Frey-Hindle-Appleby House



The small one-and-a-half storey 3-bay house at 223 Victoria is part of lot #100, granted by the Crown to James Park. Registry office records indicate that the patent to Park was issued in 1818, however a list of town lot occupants from 1795 indicates that he had acquired the property much earlier, at around the same time the majority of Crown grants were distributed. Park sold the property in 1822 to James Secord (1773-1841). An 1810 plan of the town indicates there was a dwelling house on this lot, standing roughly where 105 Johnson Street is now, which would have been destroyed by the 1813 fire.

James Secord is notable for being the husband of the famous Laura Ingersoll (1775-1868). By that time, the Secords lived in Queenston, and James was a struggling merchant and registrar, while enduring a significant knee injury sustained at the Battle of Queenston Heights in October 1812. Secord sold the property the following year to Robert Cannon. At that point, the existing house was probably on the lot, possibly built by Secord himself as a rental property; the time was coincident with his eldest daughter Mary (1799-1876) becoming widowed in the Caribbean and returning to Niagara with her two daughters. The next notable transaction for this particular section of the lot is in 1830 when Cannon sold the lot to Margaret Hannah McMichael Frey (1749-1834) in the last years of her life. It is likely, however, that Frey occupied the property even before 1823, as Robert Cannon went bankrupt in 1831, precipitating the formal sale to Frey.

Hannah was the widow of Bernard Frey (1747-1813), a soldier who had been killed during the War of 1812. Her husband was born in Tryon County, New York, and was a member of the Butler's Rangers, who led raiding parties into the



Mohawk Valley during the Revolutionary War, some of which were along with Joseph Brant (1743-1807). He settled in Niagara after the Rangers were disbanded, and was granted considerable township land, as well as a town lot in 1797. He was killed in the fall of 1812 when struck by a cannonball from Fort Niagara. Hannah petitioned for Bernard's war losses, including the dwelling house on lot 264, his Crown grant.

Hannah Frey died in 1834 in St. Catharines, leaving the property to her only daughter, Margaret (1800-1879), the wife of John Clement Ball (1788-1871). Margaret passed the property to Hannah's granddaughter, Hannah Ball Clement (1817-1909), the wife of George Augustus Clement (1813-1887), a prominent merchant and a member of the Niagara Town Council in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Since then the house has changed numerous times up until the present day.

Architecturally the house is notable for its saltbox form – a product of the front section being combined with the rear lean-to extension. The interior of the house has lost much of its original finishes, and most of the original features are gone.

## 235 Victoria Street



Located on the north side of Victoria Street between Gage and Johnson Streets is 235 Victoria Street. This particular acre of land was deeded by the Crown to James Park on March 31, 1818. There is no indication of any property on this site prior to the burning of Niagara (Newark) by retreating American forces in December 1813 as there is no record of any submission to Upper Canada officials for war reparations. From 1818 to 1861, land transfer records indicate that this property passed through a number of hands, most notably in 1826, James Secord (1773-1841). Like virtually all other properties just off the main streets, this one-acre lot of land was subdivided into smaller parcels.

This property became a property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1986 indicating that this was a Class "C" property meaning that the building can be complementarily altered or replaced with new buildings. The building itself is a "cobbler's cottage" with a square footage of under 1000.

## 279 Victoria Street, Walsh House



By the aftermath of the War of 1812, the Walsh family had migrated from tenant farming in Ireland to ownership of freehold land in Canada, just after the War of 1812. In May 1819 Simon Walsh (1785-1853) purchased a one-acre Lot 144 in Niagara-on-the-Lake - on the northwest corner of Gage and Victoria Streets. The house, now at 279 Victoria, was built after his blacksmith shop that was probably closer to the intersection of these streets. His blacksmith business had likely earned him some prestige in the community.

Simon Walsh had married Ann Shaw (1800-1874) in 1824, and an attractive clapboard dwelling was built for him within a year of his marriage, to accommodate his new wife and children. Hard work at the forge, and success at farming five miles down the Black Swamp Road (today Niagara Stone Road), was establishing Simon Walsh in Niagara-on-the-Lake, a village recovering from the devastation of December 1813. Over the next 14 years Simon and Ann had three children that survived into adulthood. The youngest, Ann (1839- ) married into the Green family and stayed in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Two boys, John (1827-1911) and James (1829-1895) grew up on the farms, but John was always the better suited to farm management.

When Simon died in September 1853, he had willed the shop at 38-42 Queen Street and this house on Victoria Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake to his wife, Ann. His two sons were still in their mid 20's, and it seemed prudent to allow his widow to continue the management of his assets for a while. Shortly thereafter John Walsh inherited the farm properties and James Walsh inherited the properties in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

In 1855 James, the younger son and a quiet man who minded his own business, married Catherine Toal (or O'Toole) (1835-1909), another Irish immigrant to Niagara. Catherine was the eldest of five girls and one kid brother whose father had died when they were in their teens. It was a hard life for Sarah Toal (1816-aft 1881), a widow, to raise these children here. Catherine appears to have been living as a poor, hard-working lass with an eye for business and the good sense to get on well with her mother-in-law. It is likely that she also encouraged the arts in her children's education.

James had started in management of a small inn in Niagara-on-the-Lake and used his income to convert the building on Queen Street into a hotel, between the Sherlock Block with its red and green "boomtown" front and McMillan's three-storey shop and dwelling. Walsh's Hotel was managed by James and Catherine for many years; their son Francis Percy (Frank) (1876-1946) in the latter part of the nineteenth century. James and Catherine had five sons and four daughters between 1859 and 1877, some of whom were well known in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Their daughter Mary (1866-1956) was a successful Music Teacher and she played the organ in St. Vincent de Paul for years. Their son Herb (1869-1947), who married Nina Bishop (1874-1931), was probably the most well-known to Niagara residents; in his earlier days he was a Telegraph Operator by profession. He was then in the Customs Service for a time and became a self-educated accountant. He served as one of the Town Auditors for several years; and his last employment was at the McClelland Store as Cashier and Bookkeeper. His quiet, gentlemanly and efficient demeanour was all that could be desired. Herb's eldest brother, Simon C. Walsh (1859-1942) was much like Herb. He had the same quiet manner and was fond of music. In his earlier days he was employed by McGaw and Winnett in the hotel business. This firm had three hotels: the Queen's Royal Hotel in Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Queen's in Toronto and the Tecumseh House in London, Ontario. Simon C. Walsh served in all three at different times and, in the latter days, took over the Tecumseh House and ran it until his retirement. Herb's son, Jerry (1900-1968) was the Superintendent of The Niagara Hydro Electric Commission for about a quarter century.

## 315 Victoria Street



This one-and-a-half storey frame house was built around 1850 on a part of lot 153. It was granted by the Crown to loyalist James McLaughlin, a discharged soldier from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot, which had been involved in the Revolutionary War. McLaughlin had come to Niagara in 1790 along with a wife and seven children. He eventually settled in the township of Louth, where he was granted several hundred acres of farmland. One of his land petitions was vouched for by Robert Hamilton (1753-1809), the notable Queenston merchant, who wrote that "I verily believe the Man to be Loyal & Industrious."

There are no further transactions listed in the Registry office records until 1836, but we know from a war losses claim that the lot was owned by Francis Waddel before the War of 1812. Waddel was born in Scotland, and married a woman, Jane, against his family's wishes. As a result, he enlisted in the British Royal Artillery, and was sent to Quebec, later to be stationed at Fort Niagara. He was first granted Lot 176, but purchased this one sometime before 1808 and built a "comfortable frame house and outhouses on said lot." The 1810 Gray plan of the town shows this house at the corner facing Victoria, just to the north of the current house.

There is an interesting connection to Brock in the Waddel family - the family's history states that Maj. Gen. Isaac Brock (1769-1812) visited their house when he visited Niagara, and also that Waddel's son, Robert, returned Brock's hat to him when it fell off as he rushed to the Battle of Queenston Heights. These stories are difficult to verify, of course.

This house was destroyed, along with the rest of the town, in the fire of December 1813, shortly after Francis Waddel's death. The lot remained empty for

the next several decades. Robert Waddel sold the lot in 1836 to Ralph Morden Clement (1812-1854), after which the lot began to be subdivided and sold off to a variety of different people. Ralph Clement sold to George Augustus Clement (1813-1887) 1/3 of an acre, who then sold a section of land 50 x 104' in 1848 to Henry Carlisle (1820-1882), an English-born tailor living in St. Catharines. The small price of £37 indicates there was still no house on the lot, and thus it was Carlisle who built the present structure sometime around 1850.

### 324 Victoria Street



The small house at 324 Victoria Street sits on lot 152, which was originally granted by the Crown to Archibald Thompson, a loyalist from Scarborough, County of York, in 1795. Little is known about Thompson, but it would appear he settled elsewhere. An 1810 plan of the town does not show any buildings on the lot at that time, so he most likely did not build a house on this lot, although he may have built a small building to claim the lot as was commonly done.

At some point, most likely after the War of 1812, the property was acquired by the Hon. William Dickson (1769-1846), although this transaction is not registered in the abstracts. Dickson was one of the town's wealthiest and most prominent residents, holding a number of different positions including lawyer, judge, and member of the legislative assembly. He is best known for building the 2-storey nucleus of the estate now known as Randwood on John Street south of the Commons. Dickson likely purchased this property as an investment.

In 1817 Dickson sold the property, along with several other properties in Lincoln Township, to Jane Waddel, the widow of Francis Waddel who had died during the War of 1812. The two had married in Scotland against his family's wishes, and as a result he enlisted in the British Royal Artillery, eventually being stationed at Fort Niagara. Waddel had owned lot 153, across Victoria Street where he had built a house before the war. After Jane's death, Robert Waddel, their oldest son and her executor, sold the property to another son, John, in 1830. John and his wife Mary divided the property and sold the west half to John Warren for £100 in 1843.

The following year Warren sold that ½ acre to Thomas Watts, who little is known about other than that he was, for a time, a choir leader at the Methodist Church

(now Grace United) several blocks north on Victoria Street. The price was £45, a surprising drop in price that possibly indicates there was some structure on the land that had been burned or demolished, although that house may be where 318 Victoria now stands, the house directly to the north. It is probably Watts, then, who built the present house at #324 sometime after 1845, given that the property was mortgaged to the Niagara District Building Society in 1850 for £100, and sold in 1869 for \$600 (the switch in currency having taken place in the 1850s).



## 115 Wellington Street, Fell-Baggs House



The house at the top of the hill at the corner of Wellington and Ricardo Streets sits on an 8-acre tract of land that was originally military reserve land, granted by the Crown to St. Mark's Church in 1828. The church was built long before that, of course, but the land was officially deeded to the church in that year. The house itself was probably built sometime in the 1850s. It has been suggested the house served as an early rectory, but this is probably not the case. The Rev. Thomas Creen (1799-1864) was Rector until 1857 and lived in his own house at 363 Simcoe Street, which still stands today. Rev. Dr. William McMurray (1810-1894) assumed the office at his retirement, and it is well documented that he lived in a hotel for his first year until the present Tuscan villa rectory was completed at 17 Byron Street in 1858.

More likely, the land between Wellington Street and the cemetery was leased out in the 1850s to assist the church in paying for its expenses. Church minutes indicate that in 1854 a series of 21-year leases were granted to various parties, with stipulations forbidding the production of alcohol on the premises. Early records showing the occupants of the houses are unclear, however one notable occupant was Senator James Murray Mason, who had been a Confederate government official.

After the Confederacy's defeat, many Confederate politicians and military leaders fled to Canada fearing reprisals, and Niagara was the temporary home to many of them. This was in part due to the fact that Britain and the Confederates had a 'common enemy' relationship to the United States. Mason came to Niagara initially in 1867, and according to William Kirby's *Annals of Niagara* he "lived in the brick cottage on the church lot of St. Mark's." Mason had been a Senator from Virginia but was expelled from the Senate in 1861 for his support of the Confederacy, after which he served as the Confederacy's commissioner to Great Britain. During his tenancy of this house, Jefferson Davis, the President of the

Confederacy during the American Civil War in the 1860s, was hosted here for several days. Mason stayed here for only one summer – the next summer he rented the house at 83 Gage Street, and later returned to the United States.

For a brief period in the 1870s the house was occupied by Watts Sherman Lansing (1850-1937), of the wealthy American Lansing family who are best known for purchasing the estate built by William Dickson (1769-1846) and later known as “Randwood” and using it as their summer home. In 1877 the church sold the property to William Bartlett, a naval captain. The property was sold after Bartlett’s death to Abraham Fell (1832-1913) in 1892, and it remained in his family for many years, hence the house is often referred to as the ‘Fell House.’ The Fell family was originally from Buffalo, and probably used this house as their summer home. Fell was an official in several different American railways. The Fell family donated one of the church’s stained-glass windows, indicating a relatively wealthy status. He died in 1913 and is buried, along with his wife Zillah (1831-1896) and three children, in St. Mark’s Cemetery. In 1940 the land reverted back to St. Mark’s Church and was sold to Percill Liddicoat. The house has changed hands several times since then, and was recently acquired by a young family who have given it a sympathetic restoration.

## 15927 Niagara Parkway/River Road, McFarland House



This historic and beautiful Georgian style home was built in 1800 and was the residence of John McFarland (1752-1815) and his family for 150 years. It is one of the few buildings in Niagara-on-the-Lake that pre-dates the War of 1812. McFarland built the home from bricks made in his kiln on the property. A back wing was added in 1875 to accommodate a growing family for John's grandson, James (1816-1903).

Visitors will be taken back in time as interpretive guides in period costume take you through this stately home and garden. They are invited to indulge in some scrumptious home baked treats or a lovely cup of tea at the McFarland Tea Garden. Sample fine refreshments or sip a glass of Niagara wine. Light lunches and ice cream are also available for take-out to be enjoyed in the park, or along the adjacent Niagara River Recreation Trail. Traditional 19th century gardens have been meticulously designed to resemble a traditional door yard garden. The spacious grounds surrounding this stately home are the perfect place to enjoy a picnic or a leisurely stroll on a sunny summer day.

Historically, John McFarland emigrated in early 1776 from the Clydeside area of Scotland near Paisley, Renfrewshire. He was a shipwright building a repairing boats and ships, initially for General John Burgoyne, as a part of the fleet that transported the British troops down Lakes Champlain and George. McFarland was captured at the surrender of the British army at Saratoga, New York; he was paroled and sent back to Montreal. The following year, McFarland was ordered to Carleton Island, the gateway to the St. Lawrence River just south of Kingston, Upper Canada. After being a part of the team of carpenters that built HMS Ontario, which sank in a storm on Lake Ontario on Halloween 1780 with the loss

of all hands, McFarland was sent to Fort Niagara to collect suitable oak and white pine from the forests of the Niagara Peninsula for new ships, such as HMS *Limnade*. He was the Storekeeper General's representative, in charge of stores and the dock at Fort Niagara for 14 years, contemporary with Lt. Col. John Butler (1728-1796) being in charge of his Loyalist Rangers headquartered there. He married and had five children by his first wife at Fort Niagara, New York.

Widowed in about 1793 with four surviving children, McFarland was granted 1,000 acres for his services to the Crown – 500 acres in Niagara Township and the same in Grimsby up on the escarpment. He purchased the house, stable and barns of John McDonnell close to Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake) and cultivated 300 acres in Niagara Township. Now living as a gentleman of substantial means, John McFarland built a kiln on his property with Isaac Swayze (1751-1828); this kiln provided the bricks for his new home in 1800. Upon settling in Newark he married Margaret Willson (1770-1809), a neighbour, and five additional children were welcomed into the family.

During the War of 1812 the home was used as a hospital for injured British and American soldiers and a British canon was set up on its property to protect the river. During the American occupation of Newark in May and June 1813, John McFarland and numerous other dignitaries of the area were taken prisoner and marched to the East Greenbush camp east of Albany, New York. His son James (1791-1869) was also made prisoner but escaped and returned to reconnoitre Fort Niagara. His return coincided with the burning of Newark in December 1813 by some renegade Canadian Volunteers in the service of the Americans; this took place when the American forces occupying Fort George retreated from the area in December 1813. Shortly thereafter a British retaliatory raid was launched from the ravine behind the McFarland House, to capture Fort Niagara on December 18, 1813. James McFarland and his friend Daniel Field (1792-1873) were scouts for the British in the capture of Fort Niagara and the burning of the American villages on the entire east side of the Niagara River. The McFarland House, but not the wooden frame house, stables and barns on the McFarland property, survived the burning of Newark. John McFarland's town house near the present-day Golf Course was also burned to the ground. When John McFarland, then aged 64, returned to Upper Canada after being mistreated and released by the Americans, it is believed that he had a stroke and died in 1815. His legacy was significant; he had over 1,800 acres across the Niagara Peninsula and beyond in Beverly, and this land ensured the well-being of his family for the next four generations.

The house was restored and opened in 1959 by The Niagara Parks Commission, using period pieces to recreate its original appearance. Traditional 19th century gardens have been meticulously designed to resemble a traditional dooryard garden.

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