

## Dundas Castle Myths Debunked?

Bruce Janklow, August 12, 2015

The History of the Dundas castle is shrouded in a significant amount of local lore and misinformation. There are many stories about Scottish nobility owners, a castle built for a young beautiful Scottish bride, a mentally unstable wife who was locked up there and eventually went mad, even heart shaped pools that fill with blood at the full moon.

However it seems that the reality is much more mundane. Ralph Yurts-Dundas was a young man who came from an extremely wealthy Philadelphia family that among other things built the Delaware Hudson Canal. Dundas was the last name of his maternal family, which he favored and eventually he gave up the hyphen and became known as Ralph Dundas.

There is conflicting information about when Dundas bought the property, almost 1,000 acres facing the Beaverkill River in Roscoe New York, but the best estimate seems to be 1905. Soon after that he began building the castle based on architecture similar to the original Dundas Castle in Scotland. Just about the only non-imported material used in the construction was the exterior stone facing, which was taken from the Beaverkill River.

In 1921 with the 36-room castle just about but not quite finished Ralph Dundas died without ever formally taking residence with his wife Josephine and daughter Muriel.

So the 1,000 acres and the castle just sat with locals creating and passing on stories about the place and its owners from generation to generation.

In 1949 The Prince Hall Black Masons of New York City bought the entire property including the castle for a reported \$47,500. For many years the Masons have maintained a summer camp on the property and there is a full time caretaker.

Many interested parties find and explore the castle as its story has spread far and wide. Unfortunately, many have made it a canvas for massive amounts of graffiti and have done quite a bit of vandalism.

From time to time there have been reports of parties interested in buying the property and building a small luxury hotel or other similar uses, but none of them have gone all the way. .