

EARLY SETTLERS OF GLENVILLE
AND THEIR CHURCHES

BY

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THE FIRST white settler in the area comprising the present town of Glenville, Schenectady County, New York, was the person from whom the town, organized by an act of the State Legislature, passed April 14, 1820, derived its name. This was Alexander Lindsey a native of Scotland and a descendant of a Scotch nobleman who, giving adherence to the cause and fortunes of Charles the First thereby forfeited the title to his estate. Lindsey, in consequence of this reverse in the family fortunes, left his native land, going first, as one account says, to the West Indies. In the year 1633, however, we find him in the service of the West India Company at Fort Nassau, on the Delaware. There in 1651 he prepared to build a residence on a grant of land he had obtained, but was prevented from doing so by the violent opposition of certain Swedish residents of that place. Later we find him the owner of a lot in Smits Valley, New Amsterdam which he shortly sold for the sum "van twee duysent gulder." It is also recorded that in 1664 he owned lands, house and cattle at Gravesend. In 1665 he was granted a patent by Richard Nicolls the first English governor of New York for fifty morgans (about one hundred acres) of land on the north side of the Mohawk River, directly opposite the little village of Schenectady. In 1669 and again in 1686 he acquired additional adjoining tracts of woodland.

Lindsey was known to the Dutch of Schenectady as Sander Lendertsee. Later, the name Glen was commonly added to his name. It is said that his native place in Scotland was called "the Glen." Evidently Lindsey did not seriously object to this addition; perhaps he, himself, adopted it, for we find his descendants using it to this day. In honor of his native land Lindsey named these lands Scotia. The patent given to Lindsey by Governor Nicoll, with its enormous seal attached, yet well-preserved, is in the possession of George W. Featherstonhaugh of Schenectady.

Lindsey built his first house, a stone structure, quite close to the river's bank. However, by the unforeseen encroachments of the river when in flood, which threatened the destruction of this house he razed the structure and in 1713 built a larger house, the present Sanders mansion, on the higher ground a short distance north of the first site, now the home of Mrs. Charles P. Sanders and of her son J. Glen Sanders.

The first settlers of Glenville, after Lindsey, choosing line of least resistance, followed the course of the Mohawk River, westward, procuring title to the rich flat lands and

the gravelly uplands reaching to the base of the hills. In general the sites where they built their homes were well chosen; situations well above the high-water mark of the river when swollen by the freshets of Spring. The first dwelling of Lindsey, probably the first house built in the area of the town, if not the first built by white men north of the Mohawk River, was an exception to this care in choosing a site. However, Lindsey, a new-comer in the region, and his house built in the summer season, doubtless was not aware of the volume and height usually attained by the Mohawk, with its extensive watershed, at the time of the melting of the snows of winter. It may well be that the settlers beyond in choosing sites for their homes kept the fate of the first house built by Lindsey in their minds.

Notably among the tracts acquired along the Mohawk by the early settlers was that generally known as the Comfort Patent. This embraced lands called by the Dutch the Seventh Flat. It extended westward from the Tequatsera Creek, now mapped as the Verf Kill, to the Kinaquariones or the rocky nose projecting almost to the river's bank at the west line of Schenectady County. Comfort also held a smaller adjoining tract to the west, granted by Queen Anne in 1703. It does not appear that Geraldus Comfort, or Cambefort, as his name was rightly spelled, ever actually lived on either of these tracts, for we find that very soon after their acquisition he transferred them to Karel Haenson Toll who arrived in America about 1680 and who is said to have been of Norwegian ancestry.

The smaller tract, granted to Cambefort in 1703, was transferred by him to Toll in that same year, the consideration being a horse and a cow. Early in that century Toll took up his abode on the larger tract, the Seventh Flat, for a time occupying a dug-out hollowed in the high eastern bank of the little stream entering the Mohawk at Hoffmans. In 1720 Toll's daughter Nailtje (Nellie) was married in Schenectady to Johannes, son of Jan Baptist Van Eps "The Interpreter." On April 29th of the next year Toll, by a quit-claim deed conveyed as a gift the western half of the Seventh Flat to this son-in-law and wife. The home site and a considerable part of this land is still owned and occupied by the Van Eps family. About the same time Toll gave the eastern half of the Seventh Flat to another son-in-law, Peter Cornu, who shortly thereafter sold it to the Vedder family in whose possession it remained for over one hundred years.

Though Toll did not obtain deeds from Cambefort for his lands until 1703, the very year in which Cambefort himself obtained title, yet there is record of an agreement dated March 8th, 1694 between these men for the acquisition of the lands in question, by Toll. Therefore we may infer that Cambefort held the tracts by suffrage or agreement for some years before the actual date of his deeds. Such procedures seem to have been not unusual in those times.

Previous to the gift of lands to his two sons-in-law, or in 1712, Toll purchased a large estate at the Maalwyck, so-called, just west of the present village of Scotia. This purchase was made from the Clement brothers, Peter and Joseph. Successfully negotiating this sale one of the Clements was to receive as a bonus, in addition to his share of the purchase price, his choice of the best horse in Toll's stable, a saddle and bridle, together with a complete suit of new clothes and a cocked hat, all of which was accordingly delivered to him. Beside the main estate this purchase of Toll's included the upper half of Bent's Island in the Mohawk together with a considerable tract of land at the Beukendaal.

Adjoining the eastern side of the Tequatsera Creek, an Indian name meaning the place of the wooden spoon, was the Sixth Flat. This was settled at an early date by the Swart family. Several families of Swarts were among the early settlers and residents of the Mohawk Turnpike. Among these was Adam who, first settling in Schoharie afterwards came to Glenville, settling on the Fourth Flat. His son Teunis built a brick house at a place called Tincker-Hooghten (Tinkers Hill) very near the bank of the river, on land adjoining that of his father. This house was known as the "Block-house" and during the War of the Revolution it was used as a fort being stockaded and armed with a small field piece. Long thereafter up to the time of its demolition it was locally known as the "Old Fort." Swart served as a lieutenant through practically the whole course of the war. The War Records speak of him as having been a brave, active, vigilant and much beloved officer, ready on all occasions to turn out with his men.

Other early settlers and residents of the region included the Brooks; Barhydt; DeGraff; Haverly; Rector; Van Patten; Van Antwerp and Walton families.

THE WILD UPLAND OF THE FOURTH WARD

Notwithstanding the early settlement of a narrow belt adjoining the Mohawk River, yet at the middle of the Eighteenth Century, all that part of the Fourth Ward lying north of the actual base of the hilly part of the ward was still a tangled wilderness -- a true Woestina; in ancient days a famous hunting ground for the Algonkian nations who formerly lived in this territory. This is plainly shown by the countless weapons of the hunt and chase, found on these lands when afterwards cleared -- arrowheads, spear-points, skinning knives, and tomahawks; all of flint and stone, in their workmanship bearing mute yet unmistakable testimony to the adept, of their particular racial origin. The hills were forested with hard woods; the lower lands to the north and east clad with giant pines while the swampy portions -- post-glacial lake beds, were jungles of alder and willow and in some places covered

with a dense growth of tamarack. This wild part of the town was infested with wolves; even as late as 1828, farmers clearing lands on the hilly sections suffered loss of lambs, calves and poultry by the raids of these ravenous pests.

Through this primitive region ran three or four more or less prominent Indian paths, or trails, and these the white settlers sometimes followed in tracking roads through the woods when planning the establishment of homes therein. The greatest of these primitive paths crossed the north part of the town; a trail used for centuries by Algonkian nations in going to and from the coastal region of New England to villages on the rich corn lands of the middle Mohawk Valley, once used by that race, but abandoned long before the coming of the Mohawks into the region. This was a short and direct east-west cross-country route from the Hudson at the mouth of the Hoosic River to the Mohawk at the Kinauariones, ten miles west of Schenectady.

The next greatest Indian path in this area ran from north to south, crossing the Algonkian trail at right angles, not far from the point where the Crabb Kill leaves the town. This path led from Schenectady northward, approaching the hill region at the Beukendaal (Beechdale), thence to the Sacandaga country and the north. The present Sacandaga Road quite closely follows its course. Indeed, this old Indian path is said to be still discernable in certain pieces of woodland just west of the present highway, and again to the east. This was the path followed by the murderous band of French and Canadian Indians, under the leadership of Sainte Helene and Mantet, who on that dreadful night in February, 1690, surprised, sacked and burned the little village of Schenectady. And on their return journey to Canada, encumbered with their captives and plunder, was undoubtedly along the same path. Again, in 1683, the French and their painted allies, in number over six hundred came. This time with the avowed purpose of attacking Fort Orange. No doubt but that Schenectady was also included in their plans and they also planned to attack and destroy the group of Mohawk villages near the mouth of the Schoharie. However, coming to the intersection of the trails, in upper Glenville -- the meeting point of the trail which they had followed from the north, with the great east-west Algonkian trail leading to the Mohawks' country, by mistake, as the French commander reports, they took the latter. Evidently not realizing their mistake for some little time, they decided to first attack the Mohawk villages. This modified plan they carried out with great success, burning the Mohawk villages and taking many captives. This last, however, was greatly deplored by the French commander who, in his official report states that his Indian contingent had strict orders to take no captives -- to show no mercy to those in arms. Even when on the homeward march his Indians, to his unblushing disgust, so he writes, positively refused to slaughter their

Mohawk captives. The wild Canadian Indians were more merciful than their leaders, no doubt of the upper class of France, who it would seem had still much of the barbarism of the Middle Ages. During the attack on the first of the Mohawk villages "a young Dutchman," Jan Van Eps, whom they had taken prisoner to Canada, at the time of their raid of 1690, and whom for some reason or other they had now brought along, escaped. Knowing their plans, he hurried down the valley, and soon the inhabitants of Schenectady were apprised of the intended raid and word, of course, was at once sent over to Fort Orange. This fortunate escape and warning perhaps saved the inhabitants of Schenectady and Fort Orange from a repetition of the attack and carnage experienced in 1690. Indeed, the French commander of this second expedition, in his official report of the affair, as printed in the Colonial History of the State of New York, (Paris Documents) Vol. IX, ascribes the partial failure of the expedition to the escape of Van Eps.

It was by this same trail to the Sacandaga country, that in 1748 the Canadian Indians came and at Beukendaal ambushed and fought with a small band of Dutchmen and with the Connecticut soldiers who hurried from Schenectady to their relief. The site of this affray, in which nineteen men were killed and a number carried captive to Canada, is now marked by a handsome granite monument wherein is set a bronze tablet commemorating the battle and giving the names of the slain, as far as known. This was erected in 1929, by the Beukendaal Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

A third primitive trail crossed the extreme eastern part of Glenville, from north to south. This path coming down the western side of Ballston Lake, entered the town not far from the hamlet of High Mills, thence closely following the course of the Alplaus Kill to its junction with the Mohawk River. Here, at the mouth of the Alplaus there stood in pre-Mohawk times an Algonkian village. It was along this path that in August, 1767, Sir William Johnson, still suffering from an unhealed wound -- a wound received in the Battle of Lake George in 1755, was carried on a litter by his faithful and devoted Mohawks, to the High-rock spring. This noted spring of Saratoga was then in a dense wilderness. Johnson is said to have been the first white man to visit it.

MAIN TOWN ROADS OF TODAY ONCE INDIAN TRAILS

It was along the course of these old Indian paths that the first settlers of the highlands of Glenville opened roads through the primitive forest and chose sites for their new homes; sometimes choosing with care and wisdom, and again building on sites that for one reason or another were afterwards abandoned. Excepting the Mohawk Turnpike, the three principal highways of the town; the Scotia-Saratoga road; the Sacandaga Road, and the Glenville Road, all by their crooked course give plain evidence of their origin.

These narrow paths through the primitive forest; trodden for untold centuries by the moccasined redman, were in some places deeply worn. Though approximately direct in their course they were, however, full of minor crooks and curves; there swerving to one side or the other of some great moss-covered glacial boulder, or perchance to avoid a tangle of wind-fallen trees, and again skirting the margin of a low and swampy tract, or leaving the direct course, to gain an easy crossing of a deep gully with precipitous, rocky sides. Occasionally Dame Nature would kindly bridge these gullies for the Indian -- the huge trunk of a wind-fallen tree. A notable case of this kind appears to have been at the crossing of the small stream on the Glenville Road, just above its junction with the Sacandaga Road. Here undoubtedly was one of these tree bridges used by the redman, for on several of the early land maps of the region we find it named the "Fall Tree Kill."

These minor diversions from an air-line, found in the old Indian paths were, of course, somewhat avoided by the early white road-makers, who bridged the deeper gullies and through the swampy places sometimes made a passable though bumpy road by laying a flooring of poles and logs, placed transversely, a so-called "corduroy road." A certain low stretch on the North Road, as it is called, leading from the village of Glenville, to Galway, was in the early days thus floored with logs. When the powerful road machinery of today was first put in use, many of these logs were uprooted and brought to light, some of them yet undecayed.

SETTLEMENT OF THE UPLANDS

It was along the old Indian path leading north from Boukendaal -- the Sacandaga trail, that the first settlers of the uplands of the Fourth Ward pushed their way. No exact record of when this movement began seems now available; it probably was early in the decade between 1760 and 1770, perhaps a few years before 1760.

Prominent among the families who first treked their way into this wild region, the Hinterland of the Glenville hills, were the Condes; the Van Pattens; the Lighthalls; the Vroomans; the Groots, and the Cornells. A little later there followed the Dawson; the McLachlin and the Low families, immigrants from Scotland. Still later came the Schermerhorns; the Chamberlins; the Wessels; and Gillespies; the Van Nattens, and the Smith, Hayes, Bumstead and other families. A few other families came at an early date but soon removed to other parts.

Almost coeval with the opening of the Sacandaga Road, at first and for many years thereafter known as the Sacandaga Turnpike, was the cutting through woods of the present road to Glenville village and westward to the county line, which in its

course closely followed the great Algonkian trail previously mentioned in this paper. Along this latter road settled at an early date the Van Vleck brothers, Peter, Folkert and Harmanus, also the Francisco; Peek; Teller; Schoon; Rob; Brown; Knights; Vosburgh, and Fonda families, and the Smith brothers, Abner and Jacob who came from the vicinity of New Amsterdam, and cleared land and built their houses in the midst of a dense pine woods a short distance northeast of the present village of Glenville.

Some of these first families on the Glenville Road cleared land and built their homes before securing actual legal title to the lands chosen, so it appears: probably expecting to secure proper title after an official survey should be made. The exact date of the survey and laying out in lots of this part of the town is unknown. However, it seems certain that such a survey was made before the year 1796, for we find an indenture made that year, on a printed form conveying a tract of one hundred acres, with specific boundaries mentioned, to Harmanus Van Vleck from the trustees of the Town of Schenectady, County of Albany, and State of New York. The trustees at that time were Jellis A. Fonda; Francis Vedder; John Yates; Henry Yates jun., and Joseph Mynderse. The consideration for this tract acquired by Van Vleck was "252 pounds, 10 shillings, current money of the State of New York," subject, however, to an annual quit-rent. Van Vleck, it appears had been living on this land for some few years before he actually secured title thereto. In September, 1809, he sold this land to James Lovett of New York city, buying off the quit-claim in full on that year.

As early as 1796 Folkert and Peter Van Vleck, brothers of Harmanus, held title to a farm lying next east to that of their brother. A few years later this farm was sold to the Alsdorf brothers, Lawrence and Sylvester, who came to Glenville from Clifton Park. This property of the Alsdorfs embraced much of the land on which the village of Glenville stands, including the lot on which the Reformed Dutch Church was built, also the older part of the cemetery.

Shortly after the beginning of the Nineteenth Century there came into the region the Potter; Carroll; Ostrom; Mead; Scaman, and other families. Also the Hamlin family who came from Sharon, Connecticut. Nathaniel Calkins settled in Glenville about this period. He was a descendant of John Calkins of Sharon, Connecticut, who was born in 1634.

THE FIRST CHURCH IN GLENVILLE

The early settlers of the upper part of the Mohawk Turnpike were mainly of Dutch parentage, members or adherents of the old Dutch Church in Schenectady. Their attendance, however, at the services held in this church was necessarily infrequent. The roads at that period were rough and poor, and, too, there was the Mohawk River to be crossed, the first bridge not being completed

until 1808. In the winter time teams generally could be driven over the ice, but at other seasons the old ferry whose south landing was at the foot of the present North Ferry Street was the sole means of entering the town from the north. Therefore attendance at the old church in "Dorp," once or twice during the year, when the children born during the last twelve-month were duly baptized, was considered sufficient.

In view of the conditions described, it is not at all surprising that we find the Dutch of both sides of the river, at Vedders Ferry combining their forces and means to organize and build a church of their own.

Searching for data regarding this "Church at the Woestina," as it was locally called, the first church built in the town of Glenville, there were found but two or three persons in the entire town of today who had any knowledge of or were aware that there ever had been a church edifice at Hoffmans. However, due to the kindness and interest taken in the subject by the Rev. Alexander Hill, present pastor of the Rotterdam church, an actual record book, dated 1800, of the Hoffmans organization was brought to light among the papers and documents belonging to the First Reformed Church of Rotterdam, which church inherited not only the title and organization of the older church at Hoffmans but also its very edifice as well, its hewn timber work, pulpit and pews, even the wooden pillars supporting its gallery being moved over the river and incorporated in the structure as rebuilt.

No written record has yet been found of the actual date of the organization and building of this church at Hoffmans. It is said, however to have been prior to the year 1790. Hoffmans in the early days was known as Vedders Ferry; Harmanus Vedder establishing a ferry there about 1790. In 1835 the ferry rights were sold to John Hoffman and the name was then changed.

The official title of the church at Vedders Ferry, as given in its own consistorial records, under date July 19, 1798, was "The Second Reformed Dutch Church in the patent of Schenectady," the mother church in Schenectady of course being the First. Other entries of a slightly later date read "The Second Reformed Dutch Church of the Township of Schenectady." It was, of course, an offshoot from the parent church in Schenectady, from which it was promised and -- perhaps -- received financial assistance from time to time. By the Dutch of Schenectady the church at Vedders Ferry was known as the Church at the Woestina. At this period, and from the time of the first settlement of Schenectady, the territory on both sides of the Mohawk, but principally that on its north side was called the Woestina, sometimes in old documents spelled Woestyne. A Dutch word meaning wilderness.

A QUAIN T OLD RECORD BOOK

A manuscript book, previously mentioned, containing minutes of the consistory of this former church, record of baptism, etc., yet well-preserved, has a title-page quaintly penned, the handiwork of the Rev. Thomas Romeyn, as follows:

"The Woestina
CHURCH RECORDS
Began under the ministry of the Rev'd Thomas Romeyn
VOL. I.
Anno Domini, 1800"

In this interesting book, a thin leather-backed volume of about 200 pages, about 6½ x 8 inches, Dominze Romeyn has "transcribed," so he writes, records of previous meetings of the consistory, dating back to July 19, 1798. The members of the Consistory at that date were John Wemple; Martin Van Slyke; Harmanus Vedder and Christopher Peek. Vedder, who as before mentioned, operated the ferry, lived on the south side of the river, now Pattersonville. Christopher Peek was a surveyor, or at least practised that art.

The Church at the Woestina seems to have had no regularly installed minister until the year 1800, when a combined call was given to the Rev. Thomas Romeyn, to fill the pulpits of three Reformed Dutch churches. This call, as transcribed in the book quoted, was in part as follows:

"The Call, 1800,

To Thomas Romeyn, Candidate of the Gospel Ministry --
Grace, mercy and peace from God, our Father and Jesus
Christ, our Lord -- Whereas the Churches of Jesus Christ
at the Woestina in the City of Schenectady, and at
Ramsensbush and Duanesborough are at present destitute of
the stated preaching of the word and the regular administra-
tion of the ordinances and are desirous of obtaining the
means of grace, which God hath appointed for the salva-
tion of sinners thro' Jesus Christ, his son -- and where-
as the said churches are well satisfied of the piety,
gifts and ministerial qualifications of you, Thomas
Romeyn, and have good hope that your labours in the Gosple
will be attended with a blessing, therefore we the
Ministers, Elders & Deacons of the Churches before
mentioned being met have unanimously resolved to Call
and we hereby solemnly and in the fear of the Lord to
call you, the said Thomas Romeyn, to be our Pastor &
teacher. * * * * *

On November 3d of the same year, at a meeting of the
consistory, it was voted that the preaching should be "half
Low Dutch and English."

On June 15, 1801, the consistory leased a farm of 45 acres in the Fourth Ward, owned by the church, to one Abraham Van Natten for seven years. It is said that quit-rent on this very tract is still annually collected by the Rotterdam church.

Quit-rent, a survival on American soil of the fee-farm-rent of old England, was for many years claimed and exacted from the buyers of land in the township and afterward city of Schenectady. These rents were due to a board of trustees who sold tracts of land, issued deeds therefor and collected quit-rent -- when they could. It is a matter of history that no one seemed to know by what authority these trustees acted, nor did it seem that they were responsible to any one for the funds in their care. Year after year for well-nigh a century there was continued litigation over matters connected with the quit-rents and it is said that not one of these suits was ever determined. In recent days these quit claims have been pronounced to be of doubtful legal collection; vague and shadowy. Nevertheless certain landholders of the county are still making such annual payments, and occasionally a quit claim will be bought off in full; this in order to effect a sale of land, giving clear title thereto.

In 1805 we find the consistory of the Woestina church deliberating on a "verbal request," brought before them on behalf of the "inhabitants of Poopendall." Poopendall was a term often used by the Dutch of the valley, for Beukendael (Beechdale). It is occasionally found thus in documents. We are not enlightened as to the tenor of this request made of the consistory, but at any rate it was not received with favor.

The church building at Vedder's Ferry stood on the narrow level tract crowning the first grade of the road leading from the Mohawk Turnpike to the village of Glenville, or just below the tracks of the F.J. & G. Electric railroad, and but a little distance east of the present highway. A parsonage was also built not far from the church, on the same seven-acre plot. This, however, seems never to have been occupied by any of the pastors filling the pulpit of the church, for the records show that it was occupied by a tenant almost from the time of its building, or for the entire life of the church at Vedder's Ferry and even after the removal of the church edifice to the south side of the river. The tenant living in the parsonage, the sole one mentioned, was Daniel Van Derhyden who, paying a nominal cash rental, was to keep the building clean and in good order, the Consistory reserving the exclusive use of an upper room wherein to hold their meetings. The agreement between the Consistory and VanDerhyden stipulated that whenever this upper room was required and heat was essential VanDerhyden was to make fire, "himself finding the wood."

Although there is a gap of about eight years in the proceedings of the consistory as chronicled in the old "Record Book" of the Church at the Woestina, yet the records of baptisms begun in 1800, seem full and continuous. Among the latter is one notable entry which records the baptism on the Fifteenth of January, 1804, of Tom, born Oct., 1801, and of Yate, born Aug., 1803. These were children of "Yate a blackman", and "Mary a black woman." Baptized after an examination into their views of desiring baptism and with a written solicitation from their masters, John S. Glen & Philip Vedder." Other curious records exist concerning this Yate.

ERRATA

On page 83 of the Contributions there appears a displacement of paragraphs; the second, third, and fourth paragraphs belong, and should have been placed on page 85, immediately following the fourth line from the top of the page.

Will holders of the Contributions kindly note and insert this slip facing page 85.

P. M. V. E.

Answering these questions, the Consistory expressed the opinion that such a church should have its individual organization. In regard to the question of financial assistance they replied that they were not at that time ready or prepared to give an answer.

The representatives from the Fourth Ward evidently not deriving much satisfaction or encouragement from this interview, we hear no more about the proposed church until the following year, 1811, when by the suggestion of the Reverend Cornelius Bogardus, pastor of the Schenectady church, the project seems to have revived and taken definite form. Fortunately for posterity the new organization had among their number a man who was both able and willing to prepare a sketch of the founding of the new church. This was Whipel Lovett, one of a family of New England stock, who came to Glenville in the early years of that century.

REMOVAL OF THE CHURCH

The record shows that a meeting of the Consistory was held in May, 1806 at the house of John Baptist Van Eps. This was the old Van Eps place originally given to the family by Karel Haenson Toll in 1721. Then follows a gap in the entries until 1814 when on March 10th the Consistory met at the house of Simon Vedder. This meeting evidently was held at the old

the distance from the parent church in Schenectady; the poor roads -- at times almost impassable, finally brought about the organization and building of a church in the upper part of the fourth ward, the church edifice being built in 1812-1813. Lovett's interesting account as preserved in an early record book of the church is here given in part:

"An historical sketch of the First Reformed Dutch Church of the fourth ward of the City of Schenectady New York had its commencement as follows the Rev'd Cornelius Bogardus being Pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church of the City of Schenectady and on his family Visitations to the following Persons in the fall of 1811 being members of his Church to wit Catalina Conde wife of Adam Conde Nancy Truax wife of Simon Groot Simon Van Patten & wife George Mead & Wife C. S. Conde & wife & others of the 4th ward of the City of Schenectady Abraham Truax & wife John Mead & wife Gertrude Mead wife of Doctor Mead of the town of Charlton and after the Rev'd Mr. Bogardus had Performed the Pastorial Visits he advised the inhabitants of the west part of the 4th ward and all who felt friendly to the enterprise to try and build a house for Public worship in the west part of said ward now town of Glenville as the above named members lived from Eight to twelve miles from the City of Schenectady and agreed to Preach a sermon for the occasion & in the commencement of the year 1812 he Preached at the house of Sylvester Alsdorf now Dr. E. A. Young * * * * *

* * * * * At meeting of a respectable number of the Inhabitants of the west part of the 4th ward of the City of Schenectady at the dwelling house of Charles Geer on Monday the 10 Day of February 1812 for the purpose of agreeing to the Building a house for Public worship in the most convenient place in Said west part of Said ward for the accomodation of Said inhabitants & Jacob A. Vrooman Esq was chosen Moderator & Whipel Lovett secretary & it was unanamously Voted by S'd inhabitants to build a house for Public worship by subscription also Voted to the appointment of a committee to fix on a cite where the house should stande in the west part of Said ward Whipel Lovett C. S. Conde Sylveser Alsdorf Abijah Rowley Restcum Potter Esq Benjamin Chamberlin 2nd ware nominated & Voted as their committee for the above Purpose of fixing on the cite and the meting was adjourned till thursday 14th day of February for the purpose of receiving the report of S'd Committ and transact such other Business as should be nessary

Whipel Lovett secretary"

It is noteworthy that the first person name in Lovett's account of the pastoral visits made by Dominze Bogardus in the fourth ward in 1811, was Catalina Conde, wife of Adam Conde. She was the daughter of Pieter Truax, 1725-1797, and was born about the middle of the eighteenth century. Her baptism is recorded as taking place on April 5th, 1752. The family was directly descended from Philip Du Trieux. (Truy, Truax), born

1585, a Walloon of no little note, who came to New Amsterdam during Minuit's administration. Here, in 1638, he was appointed court messenger. Two years later he received a patent for land in Smits Valley. By the Dutch of the older generations the name of this family was pronounced Tru-au.

Catalina Conde, familiarly known to the surrounding community as "Moonie Conde," was noted for her piety and devotion to the church of her fathers. No personal sacrifice was too great for her when the object was the welfare of her beloved church. Her character and achievements were justly extolled in an obituary written by the Rev. William Ingalls, then pastor of the Glenville church, shortly after her death, which occurred on the Fifteenth of April, 1848. It has been said that the building and organization of the Glenville church, 1812--13--14, was due in no small degree to her efforts to that end. A silver communion service, now in the care of the Schenectady County Historical Society, also a pulpit Bible, gifts from her, were used for many years. In this connection it will be noted that her husband, Adam, was one of the four who in 1810 came before the Consistory of the Schenectady church with certain questions relating to the establishment of a church in the fourth ward. The home of Adam and Catalina Conde was about eight miles north of Schenectady, and one-fourth mile east of the Sacandaga Road, near the north bank of the Conde Creek. The site is now owned by William W. Fisher.

The next meeting of those interested in the plans for a church was held, as scheduled, on the Fourteenth of February, 1812 when the committee appointed at the previous meeting made their report, recommending as a site for the new church, a very desirable plot offered as a gift by Lawrence and Sylvester Alsdorf. In the words of the deed afterwards granted by the Alsdorf brothers:-

"In the consideration of the use and benefits of the said church and for the support of the Gospel" * * * * * "we grant said parcel of land to the elders and deacons of the First Reformed (Low) Dutch church of the fourth ward of Schenectady, N.Y."

Other committees were appointed; one to solicit subscriptions and another to visit neighboring churches in order to gain ideas as to the style and size of the proposed edifice, as well as an estimate of its probable cost. This last committee chosen consisted of Benjamin Chamberlin 2nd; David Hubbell, and Simon I. Van Patten.

The next meeting of the citizens interested was held Feb. 21st at the home of Philip Wager. Wager lived at the intersection of the roads, just one mile west of the village of Glenville. Receiving and deliberating on the report of

Chamberlin, Hubbell, and Van Patten, it was decided that the new edifice should be "50 feet by 40 on the ground with a stepel to the same."

Soon after this meeting, the contract for the building was given to Simon I. Van Patten who agreed to do the necessary work for the sum of \$2,500.00; those interested in the enterprise, to furnish stone and place the foundation; also to furnish and deliver all timber required for the frame-work. All this was accordingly done and in the manner related below, again quoting from Lovett's interesting account:

"After the Bill of timber was made out by the said Van Patten it was divided in six equal Parts and each member of the Committee took his separate Bill & invited his Neighbours to turn out on a certain day for the above Purpose and the peopel was in the days of Neemiah all turned out for they had a minde for the work but thear were none to disturbe them as in the days of the Prophet. some cut down, others scored, others hewed and others with teams to draw the timber to its place and others Provided the refreshment for the workmen and their dinners were generly eaten on hewen stick of timber in the Commons of the City of Schenectady and the Ladeys of the sociaty did their part with a willing hart in furnishing good an substantial food & the giving of stone drawing & mason work was done in like manner but done princpaly by the Peopel of the west end of the sociaty and after the above meterial ware delivered on the ground and the foundation Laid the Building was comenced in the spring of 1812."

Regarding the "Commons" spoken of by Lovett, where the timber for the church was cut, a word of explanation may not be amiss: At that period practically all of the hill land of the fourth ward was heavily wooded, yet undivided and unsold. On these lands, known as the "Commons," each and every freeholder of the ward had the right to cut and remove such firewood and timber as he might need for his own use, also to pasture his stock thereon. This condition existed until after the area, in 1820, was set apart as a separate town, when lines were run dividing the Commons into strips, each alternate strip being retained by Glenville, the other going to Schenectady. The strips, which ran from north to south, were known as "Great Lots," and were subdivided into smaller parcels of about twenty acres each, these being sold by auction.

Thus it will be seen that the timber cut for the new church cost nothing but the labor of cutting and hauling.

The stone used in the foundation, a dolomitic limestone, was procured from some one of the quarries or from a natural

outcrop of the great uplift of that rock crossing Glenville obliquely in its extreme west part. It is a stone of excellent quality, quarried with little labor, readily separating in right-angled blocks of convenient size to handle. This material, like the timber from the Commons was doubtless had with no expense to the church, and like the timber, was hauled in place by bee-work, so-called. Van Patten and his men framed and pinned together the massive timbers at the church site. Meals were there served to his men, cooked in a temporary shack by one of his older daughters. His younger girls have often told of carrying food to the church site from their home on the Sacandaga Turnpike, three miles to the east. It is said that the joists and smaller timbers used in the structure were sawn by Van Patten in a mill that he then operated. This sawmill stood on the Conde Creek, on land of his father-in-law, Adam Conde, and but a little way from Conde's house.

The framing completed, then came the day of the raising-bee, when the men and boys from miles around came to raise the heavy "bents" to a vertical position; to slip in the girts and the braces as with many a loud "Heave! ho!" the bents slowly went up, and finally to cap the posts with the long plates.

Incidentally, the bill for the liquid refreshments used that day--a goodly supply for the price paid--was about twenty dollars. This the church paid as the bill, yet preserved, shows.

THE CHURCH COMPLETED; VAN PATTEN COMMENDED

Again quoting from Lovett's account:

"At a meeting held on the 10th Day of March 1813 for the purpose of hearing the report of the Committee appointed by the Building Committee to examin the accounts of said Building Committee and also the Church edifice and their report was as follows that they ware fuly satisfied with the statements of S'd trustees as it respected receipts & disbursements and the faithfulness in discharging the trust reposed in them and further report that we are fuly satisfied with the house as to the workmanship & meterials as done by Simon I. Van Patten being faithfuly in all its Parts and feel disposed as your comitee to Complement Mr. Van Patten with a Vote of thanks for his faithfulness in the discharge of his contract all which we humbly report

Whipel Lovett --
 Elijah Knap -- Committee
 Adam J. Vrooman --

At a meeting of the inhabitants held at the New Church Edifice the above report was unanimously Received & ordered to be recorded

Whipel Lovett Secretary"

On September of the same year a meeting was held at the new church edifice, at which the following persons were chosen and elected as the first consistory, to wit:- Lawrence Alsdorf and Abraham Truax elders and Simon I. Van Patten and George Mead, deacons. At the same meeting it was decided that the church should be known as the First Reformed Dutch Church of the Fourth Ward of the city and county of Schenectady. Then, at a meeting held on the twenty-third day of the following February, after a sermon in the new church by the Rev. Thomas Romeyn as President P.T. of the Classis of Albany, the Consistory as elected the preceeding fall were duly ordained. Simon Van Patten, however, being absent.

SEAL OF THE NEW CHURCH

At a meeting of the Consistory, Sept. 10, 1814, it was resolved unanimously that the seal of the Church should be the "stamp of a ten cent piece made of silver and of the currency of the united states."

We find no record of a settled pastor in the new church until September 8th, 1818 when the Rev. Peter Van Zandt was ordained and installed. Previous to that date the church was under the care of the pastors of the nearby Reformed churches.

On December 1st, 1820 the consistory had to their credit the sum of \$3,774.54, loaned by them on bond and mortgage. This fund was given them by the corporation of the city of Schenectady, proceeds of the sale of lands owned by the city. For this sum the church was held accountable should any of the principal be used. However, despite this stipulation, it is said that in later years the sum was completely used in remodeling the church edifice.

CONSISTORY FACES A PROBLEM

Unlike the older church at Vedder's Ferry the early books of the Glenville church record no baptism of slaves. While in New York State slavery had not been abolished at the beginning of the century, indeed not until 1828, yet none of the adherents or members of the new church, so far as known, were slave-owners, with the possible exception of one or two Dutch families living at the river, who, after the removal of their church to Rotterdam, transferred their membership or attendance to the Glenville church. The few slaves held by these families were slaves in name only; humored and privileged servants who had grown up with the children of the household.

The church at Glenville, however, had troubles of its own with its colored members, particularly with one old mammy, born a slave, who balked on sitting in the section of the church set apart for people of color--a certain corner of the gallery. Time and again this question confronted the Consistory, as shown by their records, and as often was Polly admonished of her proper place in the Sanctuary. Following these interviews, for a few Sundays she would comply, mounting the stairs leading to the gallery, but soon thereafter she would again be found comfortably seated in the main part of the church: then the trouble would start again. This went on for several years, as the records show; and the problem before the Consistory seems never to have been solved.

A SALE OF PEWS

For its historic value there is here appended a complete list of the purchasers of pews at the first sale of the kind held in the church, July 16th, 1814:

No.					
1	sold to	Henry Hogan	for	101	Dollars
2	"	Restcome Potter	"	103	"
3	"	John Conde & father	"	120	"
4	"	Simon I Van Patten & others	"	100	"
5	"	James Gillespie Jun.	"	93	"
6	"	Cornelius S. Conde	"	62	"
7	"	Hendrick Staley	"	50	"
8	"	Benjamin Chamberlin	"	46	"
9	"	Wessel H. Wessels	"	45	"
10	"	Jacob G. Fonds	"	107	"
11	"	John Teller	"	100	"
12	"	Whipel & Benjamin Lovett	"	120	"
13	"	Simon Wemple	"	104	"
14	"	Sylvester Alsdorf	"	90	"
15	"	Daniel DeGraff	"	16	"
16	"	Jacob Vrooman	"	26	"
17	"	Isaac Vosburgh & others	"	33	"
18	"	John Mead	"	40	"
19	"	Edward Norton	"	32	"
20	"	Aaron Carroll	"	37	"
21	"	Thomas Hamlin	"	35	"
22	"	John Van Wormer	"	30	"
23	"	Elijah Knapp	"	30	"
24	"	Alexander Brown	"	24	"
25	"	Restcome Potter	"	22	"
26					
27	"	John Van Eps (hired by the year)			
28	"	Michael Smith	"	35	"
29	"	Henry Fullerton	"	26	"
30	"	Philip Wager	"	30	"

SITE OF
M. E. CHURCH ERECTED 1823.
FIRST PASTOR REV. ROSWELL
KELLY. 1842 ORGANIZATION
MOVED TO GLENVILLE AND A
NEW BRICK CHURCH BUILT



31	!	!	sold to Henry Ohlen	for 30 dollars
32	!	!	Isaac Groot	! 40 !
33	!	!	John P. Green	! 41 !
34	!	!	John L. Shelley	! 42 !
35	!	!	Mindert Knights	! 43 !
36	!	!	David Knapp & Shurtlif	! 47 !

Entries of a slightly later date record as follows:

Aug. 23, 1823 - "John Van Eps took Pew No. 27 at \$2 a year.

Aug. 23, 1823 - "Mr. Granger took one third Pew No. 10
at \$2.14 a year.

July 24, 1824 - "James A. Van Atten took Seat No. 26
at \$2.40 a year.

Sep. 24, 1824 - "Let Pew No. 37 Levinus Lansing & Isaac
Hogan at \$2.50 a year."

Bringing to a close these random sketches of the early settlers of Glenville and the story of their first churches, it may be added that for the historian with unlimited time and patience there still exists stores of interesting and valuable data, preserved in files of musty letters and documents; in wills, deeds, land agreements, record books of town, city and church. Gleaning from these, volumes could be written respecting the family-life, occupation, career, and the civil and military service of the hardy and courageous Dutch, Scotch, and English pioneers of our world-famed Mohawk Valley.

----- Percy M. Van Epps

