

HISTORICAL TABLETS
AND MARKERS
OF
GLENVILLE, N. Y.
by
Percy M. Van Epps
(PART ONE)

THE NINTH REPORT
of the
TOWN HISTORIAN

"And Joshua set up twelve stones in
the midst of Jordan, in the place where
the feet of the priests which bear the
ark of the covenant stands: and they
are there unto this day."

--Joshua 4:7

SUBMITTED TO THE TOWN BOARD
of
GLENVILLE, SCHENECTADY COUNTY
NEW YORK

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FOREWORD

This paper was planned to list all of the historical markers standing in the town of Glenville, Schenectady County, New York, giving short sketches of the events and places commemorated thereon. However, on account of the great wealth of material found, and chosen as essential for a clear and connected story of the events commemorated and of their times, it has been found necessary to divide the work in two parts, giving in this, PART ONE, the story of the markers standing on the Mohawk Turnpike and on the Sacandaga Road, besides one or two others.

In PART TWO, when prepared and published it is planned to give the story of the markers standing in the village of Scotia and of those standing in other parts of the town, thus completing the series.

P. M. V. E.

Dec., 1935

NEW YORK

AN EARLY HOTEL
KNOWN AS "UPPER NICKEY'S".
BUILT AND KEPT BY NICHOLAS
VAN PATTEN IN 18TH CENTURY.
FIRST GLENNVILLE TOWN
MEETING HELD HERE IN 1821

STATE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT 1935

H. N. VAN PATTEN.

In this paper, the ninth of a series begun in 1927, the markers and historical tablets placed in recent years throughout the town of Glenville will be listed, and the story of what they stand for will be told in more detail than that given by the scanty and necessarily limited wording found thereon.

Glenville in common with many of the towns of the Mohawk Valley has a wealth of historic sites and shrines, many dating well-back in Colonial times and still earlier periods. Some of these are now suitably marked but there are still others that also should be marked.

Among the outstanding events in the town was the great fight between the Mohawk Indians and an army of some seven hundred allied Algonkian warriors from Massachusetts Bay, which took place in August, 1669, in the vale of the brook Chaughtanoonda at the Kinaquariones, and the Battle of the Beukendaal, in 1748, between the Colonists and a band of Canadian Indians. These, as well as many other sites, early churches, pioneer homes and notable natural features, are now marked with tablets bearing suitable inscriptions; markers made and placed by the State Education Department, and one, the handsome and appropriate bronze tablet set in granite at the Beukendaal, erected by Beukendaal Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Schenectady, in 1929.

In giving the story of Glenville's historical markers no chronological order will be followed, either of the events commemorated or of the erection of the tablets, but rather they will be listed and described mainly by the roads on which they stand, for instance: those on the Mohawk Turnpike will be listed in the order one would meet them in going westward from Scotia. A similar plan will be followed for those found on the Sacandaga Road and on other highways of the town. A certain few, remote from the main highways, will be listed singly.

Percy M. Van Epps

Glenville, N.Y.
December, 1935

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THE MOUND BUILDERS

Following the Mohawk Turnpike westward from Scotia we find, about three miles from that village, standing on the north side of the highway, a marker indicating the site of an ancient burial place of the Red Man, bearing this inscription:

PRE-COLUMBIAN
CEMETERY
ONE-HALF MILE NORTH IS A
BURIAL PLACE OF THE MOUND
BUILDERS, ONCE OCCUPANTS
OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY

The burials were on a knoll, or ridge of gravel of post-glacial time, about one-half mile north from the highway. Many graves were here disclosed when in 1874 the New York Central railroad laid a spur track to the ridge, taking thence great quantities of material for ballast and track fills. It is well-nigh certain that many, perhaps the greater part of the graves from this place, with their contents were ruthlessly dumped on flat cars by the big steam shovel used and hauled away before the Clute family, owners of the land, became aware of the disclosures daily being made. However, even at this late hour the Clute brothers secured a number of fine and interesting implements, weapons and ornaments, all associated with the burials uncovered.

The relics recovered from this place included celts, or axes, fashioned from native copper; copper beads; ornamented stone tubes, supposed to have been part of the equipment of Indian medicine-men or conjurers; weapons and various ornaments. These all were of a type and workmanship quite unlike the implements and weapons made and used by the various Algonkian nations that occupied this region for many centuries. They were, however, identical both in type and material with objects made and used by the mound-building nations of the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi. Also without question they could be correlated with other finds of similar character made at Hoffmans in this town; at Palatine Bridge; at Athens on the Hudson, and in other parts of the region. Therefore it is safe to assume that at some time during the known occupancy of the region by various Algonkian nations, as disclosed to the archeologist by a study of village sites and relics, or possibly in the interim between certain waves of such occupation, immigrants from the mound-building regions of the central states made their way through western New York, into and entirely through our Mohawk Valley, thence pushing both up and down the Hudson, northward as far as Lake George and the upper Champlain valley, and to the south reaching Coxsackie and Athens. Nevertheless, from all disclosures thus far made, it seems that the sojourn of the mound-building folk in eastern New York was relatively short. When they vanished, or why, we do not know.

TINKER HILL
SWART'S BLOCK-HOUSE

During the War of the Revolution block-houses or forts, as they were often called, were built or adapted from existing structures at various strategic points throughout the Mohawk Valley and elsewhere; places of refuge for the families in their vicinity, where they might resort at an alarm -- sometimes the firing of a cannon, announcing the approach of a raiding party of Tories and Indians. Block-houses were generally built of logs and with an overhanging second story. Thus built in order that its defenders might readily thwart any attempt at setting fire to the structure, the outer sides of the floor of the overhanging part being pierced for rifle fire. An interesting and accurate reproduction of a block-house of the Colonial period can be seen on the Saratoga Battlefield, at the headquarters of the American Army. Block-houses were sometimes as an additional protection surrounded with a line of palisades, often inclosing other buildings, thus giving room for the cattle and horses of the settlers. The block-house at Tinker Hill stood in such an inclosure. Also it had a small cannon, mounted at a porthole; possibly intended for more than alarms, for, some years ago, on the river flats, not far to the east of Tinker Hill, there was unearthed a small store of rusty cannon balls.

The marker placed by the State Education Department, in 1935, commemorating Swart's Block-House, stands on the south side of the Mohawk Turnpike, a little way east of the school at Rectors, and bears the following inscription:

TINKER HILL
SITE OF BLOCK-HOUSE NEAR
RIVER BANK, BUILT BY CAPT.
TEUNIS SWART. STOCKADED
AND ARMED WITH FIELD PIECE
IN WAR OF REVOLUTION

Teunis Swart, probably born in Schoharie, but of an old Schenectady family, with his father, Adam, and his brother Nicholas removed from Schoharie some little time before the Revolution, securing land on the flats of the Mohawk River, about four miles west of Schenectady, at a place known to the Dutch as "Tincker Hooghten" (Tinker Hill). Why it had this name is now unknown. There seems no record of a tinker having lived at this place, neither is there a hill or elevation anywhere near.

Swart's Fort, as it became known in the region, was merely his substantial brick house, built after his removal from Schoharie, with the addition of the surrounding barrier of palisades and the small cannon "mounted at a porthole." Possibly its walls were pierced in places for rifle fire and its windows heavily

shuttered and likewise pierced. Prudent precautions these, though happily none of the many raiding parties led by Johnson, Brant, and Butler, that terrorized Schoharie, Cherry Valley and the middle Mohawk region, ever ventured as far down the valley as Tinker Hill. Had this happened, however, no doubt but they would have met with a warm reception from Swart and his garrison, for during the closing years of the war, when the raids became more frequent, Captain John Van Patten's 3d Company of Albany County Militia was stationed at Tinker Hill at different times.

Swart, from June of 1778, at least, served as lieutenant of Captain Van Patten's company. He also served as a lieutenant of the Levies. Stone, in his account of the Gonzales Tragedy, speaks of Swart as a captain. From the year 1778 to the close of the war Lieutenant Swart took part in all the principal expeditions up the Mohawk Valley. As Lieutenant of Van Patten's company he was with the troops under Col. Willet in the pursuit of the defeated British and Indians after the Battle of Johnstown, and he commanded the advance guard present when the ignoble Butler, overtaken, was killed and scalped by Campaan the Oneida. Swart is mentioned in the military records as "a brave, active, vigilant and much-beloved officer, ready on all occasions to turn out with his men."

Teunis Swart, in 1667, married Margarita, daughter of Myndert Myndertse, a blacksmith of Schenectady. He had six children; Adam, Myndert, Jacob, Johannes, Arent, and Barent. Teunis was the fifth in line of descent from Teunis Cornelise Swart, progenitor of the families of that name now living in Glenville and the adjacent region. Teunis Cornelise was one of the original proprietors of Schenectady, receiving allotment number 10 on the "Groote Vlachte" lying just west of the village, near the Poentie's Kill. He died about 1686.

The subsequent career of the gun once mounted in Swart's block-house is a diverting story by itself; how for years it was a friendly bone of contention between different groups of mischievous and fun-loving boys -- and men; not only in Glenville but also in the neighboring villages of Charlton. First held for a time by one village group and then by another; captured and hidden -- once under water in the Dawson millpond -- only to have its hiding-place ferreted out by a rival group, who often announced their triumph by firing the old piece. Finally this old stump of a gun -- its muzzle had been blown off years before -- sounded its last report; a true alarm this time, for not only did it alarm and rouse the villagers of Glenville, but also nearly wrecked their village. Given a heavy charge of powder and solidly tamped the whole length of its bore, it burst with a thunderous report, sending jagged pieces of metal through the walls of more than one house and raining fragments of cast iron on the roofs of others. A scar on a large elm tree yet standing bears witness of this bombardment.

THE VERF KILL
TEQUATSERA

The bottom, or flat lands of the Mohawk, on both sides of the river, west of Schenectady, were, in the early days of the Dutch occupation, described and parceled as numbered flats, the lines of division between these sometimes a stream or other prominent natural feature. Thus in the old Dutch deeds we find the dividing line between the Sixth and the Seventh Flats was the Droyberg Kill, or Tequatsera. This little stream, a raging torrent in the spring time, has also borne other names. In certain documents it is mentioned as the "Color Creek," but today on the topographic sheets of the United States Geological Survey it is the "Verf Kill," and is thus named on the marker erected this year by the Education Department of our State:

VERF KILL
KNOWN TO THE INDIANS AS
TEQUATSERA (PLACE OF THE
WOODEN SPOON) TO THE DUTCH
AS THE DROYBERG KILL,
DIVIDING 6TH AND 7TH FLATS

The Verf Kill rises quite near the summit level of the Glenville hills, an elevation of nearly 1100 feet above sea level, and flowing down the steep slopes it joins the Mohawk two miles east of Hoffmans. It is a short and inconstant stream, in the last mile of its course falling nearly 700 feet, in the spring time and after heavy rains a raging torrent. In the summer, however, it sometimes goes nearly dry. Through the long ages of its life it has cut and deepened its channel in the slates and shales of the hill till in places it races through deep and narrow ravines, each with its tiny waterfall. Some of these gorges, overshadowed with dark hemlocks, have considerable scenic beauty.

The Indian name of the Verf Kill, as we find it in certain old deeds, was "Taquaatera," or "Tequatsera," as usually spelled. This is said to mean the "Place of the Wooden Spoon." As there seems to be nothing about the stream or its course to suggest such a name, it may have been thus named following some incident or other that happened along its course; such capricious bestowal of names was common among the Indians. Indeed, the pioneers of our Far West were but little behind them in this. Witness: Hat Creek; Lightning Flat; Ten Sleep, and Wild Cat, all post-office towns in Wyoming.

"Droyberg," the name as given by the Dutch to the Verf Kill, seems somewhat of a puzzle to the philologist. Possibly it may be a misspelling for "droogberg," dry hill, or mount, referring to the dry hill from which the stream flows. When English first began to be spoken in this region the stream was known for a time as "Color Creek." Thus called from the color given its

flow after passing a spring near the Mohawk Turnpike, holding ochre in solution. Incidentally, this spring or the bank from which it issues was resorted to by the Indians for paint. The spring is indicated and named on Fagin's map of Schenectady County, printed in 1856.

At the mouth of the Verf Kill the Mohawks had a small fishing camp, one of the few, if indeed not the only place in the valley, east of Fort Hunter, showing any occupation by this nation. Here, extending westward is a small river flat whose boundary lines form a triangle. From its shape and also from the unusual number of arrowheads of triangular outline found in this area, the spot has become known to the local collectors of Indian relics as the "Triangular Flat." Near a famous flowing spring at the west end of this area there has been found traces of an Algonkian living-place of an archaic period.

The Sixth Flat, lying next east to the Verf Kill, when settled was owned and occupied by descendants of Tounis Cornelise Swart, one of the original proprietors of Schenectady.

The entire Seventh Flat was acquired, about the year 1700, from Carel Hanse, Toll, who in 1720 deeded its western half to his son-in-law, Johannes Van Eps ("Van Epen," as the deed is said to read). Its eastern half he sold or willed to another son-in-law, Peter (Pierre) Cornu, a carpenter, born in France. Cornu's holdings on the Seventh Flat were afterwards acquired by the Vedder family, who occupied this tract for over a century. Albert Vedder kept a hotel in the rambling old brick house next west of the kill, now the home of John Wurz. He also owned a sawmill which stood on the kill, some little distance north of the turnpike, probably not far from the home of Benjamin F. Fisher. All traces of its dam seems to have been swept away during one of the two disastrous cloud-bursts that deluged the Glenville hills; the first in 1885 and another some years after.

Vedder family tradition preserves a story telling of a tragic incident that happened in this sawmill. Vedder, so it is related, had a man who operated his mill, possibly a slave; the Vedder family are listed in the Federal Census of 1790 as owning three slaves. Conforming to an old-time custom this man often ran the mill till quite late in the evening, for it was a common belief among mill owners of that period that a certain "head," or volume of water would deliver more power at the wheel, after dark, than the same volume would in daylight. Based on this belief, fact or fancy, many sawmills of that period were thus operated after sunset, among them Vedder's on the Verf Kill. As Vedder's sawyer, alone in the mill at a late hour, was busy by the dim light of his tin lantern hanging from a beam overhead, rolling logs in position before the old-fashioned up-and-down saw, he was startled by an apparition -- a white, ghostly figure approaching him. Whether frightened or not, is not recorded, but at any rate he quickly raised the crowbar in his hand, bringing it down heavily on the head of the sheeted figure before him,

only to find that the ghost he had floored was a person of the neighborhood who had thus mischievously and foolishly tried to frighten him. The rash joker, so it is related, died not long after, in consequence of the blow received in the mill.

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CEMENT WORKS  
OF  
VAN EPS & SONS

The last historical marker standing on the Mohawk Turnpike, in Glenville, is on the west bank of the Chaughtanoonda, the little stream that, flowing through the Wolf Hollow and along the eastern base of the Kinaquariones, joins the Mohawk but a few hundred feet from the western boundary of both our town and county. The marker stands on the exact spot where a century ago stood the cement mill of John Van Eps & Sons; an industry then unique in this part of our state and one successfully carried on for over a score of years. The tablet bears this inscription:

CEMENT MILL  
HERE, IN 1825 - 1845, STOOD  
THE KILN AND MILL OF JOHN  
VAN EPS & SONS, MAKING THE  
FIRST HYDRAULIC CEMENT IN  
THIS PART OF THE STATE

John Van Eps, born in 1764, innkeeper and founder of the cement works at the Kinaquariones, was the sixth in line of direct descent from Jan Van Eps (Van Epen) a magistrate of old Schenectady and one of those slain in the massacre of 1690. On the fifth of February, 1795, John married Jannetje, daughter of Harmanus Van Vleck and at once established his home on the Mohawk Turnpike, just west of the rocky eminence of the Kinaquariones. Here for many years he kept a well-known Mohawk Valley inn where first and last many persons of no little note were entertained. Among these was Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, with his body-guard including the famous old-time fifer, Tiffany, who stopped here over night in the fall of 1813 on his triumphant journey eastward after the victory on Lake Erie. For years following this visit of Perry, a notch cut in a door-casing of the inn, marking his unusual height, was proudly pointed out. Here there were born to John and Jannetje thirteen children, ten sons and three daughters, all of whom lived to a good old age.

Two of the sons of John Van Eps, in early manhood, exploring the limestone outcrops and dolomite ledges of the Kinaquariones, but a stone's throw from their father's house, came to the conclusion that here was rock suitable for making hydraulic cement, or

water-lime as it was called in those days. After a study of the process involved in its manufacture, and consultation, their father becoming interested, a quarry site was selected and opened, a kiln built for burning the quarried material and a mill erected for grinding the burnt rock as it came from the kiln. The brook was dammed to furnish power to drive the millstones, but it was then as it is today a rather unconstant stream, therefore the founders of the enterprise found that it was feasible to divert and add to its volume the water of another and somewhat larger stream flowing down the slopes of the hills, a little to the eastward. Owning the lands between the streams, a dam was thrown across this second stream at its nearest point to the Chaughtanoonda and its water led to the latter by means of a ditch or shallow canal. Thereupon the question of power was solved.

The cement made at this little plant was of excellent quality, as the chimney-work and foundation walls of many houses in this vicinity show. In old-time houses undergoing repairs or alterations it has been found that in chimneys laid with this cement their bricks could not be separated without actually splitting them. When, sometime between 1830 and 1834, it was thought necessary to build four additional piers to support the famous old Mohawk bridge between Glenville and Schenectady, that masterpiece of wooden bridge construction, a considerable amount if indeed not all of the cement used was from this Glenville kiln and mill; and it is a matter of record that when in later years certain changes were made to these added piers, it was found that the stones could be separated only by drilling and the use of blasting powder.

Once established and in full operation, a market was found in New York City for the product of this Glenville cement works and for a time considerable quantities of the barreled cement was shipped to that place. In 1836 the cement was sold at the mill for four shillings the bushel. Barreled for shipment, it sold for about two dollars per barrel plus freightage. In the "Geology of the Third District of New York," it is stated that the Van Eps cement works were still in operation in 1842. Not long after this date, however, the establishment of large cement plants in the vicinity of Syracuse, following the enlargement of the Erie Canal, and the cheap transportation then offered, brought an end to this unique enterprise in Glenville.

John Van Eps of the old inn and the cement enterprise, took part when but a mere lad in the famous battle in the defile at Oriskany, August sixth, 1777. For some weeks before this encounter, the people of the Mohawk Valley had been in a state of alarm and apprehension. Colonel Barry St. Leger with an army of 1400, British regulars, Hessians, Tories, Canadians and Indians had left Oswego and were making their way towards Fort Stanwix, then garrisoned with 750 Continental soldiers under Colonel Peter Gansevoort. Its fall was expected and dreaded, for then there

would be but little or no barrier to St. Leger's planned advance on Albany. Burgoyne was already on his way from the north; Clinton expected to come from the south, and with St. Leger from the west -- a triangular investment of Albany, which had it succeeded as planned by the war lords would have gone far to establish British control of the rebellious colonies. The part assigned to St. Leger in this triangular advance was considered the most important part of the scheme, so authorities have said.

People throughout the entire Mohawk Valley were packing up their most treasured possessions ready for abandonment of their homes should the word come of the fall of Fort Stanwix. Up at Caughnawaga, now Fonda, good old domine Thomas Romeyn had already boxed and buried in his garden his library of precious tomes -- heavy theology of three centuries, bound in pigskin. The Dutch domine who a few years after, in the Church of the Woestina, at Vedder's Ferry, now Hoffmans, baptized the children of John and Jannetje.

Then, on the seventeenth of July, came the urgent call of General Nicholas Herkimer for every able-bodied man, and boy over sixteen, large enough to handle a rifle, to assemble at German Flats from which they were to march to the relief of Fort Stanwix. Responding to this call of General Herkimer, Colonel Van Schaick at once set out from Schenectady with a small force of men and boys, their number increasing along every mile of the road. Among these additions was John Van Eps, who at his father's house at Hoffmans, seized his rifle and joined the little army marching by. John was then still in his fourteenth year. It is known that there were many boys in this relief expedition. A British officer wrote contemptuously of the rabble of men and boys sent out to oppose his troops. The story is told of the daughter of an Oneida chief, fifteen years old, who carried her rifle and fought beside her father in Oriskany's deadly ambush. The Oneidas, alone of the Six Nations, were friendly and helpful, with but a few exceptions, to the cause of the colonists.

John Van Eps was justly proud of the part he took at Oriskany and often spoke of it in later life. When General Herkimer was shot from his horse, John was near and was one of those who carried the wounded leader to the big beech where he sat propped up on his saddle, smoking and shouting encouragement to his men. John escaped the storm of bullets unscathed and two years later he enlisted in Captain John Van Patten's company of Albany County Militia, serving to the end of the war, taking part in all the expeditions up the Mohawk Valley, including the Battle of Johnstown and the pursuit of the fleeing British army. He died in 1847.

## WOLF HOLLOW

Leaving the Mohawk Turnpike at Hoffmans and continuing northward beyond the site of the old Church of the Woestina, just described, towards the village of Glenville, the road crosses a stretch of gravelly soil; a delta-shaped fill of a pre-existing lateral valley -- material brought down the main valley by the waters of the Iro-Mohawk of the geologists, that mighty torrent that served during the waning of the ice sheet as an outlet of the great interior lake system while yet its normal outlet, the valley of the St. Lawrence, was blocked with ice.

To the left of this delta is the wooded eastern flank of the Kinaquariones. To the right and straight ahead rises the long slope of the Glenville hills gashed and gullied with several small water-courses. Shortly the road approaches the actual base of the hill, and here it turns sharply to the left -- the entrance of the Wolf Hollow, a great and deep gash dividing the hill, and here we find a marker bearing this inscription:

WOLF HOLLOW  
A RENT AND DISPLACEMENT  
OF 1000 FEET IN EARTH'S  
SURFACE ROCKS. HERE IN  
1669 THE MOHAWKS AMBUSHED  
THEIR ALGONKIAN INVADERS

Here also we meet the brook Chaughtanoonda which runs beside the highway, first on one side and then on the other throughout the entire length of the Hollow, a trifle over a mile. Its name is said to signify stone houses or stony places. Its channel and bed for the greater part of its course through the ravine is on bare, water-worn slate rock.

Though the little Chaughtanoonda did its part through the long ages in cutting its channel deeper and broader, yet the primal cause of this great rift in the river-bordering hills, Glenville's greatest scenic feature, was a rent, or deep-seated crack -- a fault, as the geologists call it -- in the surface rocks of the region, slates, limestone and dolomite, followed by a displacement of the rock layers, those on the eastern side of the rent having dropped hundreds of feet below their normal position. This displacement is plainly shown at the first sharp bend in the road, just ahead. Here we first approach the actual line of the fault. To the right are the jagged, fractured edges of the slates and shales sharply tilted from the horizontal. A result of the downward movement, the "drag." The friable layers pressing and grinding against the harder limestones and dolomite. To the left we see the high and prominent cliffs of dolomite capped with a thin layer of fossiliferous limestone, the cliff edge crowned with a sparse growth of hemlock and cedars.

This great fracture in the earth's surface layers is widely known as the "Hoffmans Ferry Fault." It is one of a series of fractures crossing the valley of the Mohawk, and it extends northward far beyond the Wolf Hollow. Indeed, it has been traced as far as Corinth on the upper Hudson, but it does not seem to extend far south of the Mohawk. Breaks and displacements of this character are said to be due to stresses set up in surface rocks by shrinkage or lateral movements of the earth's crust, and consequent readjustment.

The immediate vicinity of the rock exposures described, showing the actual effects of the great cataclysm, is to the nature lover -- the botanist and the geologist -- perhaps the most interesting part of the Wolf Hollow; also to the historian, for it was here on the morning of the sixth of August, 1669, that the Mohawks lay in ambush awaiting the approach of their Algonkian foe who, as before related in this paper, had failed in an attempt to capture and sack Gandawagué, the palisaded village of the Turtle clan of the Mohawks, and who were now in full retreat to their homes in eastern Massachusetts; their ancient cross-country path leading from the Mohawk at the Kinaquariones up and through the Wolf Hollow, the "cragged pass," spoken of by Father Pierron. Just across the stream, in a sheltered nook among the trees is Johnnys Spring, a limpid pool of cold water constantly welling from beneath the great slope of moss-grown rocks great and small, the wastage of ages, fallen from the dolomite cliffs above.

About half way through the Hollow, just above the foot of the eastern slope, is a dark opening in the black shales. This is the entrance of the "Coal Mine," locally so-called; a tunnel said to extend for several hundred feet under the high and steep bank of the hollow. This excavation was made about 1856-57 by Dr. Abram K. Underhill. A futile search for coal, which he hoped to find in the slaty rock layers which here are black and slightly carboniferous. It is said that Underhill was encouraged to carry on his vain search for coal by finding bits of the real mineral (from mines in Pennsylvania) in different parts of his workings; placed there by jokers -- his mine was "salted." One Samuel Hubbard did the actual work of excavating for Underhill. The tunnel followed the dip of the rock layers, here to the east, consequently the opening would soon have filled with water had it not been drained by lead pipe disposed as a syphon. On abandoning the futile enterprise Underhill forgot or neglected to remove this syphon, and according to local tradition certain parties resorted to this place to procure supplies of lead for the moulding of bullets; a practice which must have become more and more difficult as rising water finally filled the tunnel nearly to its mouth; as we find it today. The limited supply of lead obtained from this abandoned mine no doubt was the origin of the idle tale, once locally current and believed, that certain wise ones knew of a spot in the Wolf Hollow whence they were able to get unlimited quantities of virgin lead ore.

Certain thin layers of the black shales outcropping in places on the eastern side of the hollow abound in a curious fossil of Ordovician time, known as graptolites, delicate plume-shaped fronds radiating from a common center. In the thin limestone strata capping the western margin of the hollow other interesting fossil life forms can be found, with a little search. These same limestone layers, in a situation out of sight from the roadway, have weathered-out in such a way that a rock-shelter exists. Such places were often resorted to by the Indians; a refuge from rain, and it may well be that this place has more than once sheltered the red hunter from a sudden shower of summer or from a winter's snow storm. Relics of the red man are quite often found in such places.

Leaving the Wolf Hollow at its northern end we find a marker by the wayside lettered precisely like the one standing at its mouth. Here, on the north bank of the brook was a workshop of the Indian; a place where arrow and spear heads, knives and other objects were chipped and fashioned from flint brought from some distant source. This is plainly shown by the quantities of flakes and spalls strewn on the surface, and on the flat land just beyond traces of Algonkian fishing camps have been found beside the brook.

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#### SACANDAGA ROAD

Two markers, erected by the State Education Department in 1935, bearing identical inscriptions, stand beside this historic road, the second oldest main highway of our town. The Sacandaga Road proper begins at Mohawk Avenue in the village of Scotia, and running northward bears that name as one of the village streets. Thence under the same name it continues northward for eight miles, entering the town of Charlton, Saratoga County in which it continues to Galway and the North. Just beyond the handsome stone school at the Beukendaal we find the first of the markers pointing out this highway. The second, with the same inscription, stands at the point the road leaves the town:

SACANDAGA ROAD  
 CUT THROUGH THE PRIMITIVE  
 FOREST BY EARLY SETTLERS,  
 ALONG AN INDIAN TRAIL  
 LEADING TO THE SACANDAGA  
 REGION AND CANADA

As told on the markers, the present road closely follows the course of an old Indian trail leading northward from Schenectady. Indeed, in certain places in lands yet wooded,

where the road now runs somewhat apart, it is said that the old path, deeply rutted, can yet be traced.

At the time of the Battle of the Beukendaal, in 1748,-- a sanguinary fight between the Colonists and the Canadian Indians which will be described at length in the next section of this paper--practically all the area north of that place was yet a dense wilderness, known only to the Indian and a few adventurous white hunters and trappers. Then part of the borough or township of Schenectady, the boundaries only of our township had been surveyed, and it was not until some few years after, that certain families of Dutch and Huguenot extraction ventured to chop out and widen this old Sacandaga path, choosing alongside sites for their homes. Prominent, if indeed not first among these were the Conde family and the Van Pattens. Others, however, the Vromans, the Cornells, the Wessels, the Lighthalls, the Groots, the Lows, the Rowley family and many others soon followed.

Adam Conde, born 1748, was the son of Adam Conde of Schenectady, in 1734 High Constable of Albany, and who was among the slain at the Battle of the Beukendaal. Adam, the son, and his wife, Catalina Truax, born 1752, established their home on the Sacandaga Road, near the west side of the stream now known as the Conde Creek. Not far from their house, Simon I. Van Patten who married their daughter, Eve, built a sawmill which will receive mention under caption, "Conde Creek."

Nicholas Van Patten was one of the pioneer settlers of the Sacandaga Road, where he kept a famous hotel. Its story will also be told in another section of this paper. Soon after the close of the War of the Revolution there came and established homes on or near this road the Wards, the Hogans, the Dawsons, the Van Attens and the Knights and the Hayes families. In the last decade of the century came Abraham Lighthall who built a large and rambling house of the style of that period, on a pleasant knoll just north of the Crabb Kill. This became, and was for many years the home of the Groot family, descendants of Symon Symonsee Groot. Soon after this came the Hamlin family from Sharon, Connecticut; and the Calkins family, originally from the same town in Connecticut.

Before the close of the century the Sacandaga Road became an important and busy thoroughfare, serving as an outlet for the country to the north. Countless loads of grain and other products from the fertile farms of "Scotch Street," and from Galway were drawn over this road, to the markets of Schenectady and those of Albany. Lumber, charcoal and tan bark were brought from the hills north of Galway and from the Sacandaga region. And it was along this road that, during the War of 1812, troops and military supplies, even heavy guns, were taken from Albany and Schenectady, up and through the wilderness of the Adirondacks, to Sacketts Harbor. The late Anson B. Hamlin often

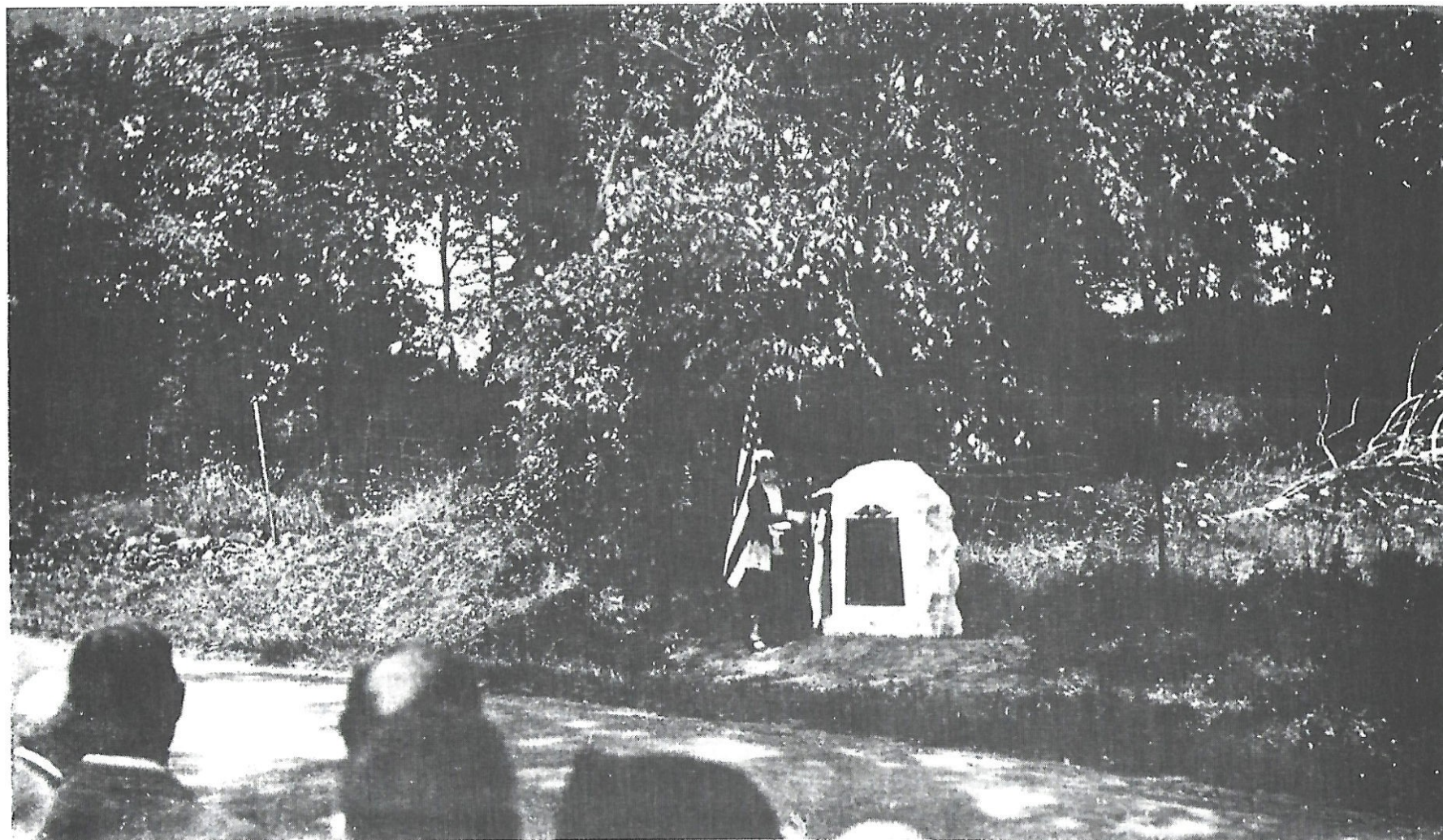


related seeing in his boyhood days long strings of sleighs loaded with soldiers being taken northward. He said, "Looking from my father's house, the road was black with sleighs."

At this period, 1800-1820, a good-sized country village had grown, clustered at and near the intersection of the road leading westward to the village of Glenville. It was long known as the "Lower Corners," in distinction from "The Corners," the present village of Glenville, and was as large, or larger than Scotia at that time. Today there stands less than a dozen houses. Then could have been seen, besides the group of houses, two hotels, a store or two, a tannery (Hogan's), besides shoe-maker's shops, chair-maker and carpenter shops, and, of course, cooper shops. The writer has heard it related by eye-witnesses that from the hotel on the corner, as far westward and even beyond the Fall Tree Kill was an unbroken row of small houses and shops -- mainly cooper shops. Cooper shops galore; one has but to scan the ledgers and day-books kept by the country store-keepers of that day to see the need of so many cooper shops; gallons, quarts, pints, glasses, even penny "nips," of firewater were set down in due order, day after day; regular customers those.

At the Fall Tree Kill stood the neighborhood schoolhouse; today it stands on the main highway, a little way below the "Corners." Van Patten's sawmill was but a mile to the south, on the Conde Creek, and a little way to the east, on the Charlton road, was the mills of John Dawson who came to America from Lancaster, England. And mention should be made of the Indian basket-makers who lived in huts and cabins in the woods along the Sacandaga Road. There were at least three such families, -- possibly more -- all Indians of the Oneida Nation and all flotsam from "Yonsey Hill," the colony of that nation placed on the outskirts of Schenectady by the Government during the Revolution. One of these three families lived in the gully of the Conde Creek, a little distance west of the Sacandaga Road. Another lived in the woods, beside the Crabb Kill and the third lived in a hut near the headwaters of the Fall Tree Kill.

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UNVEILING THE MEMORIAL  
AT THE BEUKENDAAL, JULY 29, 1929  
(PHOTO BY CLARENCE M. VANDER VEER)

## BATTLE OF THE BEUKENDALL

Two markers standing on the Sacandaga Road tell us of the Battle of the Beukendaal, fought in 1748, and of the DeGraff house; a battle given but scanty mention, or none at all, by the many historians of the Mohawk Valley and of our state, yet the encounter at the Beukendaal was far more than an accidental skirmish. It was, as one writer states, "a stand-up, hand-to-hand fight" between the Colonists and a large band of Canadian Indians.

The first marker of this group of two that we approach, stands on the left, or west side of the Sacandaga Road, on the first rise in ground, and this, erected by the State Education Department, in 1932, points out the site of the Abraham DeGraff house that figured so large in the fight:

BEUKENDAAL, 1748  
DUTCH WORD MEANING  
BEECHDALE, DEGRAFF HOUSE  
WHERE 40 SCHENECTADY  
MILITIA FOUGHT OFF FRENCH-  
INDIAN RAIDING PARTY

Gleaned from authentic relations of the fight at the Beukendaal, as told by survivors, and condensed from the clear account given in a letter to Sir William Johnson, written three days after the battle, by Albert Van Slyck, who himself took part, this story of the only battle that occurred in the limits of Glenville between the Colonists and the Indians is here offered:

On the eighteenth day of July, 1748, a party of men had come together at a farm near the river, a little over a mile west of Schenectady, at a place then called the Maalwyck, to raise the frame of a barn. Three men, Dirk Van Voast, Daniel Toll, and Rykert, a slave of Toll, shortly left the group at the Maalwyck and set out to hunt up their horses, which had strayed off. Not long after this the men at the barn heard firing towards the north, the direction taken by Van Voast and Toll. Alarmed at this a slave was hurriedly sent to Schenectady with a message of warning, which he promptly delivered. At this, doubtless the bell of the Dutch Church sounded a clanging alarm. Now it so happened that there was a company of Connecticut militia under the command of Captain Stoddard stationed in Schenectady at this time. This body of men, under the leadership of Lieutenant John Darling, Captain Stoddard being absent, were at once ordered to go to the Beukendaal, the point from which the sound of the firing was -- correctly -- judged to come. The company numbered over sixty and was accompanied by five or six young men of the town.

Van Voast, Toll and the slave, Rykert, in their search for the missing horses, coming near the DeGraff house at the

Beukendaal, then unoccupied, heard, as they imagined, the sound of horses stamping the ground. This sound came to them from a certain part of the ravine nearby; a cleared spot of bare and salty clay ground known to the Dutch as the "kleykuil," or clay pit, where deer and other animals came to lick the salty ground. Making their way through the fringe of trees and bushes on the brow of the ravine, expecting to see their horses at the deer-lick, they were startled to see instead, a group of painted savages seemingly engrossed in a game of "quoits," as Van Voast afterwards described it. This undoubtedly was "chunkey," a favorite out-door game among many Indian nations; played by rolling a prepared stone, and casting after the moving stone a wooden staff somewhat like a shepherd's crook.

The approach of the men from the Maalwyck was seen at once; if indeed they had not been seen before and the game in progress staged to draw them into an ambush. However this may be, before Van Voast and his companions could turn and get away, Toll was shot dead and Van Voast wounded and made a prisoner. The slave, Rykert meanwhile managed to run clear of the Indian's bullets and made the best speed he could toward the Maalwyck.

Surmising that the escape of the slave would soon result in the appearance of armed men from the Maalwyck or from Schenectady, the wily savages proceeded to lay a trap in the glen. Taking the dead body of Toll, they set it up against a tree, as though alive, and with a short cord they tied a crow they had in captivity, to or directly in front of Toll's body. Then, compelling Van Voast to go with them, they concealed themselves along the bushy and wooded sides of the ravine, where they awaited the outcome of this unique ruse. Nor did they have long to wait, for Lieutenant Darling and a part of his Connecticut men -- he had left a detachment at the unoccupied house of Simon Groot, along the way, though at this place a small group of men from the Maalwyck joined him -- soon entered the southern end of the Beukendaal and marched without suspicion and perhaps without caution directly into the ambush set for them with such devilish cunning. As they drew near the curious sight of Toll, apparently alive, sitting with his back to a tree, the crow fluttering before him, the Indians from their concealment opened fire. Eight or ten of the whites were at once stretched dead on the ground and then the yelling savages leaped out of cover with knife and hatchet. At this the greater part of the militia from Connecticut, raw levies, turned and ran, but the men of Schenectady bravely stood their ground, firing their muskets and then using them as clubs, thus the battle quickly became a hand-to-hand struggle. It is said that after the fight the bodies of Glen, DeGraff and other men of Schenectady and Scotia were found lying side by side with the bodies of Indians they had fought with.

At this critical point in the fight, the little group of Dutch and the few soldiers left, partially sheltered behind

trees and stumps, were reinforced by the second party sent out from Schenectady, a small company of New York militiamen headed by Adrian Van Slyck. However, as soon as these men got in line of the Indian's fire, like the militia from Connecticut, they also turned and ran.

It was madness to remain longer; those that had escaped the bullets and the tomahawk of the red man now succeeded in making their way through a western entrance of the ravine to the unoccupied DeGraff house. Here they barred the door and going up to the second, or attic story they quickly pried off clapboards and from the openings thus made poured a deadly fire of bullets at the savages who soon could be seen skulking behind the surrounding trees. While this rifle duel was in progress Dirk Van Voast, wounded and a prisoner, had been left in charge of two young Indians. Eager to see the fight in progress at the house, as best they could they tied Van Voast to a tree and scrambled up the bank of the ravine. Van Voast at once made attempts at reaching his knife, and soon succeeding, cut his bonds and hurried away as fast as his condition would permit. He had not gone very far, however, before he met a third party of armed men from Schenectady, headed by Jacob Glen and Albert Van Slyck. As this last reinforcement came in sight of the DeGraff house the Indians lost no time in taking the old path leading northward through the woods, the present Sacandaga Road, taking with them thirteen or fourteen prisoners. Some of these, by an exchange made two years later, were returned to their homes.

After the arrival of the third force of men from Schenectady and the retreat of the Indians, teams and large wagons were sent for and the bodies of the slain taken to Schenectady, and laid in rows on the floor of a large barn that stood not far from the Dutch Church, from which they were taken by the bereaved families, for burial.

It was a sad hour for the little village of Schenectady when the big lumber wagons bringing the dead from the Beukendaal crossed the ferry and rumbled over the cobbled streets to Abraham Mabee's barn, where the bodies were first taken. Of this a pathetic incident is recorded: Adam Conde, formerly High Constable of Albany, was among the slain. As the wagons were passing through the streets, Conde's wife, watching the mournful procession, saw the arm of one of the slain hanging over the side of a wagon. On its hand was the glitter of a ring that gave her, it is said, the first knowledge that her husband was one of the slain.

In the summer of 1929 the Beukendaal Chapter, of Schenectady, Daughters of the American Revolution, erected and with appropriate ceremonies, including an address by Dr. Alexander Flick, State Historian, unveiled and dedicated a handsome monument to commemorate the names of those slain at this place. This granite monument stands beside the Sacandaga Road, in a spot overlooking the ravine, and its bronze tablet bears this inscription:

1748

1929

IN MEMORY  
OF THE MEN WHO WERE KILLED  
IN THIS RAVINE IN  
THE BEUKENDAAL BATTLE  
ON JULY 18, 1748  
BY THE CANADIAN INDIANS

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| JOHN A. BRADT        | ADRIAN VAN SLYKE    |
| JOHANNES MARINUS     | JACOB GLEN, JR.     |
| PETER VROOMAN        | ADAM CONDE          |
| DANIEL VAN ANTWERPEN | J. P. VAN ANTWERPEN |
| CORNELIS VIELE, JR.  | FRANS VANDERBOGART  |
| NICHOLAAS DeGRAFF    | CAPTAIN DANIEL TOLL |

WHO WERE CITIZENS  
ALSO LIEUTENANT JOHN DARLING  
AND SEVEN CONNECTICUT SOLDIERS  
STATIONED AT SCHENECTADY

---

ERECTED BY  
BEUKENDAAL CHAPTER N.S.D.A.R.  
OF SCHENECTADY, N. Y.

Just how many of the Indians were killed at the Beukendaal was never known; but their loss was supposed to have been considerable; several of the Colonists taking part in the fight were known to be expert shots. Several Indians were found dead in the ravine and it was known that some were killed in the fire from the house, but those so killed, and their wounded were quickly dragged back out of sight in the woods next north of the house; a custom common among the Indians, and at which they were very adroit. Accounts vary as to whether any of the French soldiery from Canada took part in this raid.

On that very day of July when the little group of men were fighting for their lives at the Beukendaal, a conference with the friendly Indians was taking place over in Albany, a "Great Council," sponsored by Governor Clinton and headed by Sir William Johnson, dressed in full Mohawk costume, its object not only to conciliate and keep the Six Nations and other friendly tribes in good humor, but also to gain permission of the chiefs to build forts in the Indian country westward; these ostensibly for border protection, but, as recently has been shown, a deeper object was in the mind of the shrewd and far-seeing Sir William; no less than the ultimate extension of Colonial territory and holdings in the hinterland of the colonies. Not only were the head men of the Six Nations present at this "Great Council," but also Indians from the Hudson River tribes and from the different Algonkian nations of New England, hundreds in number. And, of course, there was feasting and there were presents galore.

Came evening of the eighteenth and the startling word was brought from Schenectady of the surprise attack at the Beukendaal

and of the fierce fight that followed. At once the drums were ordered to beat the assembly, and 100 soldiers were detailed, together with 200 Indians told off from the council, with orders to proceed to Schenectady to pursue the retreating Indians and head off and capture them if possible. The pursuit was made but owing to a misunderstanding or a wrong idea of the route taken by the Canadians, the pursuit was of no avail.

The Battle of the Beukendaal, the ambush and ensuing bloody hand-to-hand fight in the Vale of the Beeches, for that is the meaning of the Dutch word, in its extent and character can well be classed, in the history of our Mohawk Valley, with that greater battle in the ravine of Oriskany; the Thermopylae of America.

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#### VAN PATTEN'S HOTEL (UPPER NICKEY'S)

A few years after the battle of 1748 at the Beukendaal certain pioneer families, leaving the narrow belt of Dutch farms along the Mohawk, settled for over half a century, boldly penetrated the wild land north of the Beukendaal and chopped-out the old Indian path leading to the Sacandaga region, making it passable for teams. Here and there clearings were made in the bordering woods and houses built, some of logs, but mainly framed structures. Among the first of these built was the large Van Patten house, standing four miles above the Beukendaal. A marker erected by the State stands before the house, bearing this inscription:

AN EARLY HOTEL  
KNOWN AS "UPPER NICKEY'S"  
BUILT AND KEPT BY NICHOLAS  
VAN PATTEN IN 18TH CENTURY  
GLENVILLE'S FIRST TOWN  
MEETING HELD HERE IN 1821

This fine old house of colonial design, today the home of the family of the late Claude C. Runner, was built by Nicholas Van Patten, a descendant of Class Frederickse Van Patten, the first of that name in America, so far as the records show. Here the Van Patten family, father and son, for many years kept a hotel which became known as "Upper Nickey's," to distinguish it from "Lower Nickey's," a hotel standing just above the Beukendaal, kept by another Nicholas Van Patten, a cousin of the first.

During the period between 1790 and 1820 the Van Patten house, Upper Nickey's, was a well-known and favorite stopping

place for the numerous teamsters hauling produce from Galway and the North; and it was in Van Patten's house that in 1821 Glenville's first town meeting was held. As the population of the newly-formed town stood, Van Patten's house was practically its center. Scotia at that time -- and for the next half-century -- had no more inhabitants than the Village of Glenville -- perhaps not so many.

At this first town meeting, held on the first Tuesday in January, 1821, Albert H. Vadder was chosen supervisor; Cornelius S. Conde, town clerk; Peter H. Brooks, Benjamin Lovett, and Bernard Cramer, trustees; Andrew Yates, B. Lovett, and Philip B. Toll, assessors; David Ostrom, Christian Haverly, and John Lighthall, commissioners of highways; Abraham Lighthall, collector; Robert Sanders and John Brown, overseers of the poor; James Caw, Joel Merchant, and William Vedder, commissioners of common schools; Peter Van Zandt, Northrop T. Smith, and Robert Schoon, inspectors of common schools; Garret Erkson, Henry Lovett, James J. Lighthall, and Alexander Vedder, constables.

Soon after the foundation and naming of the town, formerly and for many years the Fourth Ward of the City of Schenectady, a new proprietor took charge of the old Van Patten hotel, as we learn from a sign-board yet stored in its attic. On this can be traced, under a later-painted name, that of B. Crippen. Evidently proud of the name given his town Crippen caused it to be painted on his sign-board. Painted over the readily-traced name of Crippen is "D. Wessels, HALF-WAY HOUSE, 1843." David Wessels, born 1816, was the son of Wessel H. Wessels. David, on June fourth, 1837, married Clara Van Patten. The Wessels family were prominent residents of early Schenectady. One Wessel Wessels, born 1715, married Maria, daughter of Arent Van Antwerpen.

Finally, with changed conditions, the building of the railroads, the passing of the charcoal and tan-bark industry, and the near end of the lumber supply from the North, the inns -- save one -- along the Sacandaga Road, and there was at least five in the limits of the town, closed their doors to the public. Among these was the Van Patten house, which now became the home of the Ward family, descendants of Amos Ward one of the early settlers of the neighborhood. At least four successive generations of the Ward family lived in this house.

A famous old gun owned by Nicholas Van Patten is yet in possession of a Glenville family, a musket made by Willits in England in 1758, as the name, date and crown surmounting the letters G R engraved on its lock shows; also on its lock-plate is a broad arrow surmounted by a crown. On its barrel various emblems are stamped, in a sunken oval a crown and a monogram, C-P, also a crown with the letters I W. Made with a flint-lock, in later years its firing mechanism was changed to the percussion-cap system, probably when that improvement came. This is plainly shown by the screws that held the pan in place having been filed off flush with the face of the lock. The barrel of



this old weapon is four feet in length, and if family tradition is true, a former owner, evidently tired of propping the end of his gun with a crotched stick, cut twelve inches from its length. It took a bullet weighing a trifle over an ounce. Its stock is curly maple finely carved and has various engraved mountings of brass. A large and neat name-plate is set in the wood. Disregarding this, however, Van Patten boldly and deeply carved on the side of the stock, in ornate script his initials, C V P. C standing for Claas, a common and familiar abbreviation of the name Nicholas.

Woodrangers and soldiers of colonial times are said to have had the thoughtful and methodical practice of cutting a notch on the stock of their guns for each Indian shot. Close examination of the old Van Patten gun fails to reveal any such tally-mark. Nevertheless, family lore carried down through a half-dozen generations credits this old firearm with hastening the arrival of at least one hostile Indian at the Happy Hunting-Grounds. The exact time of this exploit is not known; the place, however, was said to have been somewhere along the Mohawk, west of Schenectady. As the story goes: The Indian shot was on one side of the river and on the other side was the man with the gun. If the tale is true this likely was one of the sons of Claas, and the exploit happened near the close of the Revolution when many small bands of hostile Indians skulked in the woods bordering the settlements and backwoods farms watching opportunity to secure booty and scalps.

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#### CONDE CREEK

#### VAN PATTEN'S SAWMILL

Coursing down the eastern slope of the Glenville hills is a small but rapid stream now known as the Conde Creek, thus named from Adam Conde and his immediate descendants who early acquired a considerable area of land where the stream crosses the Sacandaga Road. Adam, son of Adam Conde of Schenectady, born 1748, was the first settler on this tract. He built his house on a sunny, sheltered eastern slope on the west bank of the stream, a little way below the Sacandaga Road. Little trace of this pioneer home now remains, though its site is known. Where the stream crosses the Sacandaga Road there will soon be placed a marker -- already cast -- lettered thus:

CONDE CREEK  
SAWMILL SITE  
HERE, 1800, STOOD A  
SAWMILL BUILT AND  
OPERATED BY SIMON  
I. VAN PATTEN

But a stone's throw from the Sacandaga Road the water of the creek, racing through its slate-bottomed channel plunges

over a ledge, a drop of 25 feet or more, and here in the last decade of the 18th century Simon I. Van Patten, who married Eve, daughter of Conde, owner of the place, built a sawmill, leading the water from the crest of the fall through a long wooden penstock to the home-made waterwheel that gave motion to the up-and-down saw used in those days. In this mill Van Patten did custom-work for his neighbors also sawing lumber for himself, used in jobs he accepted as a contractor and builder.

Simon I. Van Patten, born 1775, was a son of Captain John Van Patten, who won distinction at the Battle of Saratoga, in 1777. At the time of his marriage, in 1797, he built a house on the northeast corner of the intersection of the Dawson Mill-Charlton road with the Sacandaga Road. Here he lived for several years and in this large frame house with its old-time doors, divided horizontally, and its fireplace bordered with blue Dutch tiles bearing Biblical scenes, his oldest children were born. His carpenter shop stood in a delta-shaped enlargement of the Dawson road at its junction with the main highway. This shop was burned to the ground, the result of his sons, George and Adam C., chasing each other around its interior with lighted shavings; a great loss to Van Patten, as many of his tools and much material was burnt. However, at the time of the fire this loss was belittled, overshadowed by the fear that Adam, his youngest son, had perished in the flames, as for some little time he could not be found. But with the coming of darkness -- and hunger -- Adam crawled from under the barn where, unobserved, in fright and fear of punishment he had hidden.

Van Patten died in the year 1851 and was buried in the cemetery of the Reformed Church in the village of Glenville; a church of which he was the architect and builder.

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