

Schenectady County Historical Society

Newsletter

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July-August 2004

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2004 SCOTIA'S CENTENNIAL YEAR

Elsie M. Maddous

Although Scotia was one of the oldest communities in upstate New York, it was not incorporated until 1904. The Scotia-Glenville area was part of the City of Schenectady during the early 19th century. Called the Fourth Ward, it comprised wooded hills and fields from which the inhabitants of Schenectady had been given the right to cut trees for lumber, fish and pasture cattle. These fields were called the "Commons." However, problems with the practice developed so finally the New York State Legislature passed an act on April 14, 1820 changing the Fourth Ward into the Town of Glenville.

The village of Scotia came into existence because early in 1902, the landowners in the area voted to incorporate. Originally Scotia went from the river to near Ten Broeck Street. Reseville was settled around the

Sacandaga Road-Mohawk Avenue intersection with Maalwyck at the western edge. Over the years, as the area became less of a farming community and more residential, the three separate hamlets seemed to blend into one, finally becoming an official village.

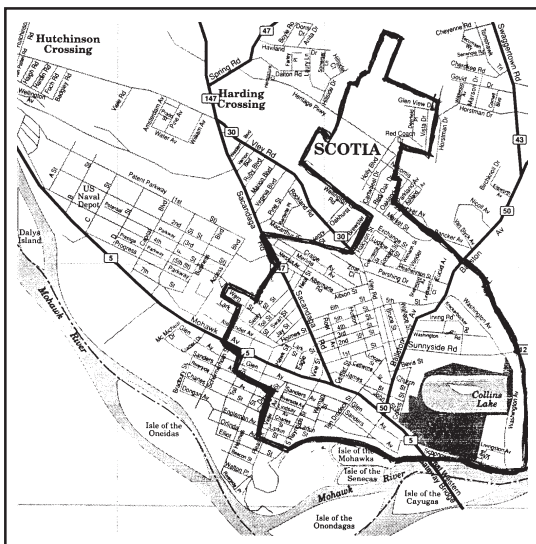
Incorporation was delayed from the first attempt in 1902 because the New York Central objected and obtained an injunction. Papers had been drawn up with boundaries gerrymandered just beyond the New York Central tracks to include the railroad in the tax base. Finally in 1904, the railroad had given in and incorporation proceedings were decided in favor of the citizens. The new Village Board met and organized early in February 1904.

After being a hamlet for two hundred and forty-four years Scotia became a village. It is surrounded by the Town of Glenville on three sides and the Mohawk River is a southern boundary. Settlers who made the area their home came from several ethnic groups. Most were descendants of the earliest Dutch settlers. There were German, Scottish, Irish, Swiss, English and two families of ex slaves.

Scotia was named by the first settler, Alexander Lindsay Glen for his native Scotland. He purchased his Scotia property from the Mohawks in 1658. He built two houses. His youngest son, Major John Alexander Glen, built the east part of the house in 1713, what we refer to today as the Glen Sanders Mansion.

Abraham Glen, grandson of the first settler was born in 1694. His house built circa 1730 is now the Scotia Branch Library. "Maalwyck" on Mohawk Avenue was sold to Karen Hansen Toll in 1712 and stayed in the Toll family for 186 years. The Flint House dates to about 1735 and has had several owners, the last being Lillian J. Flint. She left the house and four acres of land to the Village of Scotia. It is now the home of the Scotia Historical Society. The Mynderse family lived on the north side of Collins Lake. When Scotia was incorporated in 1904, Dr. Herman Vedder Mynderse became the first president.

Upcoming events celebrating Scotia's Centennial include fireworks July 2nd, a big band July 28th and a talk on Collins Park August 26th. A Fall Festival on October 3rd at the Flint House will conclude the observance.



REMEMBER THE DATES

SCHENECTADY HERITAGE AREA

STOCKADE WALKING TOUR

July 17

August 21

Tours Begin at 10 a.m.

Schenectady County Historical Society

\$10 per person

Call 832-5147 or 374-0263



STOCKADE WALKABOUT

September 18

Complete Details in Next Issue

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Ann Ross

Frank Taormina

Richard Whalen

Sally Van Schaick

STAFF

Virginia Bolen

Librarian

Jo Mordecai

Exhibits

Johanna Woldring

Office Manager

Pat Barrot

Mabee Farm Site Manager

Paul Gonsowski

Custodian

HOURS:

MUSEUM

Tuesday – Friday

1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

LIBRARY

Monday – Friday

1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

MABEE FARM

Tuesday – Saturday

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

*Closed Monday July 5th
and September 6th*



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello everyone. As you can see, we are making some changes in our newsletter this month. However, first we need to take this time to thank Sally Van Schaick for all her years of hard work and effort on the Society's behalf. Thank you Sally for a job well done!!

We seem to be having more and more activity going on in our facilities these days. Sometimes the parking lot and library are all full to overflowing. We've had Paul line the driveway to make sure we can fit in as many cars as possible. Our librarian, Ginny, has so many researchers and volunteers working on projects that there usually are no empty seats to be had! The Mabee Farm has taken off at a dead run this season with all its events, student programs and exhibits that we get tired thinking about it.

We are turning our focus towards the Museum and are seeking a curator. Meanwhile, Jo will continue to give tours

and do her thing as she always has. Most of our paintings have been refurbished and just sparkle. Please stop in the near future and check them out! We will be applying for grants, creating new and exciting programs and working to make our museum one of the best in the capital area.

Some of our members have been astounding me with their generosity. Giving some of the fruits of their labors from many years, Capt. James Caulfield and Mr. Chet Watson have given us items from the USS Schenectady. An exhibit is in the planning stages. George Franchere who is a continually generous donor has recently given us a beautiful replica of the DeWitt Clinton. Other members have been so generous with their dollars and volunteer time. We are very happy to be part of such a vital and bustling enterprise.

Kim Mabee



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As the new editor of the Newsletter, I would like to thank my predecessor Sally Van Schaick for her tireless efforts and dedication to the production of the Society's Newsletter over the last fifteen years plus. Sally did a tremendous job of coordinating the news events of the ever increasing and expanding activities of the Society. The Society is most appreciative of her talent and the time she graciously gave to the project.

The Society is one of the oldest in the country. It will be celebrating its one hundredth birthday next year. Celebration plans are under way. The Mabee Farm and the Grems Doolittle Library have become popular destinations. The Museum has recently restored most of its art collection with the financial support of many individuals, the GE Matching Funds Program and the expertise of Caroline K. Keck of Cooperstown NY. It is planning more activities, programs and interpretive exhibits that will appeal to its members and capture the interest of the ever changing community. It is hoping to expand its publication program to include not only archival material but a catalog of the

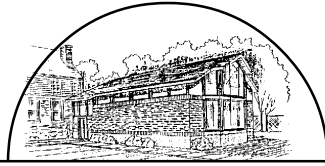
Society's art collection and monographs on specialized collections of samplers, ceramics and furniture.

There will be a new column in the Newsletter entitled "From the Society's Collections." Each issue will feature one item in the collection. In this issue the portrait of Helena Van Eps Pieterse dated 1743 will be featured. See page 6.

Volunteers are very important to the well being of a non-profit organization and we need your help. If you like history and art, please join us. You will not be paid in dollars but you will be rewarded by knowing you have contributed to the Society's achieving its goals. We welcome your support.

If you have questions, suggestions or comments I would like to hear from you.

*Ona Curran
(518) 875-6788
ocurapp@aol.com*



The Grems-Doolittle Library & Archives

RECENT ACQUISITIONS BY THE LIBRARY:

The DAR Patriot Index, Millennium edition, Daughters of the American Revolution, 3 vols.

The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, Disc 1, 1870-1899 (CD)

DONATIONS TO THE LIBRARY:

The Mills Family History, 3 vols. by William H. Mills donated by the author

The Veeder – Vader Family Tree Expanded, by Elgin A. Vader, donated by the author

McKendree: The Life of McKendree Petty..., by Ed Worthen

The Accomplished Conveyance..., 1725 owned in 1750 by Henry Beeckman, donated by Charlotte Wilcoxsen

Leaves of Gold, a book distributed by a local funeral home, donated by Carol DeLeo

Chrisler *Family Bible* with records, donated by Gladys Craven



Can you identify this lovely brick church? House next door may be the parsonage.

NOW TAKING RESERVATIONS

... for the new *Images of America Rotterdam* book due out this summer. The Historical Society's library volunteers have collected the photographs and are now finishing the text in preparation for publication. Reserve your book by writing to the address on the front page or by using our email address: librarian@schist.org.

All books mailed outside the Schenectady area will receive free postage. Please give us your name, address and email address, if you have one. You will be contacted for payment when the books are here. Books may also be purchased at the Society headquarters or at the Mabee Farm when they are ready.



Dock Street (now Erie Blvd.) looking south from the roof of Clute Brothers machine shop about 1886. This is the second bridge at this site. It was erected after the 1841 expansion of the Erie Canal. Note the two whale oil lamps on the bridge center.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR ENCAMPMENT



Angry clouds threatened to dampen spirits May 22nd and 23rd at the 2nd Regiment of the Albany County Militia's annual reenactment. It poured all around the Mabee Farm for 2 days, but nary a drop fell on the Farm. The highlight of the weekend was the Saturday night Barn Dance, where everyone curtsied, swung, stepped and skipped to the tunes of caller Paul Rosenberg and his band. The Mabee Farm Bateau, the DeSager rowed back and forth from Kim & Gary Mabee's house to the Farm with many a wearied rower in tow. A truly memorable weekend!



We finally have the name plate for the bateau. Isn't it a beauty?

Community Open House

July 18, 2004
1-5 pm

Free Admission
Tours on the half hour
Refreshments

Come meet neighbors and friends and enjoy a peaceful day along the Mohawk River.

Mabee Farm Historic Site
1080 Main St., Rotterdam Junction, NY
(518) 887-5073

Mabee Farm

SPECIAL MEMBER & VOLUNTEER



Richard Lewis, our valued Education Coordinator at the Mabee Farm, grew up in Gloversville. Originally, Richard was a chemistry major at Union College but he graduated in the humanities, when history first started interesting him. His first job was as a newspaper

reporter for the *Schenectady Gazette*, covering culture and education. He edited the *Sesqui Centennial* in 1959 for the 150th Anniversary of Schenectady County. He also spent time with historian Bill Efner, which further ignited his historical interest.

As he was just beginning his education studies at SUNY Albany, he was snapped up to teach 11th and 12th grades in Galway. Later, he spent 4 years at Scotia Glenville and then took a position supervising student teachers at the campus school at SUNY Albany for 10 years. SUNY discontinued the program, and Richard then became head of the English Department at Shenendehowa, a position which he held 22 years. He retired in June 1997. At CARD (Citizens Advocating Responsible Development), Richard met Stanley Lee, who suggested he come to the Mabee Farm and try his hand at being a docent. Richard performed this task so well, he soon became Education Coordinator. With Richard at the helm, the highly rated school program has exploded from 500 visiting students the first year to 1,370 the second and 1,500 in the spring alone!! Kudos to Richard on a tremendous job!

Richard and his wife Linda Lewis (a school psychologist) live in the old Dutch 1796 Jesse Van Patten house in Scotia. Richard's grandchildren Jack and Kerry, students at Scotia Glenville School, are showing a keen interest in history. I wonder why!

MABEE FARM GIFT CART

Kids are flocking in droves to the new Mabee Farm Gift Cart. The brainchild of the Mabee Farm Committee, the cart was originally established to give the children in our school programs a chance to purchase historical toys and experience first hand how colonial children played in the 17th and 18th centuries. Colonial toys and games come with a history and directions. So far, the gift cart has been a tremendous success.

Historic Site

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MIXER

The Mabee Farm Historic Site was host of the Schenectady Chamber of Commerce Mixer on Wednesday, May 19th. Kevin Defebbo, our Schenectady County Manager and fearless Master of the Tomahawk, swung his axe with all his might, while others tried to better him. Business people watched as John Ackner demonstrated blacksmithing and Charlie Long displayed the fine art of broom making. A fun evening for all!

BLACKSMITH REENACTMENT



Celtic and Nordic Blacksmiths at the Mabee Farm? Yes, on April 25th we were treated to a demonstration by the Capital District Blacksmith Association, who labored in period clothing over fires to craft iron tools. It was a unique opportunity to watch and talk to blacksmiths like the 5th Century, "Clans of the Dragon" Celtic reenactors and the 11th century "Wolves of

Wodan" Viking reenactors who show us how it was done long ago. A real educational experience!



THE CORN CRIB IS HERE!!

Mabee Farm Committee members have rescued a corn crib from demolition. The new corn crib is on site and ready to be reassembled in a few years.

TEACHER ACCREDITATION PROGRAM

May 1st was our first Teacher Accreditation program at the farm. The first-time program featured John Ackner, who spoke about blacksmithing and Colonial life, while Joe Zarzinski talked about archaeology and methodology. We received fantastic feedback from the teachers as well as the head of the program, Henry Mueller. The Mabee Farm is one of five sites in the region to be registered for this program which enables teachers to earn extra credits towards their certification.

DON'T FORGET THESE DATES!

July 17	Erie Canal Bike Tour
July 18	Community Open House
August 7	Archaeology/Flint Knapping Day
August 14	Fife & Drum Day
September 19	Sundae on the Farm
September 25	Close for regular hours
October 3	Antique Tool Swap
October 9	Fall Arts & Crafts Festival

ERIE CANAL BIKE TOUR

400 bicyclists from the Erie Canal Bike Tour will be making a rest stop at the farm on Saturday, July 17th. The Tour focuses its ride along the Erie Canal, Mohawk River and various historic sites along the route from Buffalo to Albany. If anyone out there would be interested in volunteering that day call Pat at the Farm (518) 887-5073.

Mabee Farm Historic Site

1080 Main St. (Rt. 5S), Rotterdam Jct., NY
(518) 887-5073

Email: mabee@nycap.rr.com

Web: www.mabeefarm.org

Archaeology & Flint Knapping Day

Sat., August 7th 1 - 5 pm

Hands-on Flint Knapping
A real dig in progress
On-site lab
Archery & spear throwing contests
Experts to identify artifacts
Public participation encouraged



Demonstrations on early technology used to make arrowheads, spear points, scrapers & other stone tools

Mabee Farm Historic Site

1080 Main St.
Rotterdam Junction, NY 12150
Tel: (518) 887-5073



FROM THE SOCIETY'S COLLECTIONS

PORTRAIT OF HELENA VAN EPS PIETERSE (1721 - 1758)

Oil on canvas

Inscribed Aged 23 1743

30" x 28"

Gift of C.F.R. Ogilby 1949

The portrait was given to the Society in 1949 and is one of the earliest in the Society's collection. The sitter in the portrait was the daughter of Helena Sanderse Glen and Johannes Van Eps an Indian Trader who was captured by the Iroquois, later escaped and later became a translator for Indian/Colonial negotiations. She was the second wife of William Peters (married 1752) an Englishman about whom little is known. By 1740 there was considerable integration of Dutch and English in the colony and with other nationalities as well. We were a melting pot early on. Helena died in 1758 after bearing two children. Both descendants of Peters and Van Eps abound in the area and elsewhere.

The artist name is unknown but there were several artists working in the New York Province in the first half of the eighteenth century. Several names have emerged in the last twenty years including John Heaton, Peter Vanderlyn and Nehemiah Partridge. The artist of this portrait is someone other than the afore mentioned but is similar stylistically to portraits in the Everson Museum e.g. portraits of Catherine Van Patten and Adam Swart, both documented early Schenectady residents.

Conservation treatment was recently completed by Caroline K. Keck and provided through the generosity of W. Brinson Weeks Jr.

A photograph of this painting is available. An 8 x 10 black and white photograph is \$30. plus \$5. postage and handling. If the photograph is to be used in a publication contact the Society for a "Permission to Publish" form. If it is for personal use or research there is no need to file a permission form.



ATTENTION ANTIQUE ENTHUSIASTS

Several programs are in the planning stages that will be enlightening, educational and fun. The society will host a series of weekly lectures on Friday mornings in October followed by lunch at the Stockade Inn. The lectures will focus on the Museum's collections. Several bus trips to museums and historic sites are also being organized for Fall and Spring 2004/5. The Society's version of Antiques Roadshow is coming soon.

Learn about history, art and antiques. Become a volunteer docent. A free training session will be held in the Fall. Be a partner in our progress. We look forward to your participation. You can do research on the collections and if you so wish write an article or two for the Newsletter. You can help with planning and installing exhibits. Perhaps you are good with a camera or have computer skills. There is lots to do and whatever you enjoy doing would be most appreciated.

You will hear more about these programs as plans progress. If you have ideas as to which museum you would like to visit or programs you would like the Society to offer, please call Ona Curran (518)875-6788 or ocurapp@aol.com. We welcome your suggestions.



Two major pieces in the Society's collections are currently being restored. One is a Federal period linen press circa 1790-1800. The other is an important needlework mourning sampler dated 1806, commemorating the death of John Swain who was the grandfather of Howland Swain Barney, the founder of Barney's Department Store in Schenectady. It was given to the Society by Mrs. Marjorie Donnan Cox, a descendant, in 1952.



The Society's Kast in the Glen Sanders Room is part of a study on early colonial Dutch furniture and related architectural elements conducted by the Chipstone Foundation. The article will appear in the 2004 issue of *American Furniture* edited by Luke Beckerdite. Research is being conducted by Robert Trent, a former curator at Winterthur. Robert Trent has been making detailed studies of architectural details at the Mabee Farm. The Mynderse Kast at the Schenectady Museum is also part of the study as well as furniture of this early period at the Albany Institute of History and Art. *American Furniture* is a prestigious publication and the Society is proud to be part of this study.

DO YOU KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS
OF PORTRAITS OF
18th CENTURY SCHENECTADY RESIDENTS?

Daniel Campbell and Ariantje Bradt Campbell -
Winterthur

Adam Swarth and Catherine Van Patten Swarth-
Everson Museum, Syracuse

John Duncan -
Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village

Gerrit Symonse Veeder -
Munson Williams and Proctor Institute, Utica

Tryntje Otten Veeder -
Metropolitan Museum- NYC

Deborah Glen and John Sanders -
Colonial Williamsburg

Jacob Glen - New York Historical Society

Sarah Wendell Glen - New York Historical Society

Jacobus Van Slyke - Shelburne Village, Shelburne VT

Susanna Truax and Catalyntje Post -
National Portrait Gallery

Caleb Beck and Anna Mol Fairly Beck -
Van Cortlandt Manor House



The Museum is eager to acquire furniture, paintings, textiles, pottery and porcelain or other items that relate to Schenectady County history.

The wonderful Mabee Farm is in need of furniture. The main room of the historic house needs a Kast. It probably had one back in the eighteenth century. A Kast provided storage for clothes and linens and was a major piece in the house along with the built-in bed and bible box. If any one would like to donate a Kast or the means to acquire one, the Mabee Farm would be most grateful.

All donations to the Mabee Farm or the Museum are tax deductible. If there are questions or if you would like more information, contact Ona Curran (ocurapp@aol.com) or Stan Lee at the Mabee Farm (mabee@nycap.rr.com).

Thank You

*To all who helped the Society
restore its Art Collection*

Mr. and Mrs. William W. Borthwick
Bob and Sylvie Briber
William Grundy Broughton
Charitable Private Foundation Inc.
Mr. Richard M. Clowe
Mr. and Mrs. Almy D. Coggeshall
Mrs. Carolyn M. Cooper
Dr. and Mrs. Harold P. Curran
Mrs. Ruby Deagle
Ms Ellen M. De Lalla
Mr. Edward A. DeGraff
Mr. and Mrs. Burton R. Delack
Mr. and Mr. William Dimpelfeld
Mrs. Rose Dixon
Mrs. Rose Fetter
Mr. Stanley R. Fitzmorris
Mrs. Wayne H. Harvey
Mrs. Terry S. Hinkle
Dr. and Mrs. James Holmblad
Mr. Blaine H. Johnston
Mrs. Ann Karl
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Kerr
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Kindl
Mr. and Mrs. Richard G. Livingston
Gary D. and Kim A. Mabee
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Cryptic Masons
Mr. and Mrs. George S. Schmidt
Mr. Donald Smith Jr.
Mrs. Joan Spicer
Sally Van Schaick
Mr. and Mrs. T. Edmund Webb
Mr. W. Brinson Weeks Jr.
Mrs. Mary Jane Whitcomb



The Schenectady County Historical Society, as a non-profit organization depends on its members for support. Members provide the means to conduct programs and plan exhibits that relate to the community and tell the story of Schenectady County. Welcome to our new members. We hope you will extend an invitation to your friends to join, so they too can take part in the upcoming Fall and Spring programs.

Please note the List of Contributors as previously listed in each issue will be published yearly at the end of the fiscal year in the Society's expanded Annual Report. The Society thanks each and every one of you for your continued support.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Schenectady County Historical Society

Please indicate one of the following for your membership:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 | Family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | Donor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | Sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 | Lifetime |

Please mail this form with your check to:
Schenectady County Historical Society
32 Washington Ave., Schenectady, NY 12305

Your Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Also enclosed is a gift of \$ _____ for special projects designated as follows:

Museum: Art Restoration _____ Acquisitions _____ Publications _____ Programs _____

Library: Equipment _____ Publications _____

Mabee Farm: Preservation _____ Education Building _____ Programs _____

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