

# History of Scotia

By Michelle Norris, Village Historian

In 1610, Alexander Lindsey was born in Inverness, Scotland. Alexander left his native land as a young man, and traveled to Holland. From there he voyaged with the Dutch to America, settling first in New Amsterdam (New York City) and then in Fort Orange (Albany).

In 1658, Alexander Lindsey (now known as Alexander Lindsey Glen) headed west to the Mohawk River, to what would become the Schenectady settlement, in the company of Arendt Van Curler, Robert Sanders, and his brother-in-law William Teller. He looked across the river and saw the beautiful cornfields cultivated by the Mohawk Indians. Glen immediately purchased the land, and erected the first dwelling for a European on the north bank of the Mohawk River. When it was completed, he called his residence "Nova Scotia" after his beloved Scotland.

In 1690, across the river, French and Indians swept into the unprotected Schenectady stockade and massacred more than sixty residents, burned the fort, and took more than thirty prisoners. Nova Scotia and John Alexander Glen, son of Alexander Lindsey Glen, became a haven for many of the survivors.

In 1713, it became necessary to relocate the Mansion from its original location on the riverbank, because the Mohawk River channel had shifted to the north, and resultant flooding damaged the building. Using all available material from the old house, John Glen built what has today become the Glen Sanders Mansion. The one-room building that Glen constructed is the kitchen of the present house. With additions, the new house was soon comprised of a hall and three rooms. The original Dutch gambrel roof is still intact.



*The Original Mansion in 1713*

Between 1658 and 1713, a small village began to develop around the Mansion, and its residents named it "Scotia."



*Abraham Glen House today*

Abraham Glen, the grandson of Alexander Lindsey Glen, built his home across the street from the Mansion on what is now Mohawk Avenue. The main part of the house was built in 1730, with small additions coming in the years following. Upon Abraham's death, the house was purchased by the Charles and James Collins family, who occupied the house for 80 years. The Abraham Glen House and the park area behind it were deeded by the Collins estate to the village of Scotia in 1928. The house became the Scotia Public Library in 1929, and is now the Scotia Branch of the Schenectady County Public Library.

The area of Scotia is bounded by the river, South Ballston Avenue, Glen Avenue and Toll Street. In June of 1760, however, it was a large open field and was known as "the camp"

between the Glen Sanders Mansion and the Toll farm, serving for more than a century as a periodic mustering ground. The camp was occupied by colonial forces during the French and Indian war of 1759, by the Continental Army during the American Revolution in 1775, and by the Mohawk Valley militia during the War of 1812.

In 1798, Schenectady was incorporated as a city, with Glenville and Scotia as its fourth ward. In 1809, Schenectady County was formed from the division of Albany County, and in 1820 Glenville formally separated from the City of Schenectady and became part of Schenectady County.

In 1873, after a series of disastrous fires, the Neptune Engine Company of Scotia was organized. Through the effort of William L. Warren, firefighting equipment was purchased from the Schenectady Locomotive Company and Union College. The fire company was chartered in July 1877. The John Miller Hook and Ladder Company began on August 22, 1910 as a branch of the Scotia Fire Department; it was named after the village mayor.

In 1920, A.B Lawrence was elected president (mayor) of the village of Scotia. He saw the need for a police department, and appointed Floyd J. Parks as the first police officer. A motorcycle was soon after purchased by the village, and a permanent budget for the police department was instituted.

Reeseville, located near the present South Ten Broeck Street along the south side of Mohawk Avenue to the Glenville line, was a small village that grew up around the Reese Farm, known now as the Flint House. The Reese family lived there from 1820 to 1871, and helped make broomcorn the biggest crop in Schenectady County. The residents of Reeseville were mostly farm workers. The tiny village had its own school which it shared with Scotia, several shops, and a resident doctor. However, by the beginning of the 1900s the broomcorn industry was moving to the western part of the state and Scotia's main industry began to shut down.

In the early 1900s, the villages of Reeseville and Scotia agreed to merge and incorporate. It took two years for the villages to achieve incorporation, however, due to legal battles with New York State concerning Route 5 or Mohawk Avenue, and with the railroads that run past and through the village. After overcoming these struggles, the two villages were joined and became the Village of Scotia, incorporated on February 10, 1904. In 2004, the village of Scotia celebrated its 100th birthday.



*The U.S. Water Ski Show Team performs on the Mohawk River in Scotia*