

HISTORY OF SCOTCH PLAINS

From the very beginning Scotch Plains Township inspired glowing reports.

Peter Watson, in a letter to the old folks in Scotland on August 20, 1684, enthusiastically wrote of the inhabitants of the new-born community:

"This country is very well settled with People most part of the first Settlers come out of New England, very kind and loving people, kinder than in Scotland and England."

And Robert Fullerton, in early November of the same year, wrote to his brother, the Laird of Kinnebar:

"I did see several droves of wild deer and wild horses as I did ride up in the Country. The land which we were viewing is a large plain, under the blew hills, watered with two or three little rivers."

It took patient Mother Nature millions of years to mould the "large plain" and "blew hills."

For centuries volcanic upheavals spewed over the area, seas submerged the land and then receded, leaving their sediments behind to solidify into rock and stone. Mountains were thrust up only to be leveled. The glacial ages, with layer upon layer of ice, came and went adding their share to the shaping of Scotch Plains. The Ash Swamp area resulted from this glacial action, as well as the short rounded hills along Rahway Road towards Plainfield. An amateur geologist living in Scotch Plains would have an extensive laboratory in his own backyard.

By the time the first settlers came to this part of New Jersey in the middle of the Seventeenth Century, the violent activity of Nature had subsided many eons before. Placid Indians, the Raritans, who were of the Leni-Lenape branch of the Delawares, were living in a large wigwam village near what is now the Shackamaxon Golf Course. Incidentally, the sharp-eyed are, upon occasion, still turning up Indian relics.

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Scotch Plains was named for George Scot of Pitlochrie, Scotland, who led a group of Scots to the new land. He died on shipboard dur-