



Robert Glendining, manufacturer and benefactor was born in Dumfries, Scotland, on 20 March 1841. After a public school education he was apprenticed to a local draper. He arrived in Dunedin on the *Evening Star* in 1862, and on 6 August joined John Ross in establishing Ross and Glendining, “importer, wholesaler, and retailer of softgoods, selling a wide range of draperies, clothing, haberdashery and millinery to local and country customers”. The firm grew so quickly in the gold-rich economy that the partners soon disposed of the retail side of the business and concentrated on importing and wholesaling.

On October 12, 1865, Glendining married Mary Linson Cassels in Melbourne; Ross was to marry her sister Margaret five years later. While Ross ran the London office for the next 32 years, Glendining remained in control of the local firm and looked after the Australian contracts. From 1879 woollen goods were manufactured at the Roslyn Mill, Kaikorai, where Glendining began his day at 7.30 am.

The business was constituted a limited liability company in 1900 with a capita of 500,000 pounds. It then had branches in Dunedin, Christchurch (1888), Wellington (1890), Invercargill (1892) and Napier (1894). An Auckland branch was established in 1904. The scale of the firm's investments, the number of its product lines, and the strength of its distribution network enabled it to prosper in spite of the vicissitudes of the local economy.

Robert Glendining remained closely involved in the business until his death at his home, Nithvale, in North east Valley on 23 June 1917 after an illness of some months. He left an estate valued at 360,000 pounds, at the height of the firm's financial fortunes.

Glendining was chairman of Dunedin Drainage and Sewerage Board from 1901, a Commissioner of the Dunedin Sinking Fund 1895-1904, a member of Otago Patriotic Fund Committee, a founder and original director of National Insurance Co 1876-1907, local director of the Mutual Life Association of Australia, and director of the Perpetual Trustees Estate and Agency Company of New Zealand Ltd, and of various mining companies.

He was for many years an elder of Knox Church, Dunedin, and a member of the Church Board of Property. His considerable benefactions included building and equipping the Glendining Home for Children, opened in 1913, and generous contributions to Knox Church and Sunday School. His love of flowers led him to donate the Winter gardens of tropical and sub-tropical flora in the Dunedin Botanic gardens, completed in 1908 to a design by David tannock.

His widow in 1918 endowed the Mary Glendining Chair of Medicine at the University of Otago. She died in 1936, leaving substantial bequests to Knox College and to Presbyterian Missions. There were five children of the marriage. Both Robert and Mary are buried under an imposing and fitting granite obelisk in Dunedin's Northern cemetery.