

Mrs. R.H. Benjamin (Jennie)
Descendent of Louis DuBois Goetschius
Interviewed by Kay Yeomans, April 3, 1975

Note from Kay Yeomans: Mrs. Benjamin stopped in our driveway one time when she was on her way to weed family graves at The Old Stone Church including that of the Rev. Stephen Goetschius. She said she was also a descendent of Joseph Post, who owned our house (a mill in his time). I visited her in Clinton, NJ for the interview. There are some confusing remarks in her narrative and I will bracket some of the questions they raise. She skips around between generations so a genealogy would be helpful when reading her notes. She mentions Louis DuBois Goetschius several times but is speaking of two different people. The Reverend Stephen J. Goetschius came to the Old Stone Church from New Paltz, where he had married Elizabeth DuBois. Her father was Louis DuBois. They named one of their sons Louis DuBois Goetschius, b. 1783, and it was he who received nothing in the Reverend's will because he had had his share already. He had a son John Zabriskie Goetschius, b. 1809, who named his first born Louis DuBois in 1831. It was this Louis DuBois who lived in Upper Saddle River on Sparrowbush Road.

Mrs. B: That over there is a picture of my great-grandfather, Henry Hall Goetschius. He married Anna Maria Post. That's her picture down below there. She was the daughter of the Post who had the mill where you live. When they got married, they got a piece of the land across the street and built a home there. Their first son, Theodore, my grandfather, was born there.

Henry Hall was a cripple all his life. He went to Minnesota when he was 19. He went with Ed (or Ev) Hall. The Halls lived just across the line from Saddle River in New York State. When he was 19, not having received an education, he thought that if he went west he would have more of an opportunity in life. So he and Ed Hall took the train from Waldwick and ended up in Minnesota in 1858. They were there when Minnesota became a state. He worked in a hotel there. He had to work very hard and his disease became worse. So he came back to Saddle River.

He lived with his brother [in house built by his father, Louis DuBois Goetschius] on Sparrowbush Road, just one house up from where the Post's lived. That's how he met Anna Marie Post. [She lived at the bottom of Sparrowbush and West Saddle River Road.] They were married July 4, 1860. Their first son was Theodore, and their second child was my great-aunt who married James DeBaun. Her name was Rachel Jane Goetschius. She had a younger sister Maggie.

Eventually, they sold their house and moved to Waldwick. He [Henry Hall Goetschius] managed a blacksmith shop. He couldn't actually work in it, but somehow he learned the trade and managed it. He did that when they lived in Upper Saddle River and then in Waldwick. [*In Upper Saddle River a man named Walthery ran the blacksmith shop for him. It was there in 1894 that the election was held for Upper Saddle River to become a Borough.*] He was also an officer in the court. I have a picture of him standing out in front of the courthouse in Hackensack. They put him in a wagon, put a rope over him and put the reins in his hand and sent him on his way to Hackensack.

Theodore's wife died in 1901 and left behind Alice [my aunt], my mother Olive, Harry, Mildred who is still living, and Hazel who is deceased. There were five children. For a while my mother tried to keep house in what you call the Tuthill home [*on Old Stone Church Road, torn down in 1990s*]. She was only 14 years old. It was too much for her so my grandfather took his children and went to his father Henry Hall's house in Waldwick.

Now remember, Theodore's father was a total cripple, had been since he was 17, and he had brought up his own family and now started in to raise his son's family. My mother Olive was 14. Her sister was also a cripple. She had polio about the same time that Steve Goetschius did, and became a cripple. Although when she was young, it wasn't too bad. They put braces on her legs and she went to school and everything. My mother went from Waldwick and was one of the early telephone operators in the exchange in Ridgewood. She used to take the train from Waldwick to Ridgewood when she was 16 years old.

Kay: She must have known Bill's grandmother then, Anna Helms. She was also one of the first operators in Ridgewood.

Mrs. B: Probably. She was doing this when she got married in 1903. Now Henry Hall was a very remarkable man, as you can see. He had a great deal of character. He was a man who was very much respected by everyone except his father-in-law. Henry Pohlman Post thought his daughter had made a very bad marriage. However, he did help them out with a little piece of land so they could build that first house there on the corner [southeast corner of Old Stone Church and West Saddle River Roads]. I think she was an only daughter. I have her cameo. The story goes that in those days, when a girl turned 16 her father gave her a black silk dress and a cameo. I have her cameo, and she was married in the black silk dress in 1860.

When Pohly Post died he didn't leave her any property. He left the mill [on the NE corner of Old Stone Church and the West Road] and house, etc. to his sons but he left Anna Marie an annual stipend from interest on his money for as long as she lived. She lived long enough so that her brothers felt she had gotten more than what the land and money were worth, so they tried to buy her off. I remember I was five years old when they tried to buy her off. I remember the day she got her interest each year she would get all dressed up, put her best bib and tucker on with a little fur muff she had and out she would trot to get her money that was due her every year. She wanted that and wouldn't settle for a lump sum.

The house they owned in Waldwick was right next to the old school on Franklin Turnpike and the main street in Waldwick. It is torn down now. Henry Hall's father was John Zabriskie Goetschius. He was born in 1809 and lived until 1885. He married Charity Rutan. They named one son Louis DuBois Goetschius [born in 1831, he lived on Sparrowbush] and they had an Abraham. I have all of those names if you want them. Henry Hall was born in 1838 and his mother died 12 years later. She died in childbirth. His father remarried and had another very large family. He lived in Oakland, where he is buried in the old Ponds Church cemetery. The old church is gone but the cemetery is still there.

Kay: Did he originally live in Saddle River?

Mrs. B.: Yes, he did. When Henry Hall came back from Minnesota, he lived with his brother Louis DuBois on Sparrowbush Road. I have tried

to find out about Louis DuBois but about all I have found is his father's will in the courthouse in Hackensack. He disinherited Louis DuBois because he figured he had given him enough while he was alive. *[I think she was confused here and is referring to the Louis DuBois b. 1783 who was left nothing in the Rev. Stephen Goetschius' will because he had already had enough. Refer to the genealogy at the end of this transcription to sort out the names].*

That indicated to me that Louis DuBois must have made demands on his father. He made one of his other sons [John Henry Goetschius] his executor and left him his house, the sandstone one on the corner of Lake and East Saddle River Road. That was Stephen. He left that to his son John Henry. Then there was another son Stephen Zabriskie Goetschius who was a twin of John Henry's. He went west. He married a Margaret McMasters, and they had two children, John Zabriskie Goetschius and a daughter Catherine.

The Zabriskie part comes in because the Rev. Stephen Goetschius' father, John Henry (Johannes Hendricus) married Rachel Jane Zabriskie. The Rev. John Henry Goetschius had a church over in Bergenfield called the Old South Church. In 1772 Rachel Jane Zabriskie whose father was Jan Zabriskie and whose father was the original Albrecht. Jan and Margerie Duryea were the parents. Rachel was his second wife. John Henry's first wife had died in 1749 and he married Rachel Jane in 1750. His first wife was Maria Hallman and he had married her in Philadelphia. He had gone then to Long Island and then to Bergen County. When he came to Bergen field, there was a Cooper family (Kuyper) and they had a cooperage. You can see it still right in back of the church. They build barrels. A part of the Kuyper farm had been split off to build the church. In 1748 the Rev, Johannes Hendricus Goetschius was called to this church. In order to entice him to come, according to Adrian Leiby, since he had four daughter and 2 sons, they had to agree to build him a parsonage. Somewhere Adrian Leiby found a sketch of this parsonage. It was built along the early Dutch lines, somewhat like the Stephen Goetschius house in Saddle River. His wife died the next year and he married Rachel Jane Zabriskie. One of John Henry's children became very important in the Revoluion and he was hardly known. I found his name somewhere and called Adrian Leiby and wrote to George Olin Zabriskie in Hawaii and asked about him. Since then Adrian

Leiby has written a book which includes him. It's called the "*Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley.*"

He was the Major John Mauretius Goetschius, and he wanted to be a minister. But a minister is supposed to be a speller but judging by his reports which Adrian Leiby found, his spelling and writing were atrocious. He tried twice to be ordained and wasn't successful. So when the Revolution came along, he joined up and was a quartermaster originally with the New Jersey Militia, then he became a liaison officer on Washington's staff. He was with Washington at Fraunces Tavern when he gave his final address.

He had a very specific part in the Revolution. The British were in New York and they were in Philadelphia. They used to raid into Bergen County and despoil. His job was to lead a line squadron and to keep the people of Bergen County from being crushed by the British. His own farm was burned down and his own wife and children nearly kidnapped. I found a newspaper account in the Paterson Library that said that he was out on patrol to protect people from these raids. He challenged two white men and several Negro servants and they didn't stop. So he and the man who was with them opened fire. Two of the servants were killed and one of the white men wounded. After the war was over, they wanted to try him for murder, the neighbors. By this time he had a large family, 8 or 9 children, the oldest of whom, Lea, had married a Giuliam (William) Demarest.

The whole family picked itself up and went up to New York State to Montgomery County to two little towns called Fonda and Mondava (Bordalvo?). They stayed there until 1812. No one has been able to find the major's grave. The DAR is interested in this. In 1812 his daughter and her family went down the Mohawk Valley into Columbus, Ohio and there they joined up with some cousin's, a daughter of The Rev. Stephen G., and they founded Columbus, Ohio.

[There were indeed several Goetschius families who settled in Ohio in the 1800s, including two of Rev. Stephen Goetschius' grandsons but whether they were among the first in Columbus is unknown]

In 1772 Rachel Jane made a will. She was the daughter of a well-to-do man and she got a dowry when she got married. She was given a big tract of land which is in Tallmans, New York today [just over the New Jersey border]. There was a house up there called the Goetschius house on Cherry Lane. When I was a little girl, it was still standing. Many years ago, I found an abstract of her will showing that she left so much money to her eldest son who was Johannes, with the consent of her husband. She had to get the consent of her husband to draw up a will and dispense with her own property.

It was a very curious thing. George Olin Zabriskie thinks that Rachel Jane died in 1772, but I found a record showing she had appeared as a witness at a christening up in New Paltz in 1783 and her will was probated in 1784. [may have been another Rachel].

The Rev. Johannes Hendricus Goetschius was a very famous man, a friend of Freylinghuysen and many influential people. I found over in the Rutgers University Library a record of a Rev. Johannes Hendricus, VDM, who married by special license a Magdelana Christie. I understand that if you married by special license in those days, there was some question about your being able or legally able to get married. I think Rachel was still alive and there was some doubt about whether he was free to marry. The Christie family had to post a bond which was forfeit to the Crown if there was any question about his being able to get married. This was in 1773 and 11 months after that he was dead. George Olin asked me if I had ever found any record of a child being born in this marriage and I said no, I had not. This last wife did eventually marry again, a VanDuyssel, and did have a child.

John Henry is buried in Bergenfield, ten feet from the southwest corner of the church. It is eroded but the monument has Rev. John Henry Goetschius, his first wife Maria Hallman, and his mother, Ester Werntland, who came from Switzerland. This is at the old South Church. The monument was erected by the Kuypers. One of his daughters had married Dirck Kuyper.

Adrian Leiby mentions in his book that he had found in some old church minutes that about 100 years ago the Goetschius crypt had been in a state of disrepair. This had been at the northeast corner of the church.

There is a slate slab there with the name of Hardenberg or Freylinghuysen (They re both buried there) and you lift it up and go down into the crypt. John Henry was buried there.

In 1772 Rachel Jane and all her children disappear from New Jersey records. Apparently they all went back to the house in Tallmans that her father had given her. The records are up there in Rockland County (j to be minister at the Saddle River Reformed Church. That was in 1812. But while in New Paltz, he married Elizabeth DuBois and his children were born up there. When they came back, they came via Hillburn and into Mahwah. There are Goetschius people now in Ramsey and they are descended from a Beatas Goetschius. There were two Beatas – one was the son of the Rev. John Henry and the other was his brother. The ones in Ramsey are probably descended from the son of John Henry. When Stephen came to Saddle River, he brought his family with him and they settled in Saddle River. *[this is not true. Stephen was in his sixties. The only children with him were the youngest, John Henry, a twin whose twin brother chose to study for the ministry and a daughter Ann Eliza who married Jacob Hopper, grandson of the John Hopper who built the museum.]*

Stephen's son Abraham was across the state line in New York. I found Jacob in Green County, NY, up near Poughkeepsie in a town called Catskill. Jacob married Catherine Schonemann, the daughter of a Rev. Schonemann. One of Jacob's sons came down to Passaic County and married his cousin, Hannah Goetschius and took her back to Green County. They had 10 children.

Rachel's oldest son, Johannes, when he received and settled her estate, sold his property to Jan Tallman. That's how it became known as Tallmans.

Johannes Hendricus, the minister had two brothers, Betas and another, the Rev. Johannes Mauretius Goetschius who was the minister in New Paltz before Stephen. He died in 1771 and Stephen took his Uncle's place. He married in 1750 and Elsie Metenderle. He had no children.

CHECK CHILDREN OF JAN MAURETIUS. BOTH BROTHER AND SON.

John Henry had a son Johannes Mauretius, brother of Stephen. He lived in Bergen County, in Hawthorne. He had a farm just at the bend by Diamond Bridge Avenue. Lafayette's camp during the Revolution was on property just south of his farm. He acquired this right after the Revolutionary War. Lincoln Avenue, which goes between Hawthorne and Ridgewood was a little lane through his farm and was called Goetschius Lane. Where Route 208 comes in and crossed the railroad track in Hawthorne, he had a cider mill. When he left his will, he had everything measured to his cider mill and his little lane and he divided it between two sons, Hendrick and Jacob.

I have a cousin, Pat Birkin, up in Midland Park. She says her father who was an engineer for the city of Paterson, was also an amateur genealogist. He always told her that their branch of the family was not descended from Rachel Jane and the Rev. John Henry, but from his brother the Rev. John Mauretius.

I'm inclined to believe that. I think Rachel Jane took her family and went back to her house in Tallmans. She was only 45 years old. I think the Rev. John Henry married another woman, and that put him under a cloud because you don't hear too much about him in church history and there is no record in church history of definitely where he died. [*This is Mrs. Benjamin's opinion and is not corroborated in any of the history books mentioning John Henry Goetschius or in the Heidgerd genealogy of the Goetschius family.*]

The father of the Rev. John Henry Goetschius was the Rev. John Mauretius, born in Zurich, Switzerland in 1686. He married Esther Woehrle (Werndtland), born in 1688 and she died in Bergenfield Sept. 12, 1777, where she is buried. They came to this country in 1735. They came because the Rev. John Mauretius Goetschius, who had had a church in Salas, Switzerland had fallen under a cloud because he got a servant girl pregnant. He was stripped of his church; however, he was a very well loved minister and 400 people decided when he was stripped of his church to follow him to Holland. They took three large boats down the Rhine to Holland and it was a very difficult trip. They were harassed by the Germans, several died on the trip, children drowned, and by the time they got to Holland they had no money left. They were begging in the streets in Rotterdam. Then the Dutch passed a law against begging.

John Mauretius finally managed to see someone in The Hague and get another church. They had been headed for the Carolinas, but that had fallen through. So he got a church in Philadelphia and they came to the New World. Those who couldn't pay for their passage had to come as indentured servants. His church was in the New Goshen section of Philadelphia.

Three months after they landed, he died and his son Johannes Hendricus took over his church. He was not yet twenty. He was never ordained in Holland but he continued to preach. At that time, not too much issue was made of it. In 1740 he decided to go over to Long Island to preach. When he did that he was challenged. They said he was not entitled to preach or take a church because he had not been ordained. The dispute raged for eight years while ships went back and forth to Holland to decide this issue.

In 1747 in Newtown, Long Island, he preached a sermon that divided the church into two factions. I have a copy of this sermon [*copy given to the U.S.R. Historical Society*]. It was published in the 1847 "Banner of Truth" after being translated from Dutch to English.

This split the church into two factions: the Coetus and the Conferentie. The Conferentie believed that the new world was not independent of the old world, that it was a part of the old world and subject to the authority of the old world. The Coetus believed they were separate. These two factions became the base for the Whig and Tory, Independence and Loyalist factions when the Revolution began. This was the forerunner of the Revolution in America. The Rev. John Henry Goetschius died two years before the Declaration of Independence, but Adrian Leiby says that he had more influence on the Revolution than all the soldiers who marched past his grave.

The Reverend came to Bergenfield from Long Island, and he also preached in Hackensack. When the church split, the churches would alternate not only ministers but congregations. The whole congregation would follow its minister to whichever church he was preaching at.

Kay: Mrs. Benjamin, I wonder if you could tell us some stories about Upper Saddle River.

Fine, my grandmother was Charity Elizabeth Smith. She was a Paterson girl. She married Theodore, Henry Hall Goetschius' son, and Henry Hall built them a house where Tuthill's now live. He had a blacksmith shop there, and his wife managed the farm. She had three men who worked for her. One was a Walthery, who was her foreman. On weekends she would take her produce down to the market in Paterson, and she would stay overnight with her sister.

One of the times that she left to go to the market in Paterson, she left two of the children at home with her husband. When she came home, he was lying unconscious with blood running out of his ear. The children were missing, but she found them at the neighbor's. Come to find out, he had gotten into a race. He loved fast horses, and was always bragging about how he could beat anybody's horses around. He had gotten into a race with one of the neighbors. It seems that they had locked wheels and my grandfather had tipped over and the other man ran over his head. He was not able to recognize his family or do any work for a whole year after that.

My grandmother, according to the stories, was quite a businesswoman. She had decided that although her husband didn't like to run a farm, she did and she had a very successful farm with about 50 acres there. She marketed her own produce, hired and fired her own men, and managed to take care of her family. My mother as the next to the oldest. The oldest had had polio and was a cripple.

My mother told me that one of her favorite spots was to go down to the cemetery at the Old Stone Church and just sit there and collect herself and get away from all the younger kids.

I grew up in Mahwah, but my great-grandfather grew up in Upper Saddle River of course. And the stories of the cantankerousness of his father-in-law, Pohlman Post, are legion. He was named for a famous minister, I guess, but my great uncle always used to say that it was because Pohly resembled a polecat.

When I was a little girl, the whipping tree was still there. My great aunt used to point it out to me when we used to come over here every spring to take care of the graves. Of course, my mother went to school in that little school with the Carloughs and people that there are pictures of. I have some of the pictures of that school.