

Lizzie May Carlough Goetschius

Myrtle (Mimi) K. Miller interviewing Lizzie Carlough Goetschius At 363 East Saddle River Road on the corner of Lake Street. (Mimi Miller and her husband moved to Upper Saddle River in 1960 and purchased a medal and badge production company on Old Stone Church Road.)

Mimi: Lizzie was born and raised in this area and will have many interesting things to tell us. Lizzie, when did your family come to Upper Saddle River?

Lizzie: My father was born in Upper Saddle River. My grandfather lived in the yellow house on Lake Street, opposite Carlough Road, where the Kirschners live now. They were farmers and I know they were cattle drovers. I have heard my family talking about how they went to Pennsylvania to buy cattle, but I don't know how far in Pennsylvania they went. My father went with them and Jim Ramsey.

Mimi: Lizzie, can you tell us about the Goetschius family who lived here in this house.

Lizzie: Well, my husband would have been 92 this year. He was born in this house, his father was born in this house, his grandfather was born in this house, his great grandfather lived in this house, and his great-great grandfather, who was the Rev. Stephen Goetschius, lived in this house.

My mother-in-law [Kate] said that he used to hold prayer meetings right here in this house.

I did not go to the Old Stone Church when I was small. I went to the Methodist Sunday School because that was nearer. I started when I was quite small. But my husband went to the Old Stone Church Sunday school. My sisters and brothers all went to the Old Stone Church Sunday school, in the morning and the Methodist Church in the afternoon. [Lizzie was the youngest.]

Claire Tholl has said that the original owners of this house were Hoppers. There have been several changes to the house. There were two big rooms here, one on the north side and one on the south side, where we are, and two big back-to-back fireplaces. The stone support is still in the cellar at the present time, the foundation for the fireplaces. And now, since the house has belonged to my husband and me, my nephew Clinton Carlough and his wife have made several changes, putting in a bathroom and heat, and all that.

Mimi: Lizzie, how did you do your chores before you had water in the house and a refrigerator.

Lizzie: Indeed, I can. I came here as a bride June the 29th, 1910. My mother-in-law and father-in-law gave us two rooms downstairs and two rooms upstairs. We had to use coal stoves, wood stoves in the beginning, before we switched to coal. And we had to go out to the well for all the water. And I carried all the water in and all the water out for a little over 52 years, before Clinton brought in the plumbing.

We used kerosene lamps first off. When my mother-in-law and father-in-law were married forty years, they celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary, and my husband had electric lights put in as an anniversary present.

We did not have refrigerators in those days. If I wanted to keep something cool, I had to go all the way in the cellar with my butter and eggs and milk and all those things.



Lizzie at Greenwood Lake c. 1915

Otherwise, I had a cabinet upstairs, my Hoosier cabinet and another cabinet where I could keep things. I can tell you quite a story about my Hoosier cabinet. I was going to be married June 29th and my mother-in-law gave us this little parlor for our kitchen [Steve's office]. So my husband had a beautiful closet built, the one with all the pretty dishes in it, with a closet underneath where we could keep cooking utensils and all those things.

A man by the name of Hopper built it [John Hopper] and he told us that it was built so that we could take it with us if we ever wanted to move. The drawers are dove-tailed and the top is doweled so we could lift it right off. We had all our furniture bought, all our bedroom set, and our kitchen things, the Hoosier cabinet and our table and our chairs, and those things to start housekeeping with, a couple of rocking chairs for the living room. But our full bedroom set was upstairs.

That all came from Van Dyk's furniture store in Paterson, which had two big stores on main street, one each side of the Opera House. It was supposed to be delivered in the early morning by horse and wagon. Before they closed the store late in the afternoon, it was all loaded on the wagon, packed so they could start in early morning to come here. It was put in the livery stable. In the night, the Opera House caught fire. And the two furniture stores were completely ruined. So we had the last Hoosier kitchen cabinet out of Van Dyk's store. It was lovely for us that we got the things we had picked out to start off with.

Mimi: Can you tell us about the town when you were a little girl?

Lizzie: You asked me what the town was like. I don't know where you could find it. There was no town. The homes were few and far between.

I lived on Carlough Road. There was my grandfather's house which was on the bend before you go on Carlough Road [from Lake Street] and then the Eckerson house on Carlough Road where the John Paterson family live today, and then my father's house, and the next was up where Sparrowbush Road comes out. That was the house on the bend on Sparrowbush, used to be the Quackenbush house. The Eckerson house and my father's house were the only two on Carlough Road when I was a child.

I came to Upper Saddle River's school, all of my brothers and sisters did. And we had to walk. One very icy morning, my brother [David J. Carlough] and I were going to school. Sometimes he would bring the sleigh and we would ride down the big hill. And this morning as we made the curve — It was not the way it is now, there was a different curve — we could see a man coming up the hill with a horse and sleigh, a big heavy farm horse with a farmer's sleigh. It was an elderly man, Mr. Jack Hopper, who lived in the stone house where the Lack family lives today. [Hopper Farm Road]

My brother said, "Drag your feet." We went way over to the side. We never brought the sleigh along after that morning. We thanked God everything went alright, so we called it quits.

Farming was the main industry in Upper Saddle River. In Saddle River, there was Mr. Martin Smith who had the basket factory. That's where my father had his baskets made for his strawberries. My father was at that time called the "Strawberry King." And I still have some of the little handled baskets that they wove themselves in the wintertime, and the little pint baskets and half pint baskets that they made themselves.

Mimi: Do you have any favorite old houses in town?

Lizzie: There was the Hennion house on Pleasant Avenue where they have that beautiful tree. That lady was my mother-in-law's cousin. We were very friendly. I went to school with one of the daughters. We were pals in school and even after that we were very friendly. She lost her husband. My sisters and

brother were friends with some of the older ones.

Mimi: Did you know of any stills being operated during Prohibition time?

Lizzie: I recall a lot of rumors. My husband was Borough Clerk and it wouldn't have been nice to take sides with anybody.

Mimi: Can you tell us about some of the people who lived in town, like Laura Coe.

Lizzie: She didn't live in town. Laura Coe was a cousin of mine. She had a sister of the Mrs. Litchult that Clinton bought property from when he was building the country club. And he also bought the Jacob Straut property, which was my father's sister and her husband. That was also included in the Apple Ridge.

Mimi: Can you tell us about some of your childhood friends?

Lizzie: Yes, but there weren't very many because there weren't very many people around. A lot of children have so many to play with, but we did not. We used to go across the fields to the Litchults and the Strauts over on Crescent Avenue. I had my brothers and sisters and we had our pets and we had to take care of things.

Mimi: Do you recall anything about slaves or slavery?

Lizzie: No, but I can tell you a story, just a bit of a story. There was a very elderly lady who lived, not right where Norman Yeomans lives [Post's Mill then}, but on that road [West Saddle River Road] there was an enormous tree and there was a house there, a very old house. And there were colored people who lived there. There were several but I recall this elderly lady, she used to come across the fields and come out on Carlough Road. There was a path that I used when I visited Ethel Terhune [on the West Road, Alan Johnstone's mother]. Ethel used to walk partway with me when I would go home. That lady crossed there and she would go to Ramsey. She was the most beautiful singer that you would ever want to hear. It would echo in those woods and sound so nice. She was happy and friendly and jolly. You would hear it ring through the woods.

My father was the first mayor in the Borough and they also had a mistress of the poor. The old lady got in ill health and she needed help. Someone sent word to my father. He went and they decided that she would need to go to a home or to a hospital where she could be taken care of. There was no ambulance or anything like that. My father had a friend in Allendale, an elderly Dr. Pittus. He used to come and call on my father and stay to dinner. My father brought him to see this woman and he said, "Jim, she has to go where she can get help." My father took his market wagon, an open wagon, put bales of straw in the bottom and took his nice, warm horse blankets and sleigh lap blankets that we used to keep warm. He put them on the straw and then over her and they took her to the County house. That is a true story from when I was a child.

I have to tell you a deer story. We did our own washing and had a clothes line. On the west end of the house there was a horse chestnut and a pine tree and my mother-in-law had a clothes line tied between those two. I had washed some things and took them out there. If the wind came from the northeast or the northwest, it blew beautifully. So I'm hanging these clothes and all of a sudden I hear dogs barking coming down off of the hill. I thought "what is that" but I wanted to get my things hung up, so I finished that. As I turned around to look, here they were coming across the back lawn. The dogs were chasing this poor deer who was panting away, you wouldn't believe how long his tongue was hanging out. I screamed so hard that my throat was sore for days.

The boys all came here for their fishing and hunting licenses, and many times I heard them swapping stories about their hunting and their fishing. My husband dearly loved grey squirrels. The boys would catch the grey squirrels and bring them here to my hubby. We would get them all ready and serve a nice dinner to all the boys. We served them everything from soup to nuts, starting off with squirrel soup which is delicious if it is made right. You have to clean your squirrels, wash them all good, and let them stand just a little while in salt water. If you leave them too long you draw all the flavor out. You put them on and cook them with pepper and salt, and cook them until they're tender. You put onions and parsley in your soup and rice. Be sure there is plenty of meat in it and you will surely have something really delicious.

After that I would have the rest of the squirrel all cooked and ready to put in nice hot butter in the frying pan and brown them nicely on both sides. I would have mashed potatoes and creamed turnips, apple sauce with mint in it and candies. We served beer and they could have smokes if they wanted.

When they were filled up on that, then I served pie and coffee. Everything homemade and plenty of it. The boys really did enjoy it.