



A WALK ALONG GEORGETOWN ROAD

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Gertrude Johnson sharing a moment at Compo Beach with one of her 5 grandchildren. (circa 1955)

Mrs. Gertrude Johnson, was born on January 2, 1911, at Jaderlund Corners in "Swedetown." In 1911 this was in the Georgetown section of Weston at the corner of what is now Old Georgetown Roads. Mrs. Johnson was born to Martin Peterson and Julia Kennel of Weston. Mr. Peterson's parents had come to the Georgetown area of Weston from Sweden in the latter part of the 19th century, and Martin's father, August Peterson, worked in the Gilbert and Bennett wire mill. His mother, Sophia Mansfield Peterson, was, as were most women in that time, a housewife.

Martin Peterson, born in Brooklyn in 1883, was one of several children (including Frank, Albin and Ella) who grew up, married and raised families in the area of Weston, Wilton, and Georgetown. Martin married a Weston girl, Julia Kennel, the daughter

of Charles and Mary Hayden Kennel. Julia had been born during the Great Blizzard of 1888 in the house now known as "Old Windways Farm" located on Georgetown Road.

When Gertrude Peterson Johnson was born she was christened

"Dorothy Elizabeth," but her mother, Julia, soon changed this name when it was discovered that a neighbor objected to Julia using the same name that she had already used for her own daughter. Ever since that time Mrs. Johnson has been "Gertrude," although her birth certificate was never changed, leading to some numerous clerical problems over the years. *Continued page 2*



124 Georgetown Road. Gertrude Johnson moved to this house (now extensively renovated) at age 1. The house was built by her great uncle Adam Kennel.



Farm house on Georgetown Road at the intersection of Cannondale Road. The Corsa family ran a dairy farm on the property and sometimes cooled their milk in the spring at 202 Georgetown Road which is now a pool.

When Gertrude was age one her parents moved to the house now known as 124 Georgetown Road. This house had been built by her great-uncle Adam Kennel. It is from this house that Mrs. Johnson walked to the Upper Parish School located at 47 Godfrey Road (now a private residence). Her memories of these walks and the people and places along the route have made for an interesting walk in history.

Gertrude's first stop along the way was the spring located at now 202 Georgetown Road. Many of the local farmers would put their milk cans in this spring to keep them cold until they were sold or shipped out from the Cannondale railroad station. One of the farmers who used this spring was Mr. Corsa. His farm was directly across from Cannondale Road. He had a large dairy farm on the property. On Cannondale, Mrs. Johnson recalls that up the first small hill (now #7 Cannondale) was a farm belonging to "Will Plum" Lockwood. Everyone called him Will Plumb possibly to distinguish him from his father whose name was also William. There was a huge windmill on the property which, like so many things in



295 Georgetown Road, former home of Irving Lockwood (Ruth Lockwood's uncle).

the early 1900s, was lost to fire. The next farm belonged to Ira Andrews who owned the property later known as the Snaith property. Currently the property encompasses Trail's End and Shinecock Roads.

The last farm where Gertrude would occasionally

go was Irving Lockwood's, (Ruth Lockwood's Uncle) now 295 Georgetown Road. Ruth's father, Leroy lived in the house across the street, #304. She remembers that there was a well in the middle of the kitchen so you didn't have to go outside to fetch water in all sorts of weather. Ruth Lockwood went to school with Gertrude and she remembers that one day everyone was talking about the world coming to an end. Gertrude's mother told her that there was no truth to the story and sent her off to school. When school was over for the day, Ruth Lockwood was so frightened to walk home because she thought the world was going to end that she was crying her heart out. Gertrude told Ruth that the whole story was untrue and offered to walk her home, giving up her cross country trek with the Samuelson boys. Ruth still remembers the kindness shown to her that day.

Going up Georgetown Road from her home at # 124, Gertrude remembers sometimes having to walk along the stonewalls because

the mud was so deep on the road. She would come to "Ring's Hill" so named for John Ring who lived at 95 Georgetown Road, the second house up from what is now Midtown Service Center. This hill has also been call "Bull Punk" hill by old-time residents. At the top of the hill at #61 Georgetown Road lived the Kramers who owned the white house across from Kramer Lane as well as the land which is now Kramer Lane. The house, at that time, was not as large as it appears now. At one time Gertrude worked for the Kramers for \$1 a day. She would wash the floors and the windows with kerosene. Her worst memory of this job, other than the smell, was the day that one of the Kramer children took dirt out of the flower pot and threw it on the floor that she had just



Former home of "Will Plumb" Lockwood, located at 7 Cannondale Road. There was a large windmill located behind the house but it was destroyed by fire in the early 1900's.

finished washing.

Other than that most of her childhood memories are of happy times. She tells of playing "duck on the rock", tag, prisoner's base, kick the can, etc. There were boys in the neighborhood that she walked with to and from school and there were always chores to do. One thing they loved to do was make root beer. They would take root beer extract and put it in a bottle with yeast and sugar and lay it out in the sun. Best taste in the world. Gertrude also recalls some of her relatives had a huge copper kettle they used to make a home brew. At the time the house had walls and ceiling made of tin, and when the top exploded off the kettle it made not only a mess, but put many dents in the house.

In 1929 Gertrude married Vernon Johnson, a young man whose

family had come to this area from Kansas, and who spent many years working at the Gilbert and Bennett wire mill. Gertrude and Vernon lived with her parents, caring for both her invalid mother and younger brother Frank, as well as their own family. In 1938 Vernon and Gertrude purchased several acres of land not too far from the Peterson home. They spent several years constructing their house, as they both had outside jobs, and were continuing to take care of the Peterson household. After the marriage of her brother Frank, Gertrude and Vernon were finally able to move into their new home on Wilson Road. Gertrude tells a wonderful story of one evening when they had had a large snowstorm. Vernon wanted to go sleigh riding. He and Gertrude took a flexible flyer and walked to the top of "Bull Punk Hill." Vernon laid down on the sled and Gertrude had to sit towards the back and hang on. They started off and ended up almost where they had lived at 124 Georgetown Road. When Vernon asked if she wanted to go again, she said breathlessly that she didn't care to. She said she was scared to death and had no intentions of cheating fate again.

Gertrude (or Gram as everyone now calls her) has five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, and has recently become a great-great grandmother. Lynn writes that she is a wonderful cook and keeps a spotless house, in which



Located at the top of the hill on Georgetown Road and Kramer Lane is the former home of the Kramer family. Gertrude once worked for the Kramers.

at any time of day or night you are likely to find not only her immediate family and/or their offspring, but also various relatives from different branches of the family (and their friends and acquaintances) as well as at least two generations of her neighbors, who persist in considering Gertrude Johnson as their own special "Gram."

(I want to thank Lynn Barrelle for introducing me to Mrs. Johnson. I only wish that I had more time to sit and listen to stories of Weston years ago. I also wish that I could someday partake of her hot chocolate and baked apples for which she is well known in the family. Thanks again to "Gram" for a wonderful morning.)