

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

August 2023, Issue 317

Jesse's Elm Shade

On a warm-ish, mid-August evening, an ample turnout enjoyed a program to remember. Present: Lew Knott, Bob Shaw, Margaret Donohue, Terry & Garth Bryant, Anita Orsino, Eileen & Ed Volmar, Stewart Wagner, Stephanie Ingalls, John Garofalo & Peter O'Hara, Jeannette Rose, Linda Berger, Frank Potter, Johanne & Robert Titus, Flip Flach, David Tschinkel, Charlene & Ken Mabey, Rachel Ceasar, Richard Ceasar, Mary Lou Nahas, John Earl, Linda & Chuck Jesse, and Deb & Don Teator, and maybe a few more that escaped my sign-in and my memory.

The GLHG Program Year is filled in a number of ways but one unique way led to my penning in Chuck Jesse's name and topic. I would like to say I hunted him down but actually he found me. With an exchange of emails, Chuck became the August program.

I have started this account three times. You are reading my third draft!

Chuck's opening comments from the Power-Point presentation:

"Good Evening,

"My name is Charles (Chuck) Jesse. My dad and mom, Warren and Grace Jesse, owned and operated Jesse Jesse's Elm Shade from 1947 till 1972.

"Today I am honored to talk to you about the Resort and give you a sense of what

it was like. But first, I would like to thank Don Teator, his wife Debra and the Greenville Local History Group for giving me this opportunity to make this presentation and return to Greenville after being away for more than 50 years.

"I first learned of this organization in November of 2021 when my wife, Linda, came across Don's web site while doing research for a book she is writing for our family. I found the Elm Shade and noticed there were no information about it. I wrote Don an E-Mail introducing myself and offered to send him the pictures I had. I did, and he asked if I could add captions. To make a long story short I ended up writing a narrative history in order to put the pictures in context. He read to document and offered me this opportunity to present it at one of your meetings."

Chuck had previously sent me a history of Jesse's Elm Shade. It is a wonderful account of the development of his family's resort.

However, running at 3500 words, it will not fit into one newsletter, so:

1: I have excerpted key parts for this newsletter.

2: I strongly urge you to open the attached pdf file that is the 3500 words account, with the many photos, of which only two are in the paper copy of this newsletter.

## **Jesse's Elm Shade: My Family's Resort** (1946 – 1972)

by Charles (Chuck) Jesse

Dedicated to my family: Warren & Grace Jesse, Joan Jesse, Minnie & Fred Jesse

In April 1946, my grandfather, Fred Jesse, suddenly passed away from a heart attack. His wife, Minnie and he had owned Breezy Knoll Acres for about twenty years. My Dad, Warren, grew up in the resort business and was a dairy farmer during the war. After Grandpa died, Grandma and Dad were devastated, and didn't think they could run a Resort, a Bar, and a Dairy Farm without Grandpa Fred. Grandma understood and she put Breezy Knoll up for sale. The family moved back to New Jersey and thus ended the Jesse presence in Greenville.

Circa late 1946, my dad started missing the Greenville area and decided to get back into the resort business. He contacted a realtor agent and was directed to Elm Shade Farm which was owned by John Lowe and his wife. It was an ideal location about a mile north on SR 32, across from Irving Road. John had an existing resort style farm which would require minimal preparation to open for the 1947 season.

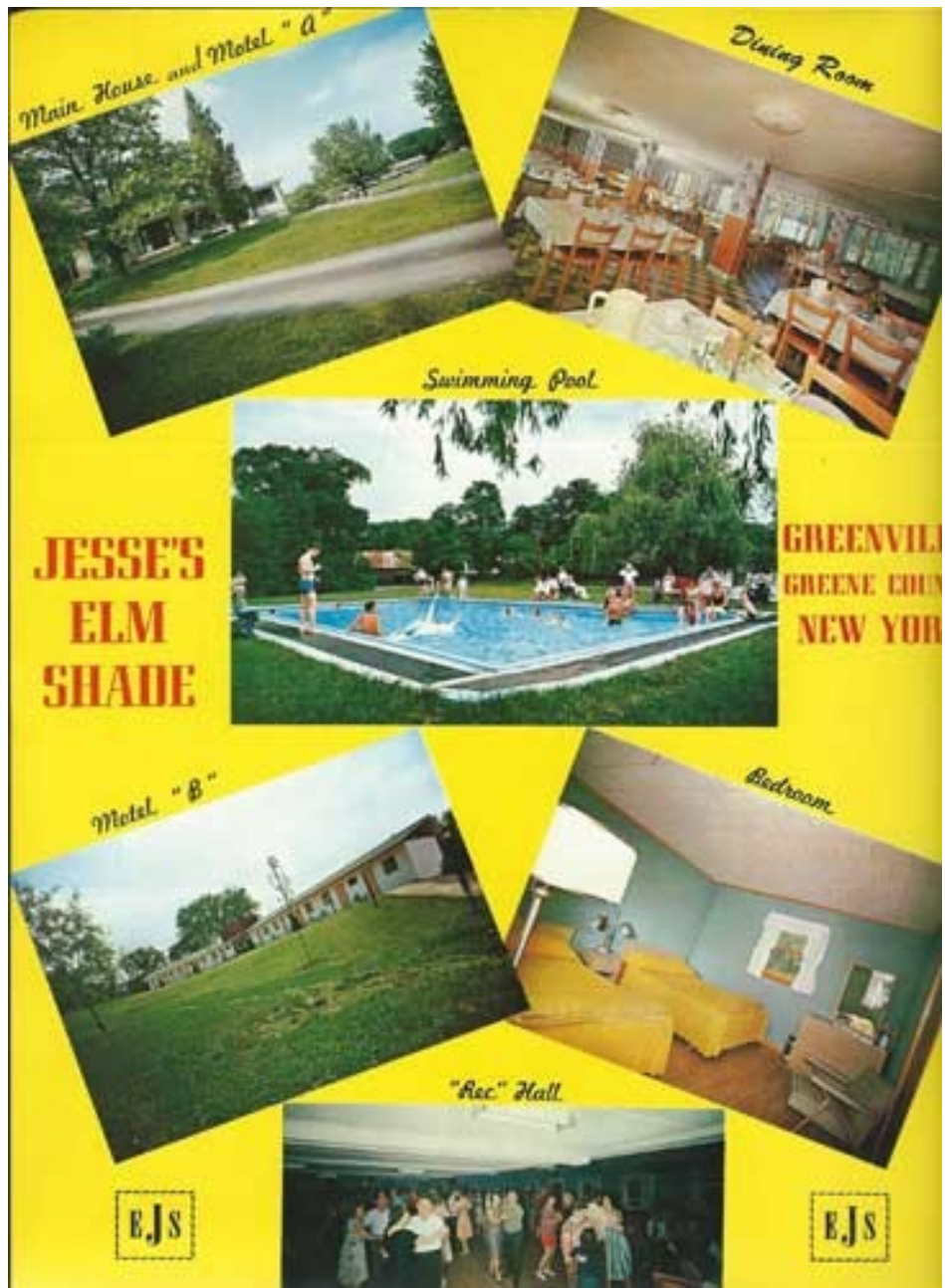
Dad and my mom, Grace, made an offer for Elm Shade Farm. The story I was told is that John didn't want to sell, but his wife was getting tired of the business and wanted him to get rid of it. He appeased her by pricing the property and business way over the market value for the time but, like today, inflation took over after the war. John didn't increase the price to compensate for it, so it got to the point where the business and property was suddenly a good deal. Elm Shade Farm became Jesse's Elm Shade when Dad and Mom bought it. The Jesse family was in the resort business again.

I was born after the 1948 vacation season. My personal memories start in the early to mid-1950s. The stories and information of the earlier years was passed down to me by my family and several of our guests who followed the Jesse's from Breezy Knoll Acres. I am writing this narrative based on these memories, the stories I was told, and by reviewing the pictures and literature left to me.

The initial guest buildings consisted of the Main House with seventeen guest bedrooms (fifteen on the second floor and two with outside entrances), two outside annexes ("A" and "B") with four bedrooms and six bedrooms respectively, and a large auxiliary storage building, which would be converted into a recreation hall by Dad. The grounds had a "shuffle board", a tennis court, horse shoes, swings, seesaw, and other entertainment items. I am not sure whether the pool was already there, or Dad added it.

There were also several farm buildings. The "Big Red" Barn was one the defining features of the property. It was one of the largest in the area at that time. Carvings on several of the beams dated it back to the mid-1800s. The barn could not be missed from the road as it dominated the rear of the resort property

Since John Lowe used Elm Shade Farm not only as a resort but also as a working farm to provide fresh dairy products to the guests, several farm buildings were also on the property. There was a "chicken coop", "corn crib", garage/storage building which was converted to a recreation hall, and several miscellaneous outbuildings



used for housing small farm animals and farm equipment.

The Elm Shade consisted of approximately 186 acres. The resort was about 25 acres. There was a wooded/marshy area of approximately 40 acres. The rest was fields. We never used it as a farm.

Dad kept John Lowe's chickens for the first year then sold them when the family returned to our winter home in New Jersey. The first 3 or 4 years of operation, Dad would buy two milk cows in the spring from Pete Carelas. Our chef would pasteurize the milk every evening and it would be used for cooking and drinking.

In the fall, Dad sold the cows back to Pete.

In the winter, Dad let one of the local farmers, he knew, use the barn to house his sheep. I don't think much money changed hands as it was a nice feeling just to have someone keeping an eye on the property. In May, the sheep would be sheared and return to their summer home. For several summers, Pete Carelas would have his farm hands come over and harvest the hay from the fields to feed his livestock. I have no other recollection of the Elm Shade being used as a farm while my family owned it.

The Farm was called Elm Shade due to the many large "Elm" trees on the property. Unfortunately, the Dutch Elm Disease hit and many of the beautiful trees had to be cut down. Luckily, the two trees on either side of the main driveway were spared. One of our guests owned a Plant Nursery and recommended that we should plant "Willow" Trees as they grew fast, provided a lot of shade, and would help dry up wet spots around the property. Dad took the advice and we ended up with more Willows than we had Elms .....

....[There is a photo of] the last brochure used by "The Elm Shade" before it was sold in 1972. I shall always remember the day my dad picked them up from the printer's. It was November 22, 1963, the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. I had been sent home from school and was watching the news when Mom and Dad got home. Dad was very upset and his thoughts were for John Jr. and Caroline losing their father. This was also a loss to the entire nation.

Since there was limited night life in the area and the majority of our guests just

wanted to relax and not have to go off premises for entertainment, we provided something to do each night. Saturday and Wednesday we had a "live" band, usually a three-piece combo consisting of a piano player, drummer, and another accompanying instrument. The Recreation Hall was setup with tables and chairs around the dance floor.

My dad was not against drinking, but his experiences at Breezy Knoll told him not to have a bar as it took a great deal of time and energy to run. During the first several years of operation, one of the Guests would take up a collection to buy a keg of beer. Since we didn't sell or supply it, there was no problem with not having a liquor license. The keg was purchased from World Top Acres, which at that time was owned by Pete Carelas before his daughter and son in law, Bob Young, took it over.

Pete's relationship with my family went back a long way, probably as far as Breezy Knoll. The tradition of the beer keg was replaced when people would bring their own bottles of alcohol or buy the brand of beer they liked. We would refrigerate their six packs and supply cups as a convenience to our guests. All that we asked was that they purchase their mixes and ice from the recreation hall.

To continue with the entertainment schedule. Sunday night was a softball game between the Elm Shade and World Top Acres. (The weather and the ability of each Resort fielding a team determined if we played). We lost most of the time, but each side had a good time and the losing team would promise revenge next season.

Monday night was Bingo. We played fifteen games and gave a small prize to each game's winner. Margaret's Pizza would

## Jesse's Elm Shade Extends A Personal Invitation To You

This popular, informal and friendly resort has for years been catering to vacationers just like you and knows how to make your vacation a delightful one. Our home-style meals are delicious and plentiful, and all baking is done right in our own kitchen. Our beautiful dining room is immaculate and you'll find the service excellent.

JESSE'S ELM SHADE can accommodate up to 150 guests and we have a wide variety of accommodations. Motel units are spacious and as modern as we could make them, and feature large double beds, for 2, 3 or 4 person occupancy; and naturally, all have private baths. Motel rooms are air-cooled by cross ventilation and all have individually-controlled heat. Rooms in the Main House and Cottages have hot and cold running water, with ample and convenient bath facilities available. To assure you of a good night's rest all beds have comfortable innerspring mattresses.

You'll find our rates surprisingly moderate.

## Sports . . . . and Recreation

Our large, modern filtered swimming pool is the center of daylight activities for those who like to soak up the sun as well as for the swimmer. Softball, volleyball, shuffleboard, horseshoes, badminton and ping-pong can be played on the premises. Horseback riding and bicycling are available; bowling and roller skating nearby; with several golf courses in the area.

We have a full schedule of entertainment planned for your enjoyment;

SATURDAY: Dance orchestra  
SUNDAY: Soft Ball Game  
MONDAY: Bingo - Prizes  
TUESDAY: Broadway Movies  
WEDNESDAY: Dance Orchestra  
THURSDAY: Outdoor Barbecue  
FRIDAY: Broadway Movies

We maintain a snack bar in our "rec" hall, open from 7:00 A.M. to Midnight. Here we have a juke box, television, radio and piano for the use of our guests. There are many interesting and scenic places to see in the area and include the Catskill Game Farm; Carson City; Point Lookout; Rip Van Winkle Trail; Howe Caverns; Saratoga Race Track; Baseball's Hall of Fame at Cooperstown; and the Shrine at Auriesville.

Churches are within walking distance of Jesse's Elm Shade and for those who prefer to ride, we will furnish free transportation.

Ad-View For Cash, 229 Clifton Ave., Newark, N. J.

## IT'S EASY TO REACH

Jesse's Elm Shade  
RT. 32, GREENVILLE, N. Y.  
(GREENE COUNTY)

PHONE YOrktown 6-8325 (area code 518)



JESSE'S ELM SHADE is convenient to reach in 3 hours driving time from New York City.

**By Car:** Take New York State Thruway to Exit 21; turn right on Rt. 23; follow Rt. 23 to Cairo Bypass, where it joins Rt. 32; follow Rt. 32 to Greenville; JESSE'S ELM SHADE is on Rt. 32, 1/2 mile past the Greenville traffic light.

The Taconic State Parkway, on the east side of the Hudson River, is a scenic alternate route; about 20 miles north of Foughkeappa take Rt. 199; then Rt. 90; Cross Hudson on Rip Van Winkle Bridge; then Rt. 23 to 32 at Cairo; Rt. 32 to Greenville and JESSE'S ELM SHADE.

**By Bus:** Greyhound or Short Line Bus from Port Authority Bldg., 41st St. & 8th Ave., New York City will take you direct to JESSE'S ELM SHADE.

JESSE'S ELM SHADE  
Warren Jess, Prop.  
Rt. 32, Greenville, N. Y.  
Telephone YOrktown 6-8325 (area code 518)

Please make reservations as early as possible. A \$5.00 deposit is required for each guest.

donate a pizza, and Frank's Sunoco donated five gallons of gas in return for a recommendation. Tuesday and Fridays were movie nights. Sullivan's Entertainment supplied the equipment, movie, and the projectionist. The recreation hall was set up with chairs like a movie theater. If it was very hot, we hung a screen on the outside of the building and set the chairs on the grass. Thursday was the "Weiner Roast". Everyone would sit around the fireplace and just have good conversations. Most of our guests came the same time every year, and in some cases, it was more like an extended family.

Our season ran from Memorial Day to Labor Day, and we had "Weekend Specials" for the two weekends following Labor Day. (In the early years The Elm Shade opened in mid-May till the end of September) Since we catered mainly to families, the season was then based on the school year schedules. The week ran from Saturday to Saturday and the weekly rate included twenty-one meals. Meals were served restaurant style and the menu didn't vary week to week. Breakfast started at 7:30 and as long as you got in the dining room by 8:30 you got served. Breakfast consisted of hot or cold cereal, eggs your way, and toast, Bacon

was available twice a week. Mondays we featured French toast and Thursdays was Pancakes.

Lunch started promptly at 12:30 and Dinner at 5:30. Meals were announced by ringing an electric bell and by the traditional "Cow Bell". The Guest always knew when it was time to eat as they would be waiting on the porch for the doors to open. If the bell didn't ring on time, they would be looking in the window to see if anything was wrong. The food was plentiful and to my knowledge few people wanted seconds. Examples of a typical entrée would be Roast Turkey, half a Chicken, Roast Beef, Leg of Lamb, Meat Loaf, Pork Roast, Spaghetti and Meatballs, Steak, Corned Beef, Breaded Fish. Of course, each meal had all the appropriate trimmings. The meal would start with an appetizer such as soup, salad, or a fruit cup and end with a dessert. Each table had pitchers of Iced Tea and water on it. Milk, coffee and hot tea was provided for the asking.

The people who worked for us, in my

opinion, were very special.

Many of them were with us for years and always came back in the spring when we started preparing the resort for the upcoming season. I only remember two lead housekeepers over the years. Ella worked for us in the fifties and early sixties until her husband retired. Janet came to us soon afterwards and stayed till the resort was sold.

Our waitresses were usually high school students, many of them seniors, getting ready for college. Most were recruited either from local High Schools, or High Schools in New Jersey where our winter home was. Most only stayed one to two years. Between their pay and tips each one could earn enough to help defray college costs.

There were four different chefs that prepared food for the guests .....

[And I have omitted the rest of the piece to fit this newsletter. Please open the pdf file.]

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### Notes:

== A hearty THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU goes to Chuck and his wife Linda for a memorable program.

== Thank you, Stephanie and Christine, for providing the "light refreshments" I keep promising!

== There are a few hellos from people who used to attend GLHG meetings but can no longer do so. So, a hello from Orrin Stevens (from Colorado), from Ron Golden (from Brooklyn), and June Clark (from England, and from the 1990s!).

== I had the distinct pleasure of covering a bevy of O'Hara Corners news and info. Alas, the coverage is past but I hope the memory lingers.

== Debra Teator continues to explain and/or preview the art hanging at the Large Community Room. She has been overseeing the art display calendar, and meeting attendees can enjoy the talents of so many of our local artists.

== Chuck and Linda put Greenville on their itinerary while sightseeing around the country. Deb and I invited them for lunch the day of our meeting and enjoyed our usual splendid scenery while we chatted. I had the distinct insight that Chuck was delighted to have a chance to retell his Elm Shade story, and the GLHG was delighted to host someone with his story to tell.