

# Greenville Local History Group Newsletter

December 2024, Issue 331

Garth—Israel Lake; Sundries

Good tail-end-of-2024, Greenville Historians,  
I trust the holiday period finds everyone in  
good health and in good company.

Covid brought a new normal – a winter news-  
letter. It was a good idea for that era and a  
useful one for now. An additional newsletter  
allows for other items to be shown that had

been waiting in a queue, one that is tough to  
break through during our regular season.  
Thus, we will enjoy a Garth article in this  
newsletter that we might not have enjoyed  
otherwise. And I already have a second arti-  
cle for the second winter newsletter. And it  
allows me to update past events, of which  
there are several in this newsletter. First,  
Garth's piece.

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A hearty thank you, Garth, for continuing your series of articles that I know so many  
of us look forward to, whether it be close to Greenville or out in Iroquois territory.

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## Searching for Israel Lake by Garth Bryant

In 2018 I saw a map at a Greenville History  
Group program showing that the land my  
family owns on Ingalside Road had be-  
longed to a man named Israel Lake in the  
late 1700s. I remembered that Edward Lake  
along with Benjamin Spees and Eleazer  
Knowles were the original explorers of  
Greenville in 1781.

Their expedition led to the large migration  
in the winter of 1781-1782 that was Green-  
ville's founding. I assumed Israel was a son  
of Edward. I decided I wanted to know Is-  
rael's story. This simple project would turn  
into a three-year effort and lead me down a  
path I never imagined.

I had always considered my family as late  
comers to Greenville. The Bryants had  
moved here long after the Town was found-

ed. My grandfather Al had moved here in  
1941 and gone into the grocery business. My  
family would run this business for the next  
50 years but this was long after Greenville  
was settled.

This would be just the first of my faulty as-  
sumptions. My grandfather bought his origi-  
nal South Westerlo store from his brother-in-  
law Ezra Winn. Obviously, my grand-  
mother's side of the family had been in  
Greenville before 1941. As it turns out, long  
before.

My second wrong assumption concerned Is-  
rael Lake. He was not Edward Lake's son.  
Two of Edward's brothers, David and Mat-  
thew, came to Greenville with Edward dur-  
ing the first great migration in February  
1782. Matthew settled in a cabin on the east

side of SR 32 across from the Town Park entrance. Israel was Matthew's 7th child.

All three original Lake brothers, like all Greenville's earliest settlers, would lose their land claims to Augustine Prevost due to the political interference of Aaron Burr. Burr had married Prevost's Aunt Theodosia. He used his political power to void the early settlers' land claims and return the title for most of the land in Greenville to Prevost. The NY legislature went along with this betrayal even though many of these settlers had fought for their Country's independence while Prevost had fought against America during the Revolution.

Having lost their original claims, members of the next generation of the Lake family bought back parts of their original family farms from Prevost. This is how Israel ended up the owner of our current land. In 1798 he bought approximately 100 acres from Prevost.

This piece of property is the last piece on the east side of Ingalside Road before the county line. Prevost held the mortgage and Israel was heavily in debt to him. Israel tried to pay his debt in part by working in Prevost Mills and acting as a handy man of sorts doing odd jobs for Prevost. He also acted as Prevost's representative in small business deals. Israel's name appears numerous times in the Prevost day book. He appears to have been given a substantial amount of responsibility in Prevost's affairs.

This historical record of a competent, up-standing Israel in Prevost Day Book stands in sharp contrast with the one other existing record of Israel's life. Israel used an alias in every early census taken in Greenville. Indeed, he used two different aliases in the 1810 and 1820 censuses. It seems Israel was hiding something.

This deception made researching Israel very difficult. I knew he married a woman named Jemima Robbins and had seven children. I couldn't find their names. I knew Jemima

died in 1829 but I couldn't find her grave. Interestingly after her death Israel started using his real name in the following censuses of 1830 and 1840. I also knew he lost his farm in 1829 but I couldn't find where he moved although I know he stayed in Greenville.

Finally, Israel's story came to light. A man named Isaac Robbins lived in Oyster Bay Long Island with his wife Margaret. They had two children, Edmund and Jemima. The whole family fled Long Island after committing some kind of crime. Isaac was arrested in Rensselaer County, convicted of forgery, and sentenced to life imprisonment in Newgate prison.

His children Edmund and Jemima moved to the Greenville area. Jemima married Israel Lake and they spent the rest of her life hiding their identities. Jemima was either hiding from the law or more likely hiding from a previous husband she had supposedly married in Long Island.

In 1829 Jemima died. This loss paired with the earlier death of his employer Prevost left Israel unable to pay his bills. Left with no other option he was finally forced to sell his farm. He split it up and sold it piecemeal to four men including a distant relative.

Just five years later Israel's nephew Botsford Lake would buy up all the pieces and put Israel's farm back together again. Botsford was the son of Israel's older brother Matthew, Jr. Matthew had married into the wealthy Botsford family. He named his son Botsford after his wife's family name. This was a common practice in colonial America.

Botsford who is buried in the small cemetery on the north end of Ingalside Road would sell this property to his son William in 1858. William would have no children and would sell the farm in two separate transactions to the Howes and Greens in the late 1800s. My father Alexander (Zan) Bryant would buy both pieces from their descendants in 1968.



## Winter Projects

I find the winter season a chance for me to catch up on sit-down, indoor projects, especially local history writing and preparation.

In a newsletters about a year ago (<https://www.dteator.com/glhg/glhg%20321pdf.pdf>), I had detailed a long list of possible projects. Instead of repeating that, I will make a much shorter list and also allow you to link to the list found in the parenthesis. Your final product could be rough notes passed on to me, or it might be an article ready for the newsletter or a program or something ready for PorcupineSoup.

— Local History Projects Possibilities —

- your own personal story, or significant part(s) of your life
- your family's role in the Greenville area
- a community member
- your house, or a house you know well, and its history
- an area - a section of a road, a four corners, etc.

- an organization - community, church, social, etc.
- changes in Greenville area life over the last x years
- school memories
- farm life
- technology in life
- the story behind a photo in my photo album
- what people did for fun
- seasonal events
- community fairs, celebrations
- a year in the Greenville Local
- make a photo album

My challenge to you: get started, write 100 words, let it set overnight. Add another hundred words the next time. I hope you see where I am going with this. And trust yourself that your story is worthwhile!

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## Donations to the Archives

I often am asked if I would like to be given material about the Greenville area. The answer is almost always yes, although there have been a few times when the material is better suited for the Vedder Research Library, a wonderful asset situated beside the Bronck House.

Over this past year, I was given material for the archives from: Robert Uzzilia (photos from an auction); Anita Stevens Sanctuary (a box full of a Wooster collection and of Greenville material); Marie Hardin (Tompkins material); and Don Irving (photos and Irving material). All is appreciated.

In addition, at a recent meeting, Linda Singer Berger donated local postcards and a worn volume: *The Frontiersmen of New York: Showing Customs of the Indians, Vicissitudes of the Pioneer White Settlers, and Border Strife in Two Wars: Volume 1 of 2*; Simms, Jephtha Root. A couple chapters made for good reading and it will be found in the archives should anyone want to borrow it.



Prevost Mill House owned for many years by Ida Smith-Evans 1910 Photo

## 2025 Calendar

The GLHG Calendar graced the counters at Kelly's, GNH, and the Library once again. This collaboration allows the calendar to pay for itself and to continue serving as a local history exhibit. Please thank the owners and/or staff of these establishments.

This year's final total was satisfactory enough. Fewer sales have led to a small deficit, to be recouped by a healthy treasury.

The 2026 calendar is in the starting stages as this newsletter is written.

## PorcupineSoup

I often extol the virtues of PorcupineSoup.com, a free online connection.

It is probably the best source of recent information of our local area (Towns of Greenville, Durham, Cairo bullseye). (And, yes, I recognize the value of the Pioneer; its biweekly nature, of course, influences its coverage.)

Earlier in the year, the links to past articles in the local history sections stopped being produced. I am pleased to inform you that publisher Andrea Macko has worked overtime to reinstitute these links. And for that I am most pleased.

Thus, readers can click on links that go to the Carrie Ingalls diary series, or Garth's nearly ten contributions, or Flip's memory trips, or the series about working at resorts, or any of the other posts.

I suggested to Andrea that re-organizing the links in the Greenville section to a more thematic organization instead of chronological might steer readers to topics they might be attracted to. Andrea is striving for that to happen.

In addition to the Greenville material, the same re-introduction of links also applies to the

Mary Lou Nahas' posts about the Oak Hill area, Sylvia Hasenkopf's posts of Tracing Your Roots, and also Dede Terns-Thorp's Town of Hunter Tidbits. There are also four other regular columns to be found: Outdoors, Real Estate, Financial Planning, and Dick Brooks' humor in Whittling Away.

Nice job, Andrea, and thank you for making the past archives visible again.

PS Another reason to read PorcupineSoup is the upcoming four-parter, the History of Bryant's Supermarket, the topic of a program that we have already experienced in a slide show program put on by Garth in July 2016. Although PorcupineSoup cannot replicate the program, it can provide the 10,000+ word account written by Garth. This is a topic of classic importance for our local history.

PSS I apologize for being so obvious but I have been asked how does one reach PorcupineSoup. Answer: if you have a device that uses the internet, in the address box, type **porcupinesoup.com**. That is it.

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## Historical Markers

Since the last newsletter, I have received several emails making suggestions for possible historic markers. I vowed to list them all and let the winnowing process do its thing when the time comes.

A couple of you favored not including families. I have made that note but for the sake of the list, I have left the idea in.

Now that we have this list, I would like to share it to the local Facebook pages that I post to, hoping more quality ideas are contributed. Some of you, I know, subscribe to one or more of the four pages I post on.

Once I glean what I can from this method, it will come time to decide to have a meeting or three to see what we do next. For one, we need Town Board support (maintenance, at least) and we will need to discuss funding.

A couple of you mentioned the Pomeroy Foundation, an enterprise that has promoted

erecting historical markers, often providing some funding. We should consider any usefulness of this foundation.

For now, this is the list generated by GLHG members. If you wish to add an idea not on the list, feel free. On to the public it will go.

[for a listing of our current markers, link to: <https://www.dteator.com/glhg/glhg%20330pdf.pdf>]

- The Cabin
- War Memorials – Park (unless already done)
- Balsam Shade – balloon fest – grass drag
- Bryant's early store
- Freehold Inn – Parks Hotel
- Alberta Lodge
- Story's Nursery
- Greenville Turnpike, at a tollgate booth site (pre-1940)
- Freehold Mills area (pre-1940)

....Continued....



- Stevens Tractor equipment store
- Hilltop resort
- Greenville Drive-In
- former GNH site in Norton Hill
- Sunny Hill (let's include any resort)
- a family, individual, persons (ex. Bryant)
- Freehold Airport
- Freehold Country Store
- Winter Carnival at Rainbow
- John I's store
- Gayhead corners
- Surprise strip
- Greenville Center area, particular topic
- Pioneer building
- Vanderbilt Theater (movie house)
- corners (intersections) that used to be transportation landmarks
- Greenville Dairy
- Chatterbox
- Kilcar
- Powell Store
- Chime's Market
- Greenville Arms
- Pioneer Building
- Surprise Schoolhouse
- Surprise General Store
- Ida Smith house
- Rundell Farm
- Capone house (Rt 26)
- brick building at Highland & 26
- cemeteries: Greenville, Freehold, Old Freehold, Locust
- (geology) the drumlins of Greenville



## Greenville Cemetery

A re-invigorated Greenville Cemetery Association Board is taking steps to upgrade the infrastructure and ambiance of the cemetery.

I am borrowing the caption that accompanied a four page panel from the 2025 calendar:

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A local history gem, the nearly twenty acres of the Greenville Cemetery serves both as a bucolic buffer and also as the final resting spot of many area residents since the 1780s. The oldest section holds the names of the oldest settlers commonly mentioned in the earliest Greenville documents. Meanwhile, any cemetery faces the encroachment of time, tree growth, settling of roads, and rising costs. Operated as an Association Cemetery (and have no formal link with the funeral home, as some think,), the Association is tasked with maintaining well-kept grounds as well as offering a public service. In the last couple years, a group of community minded members have risen to this challenge, seeking ways to present a respectful place for our deceased families. Wishing to not draw attention to individuals, the group does encourage other community members to be part of this effort

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Having been invited to recent Greenville Association Cemetery Board meetings, I/we are part of this improvement. Dispelling the former anonymity, I will point out that new president Bill Von Atzingen and new secretary Amy (Baumann) Short, along with current board members Jack Van Auken, Bill Quackenbush, Kevin Baumann, Stephanie Ingalls, John McAneny, Tom Baumann, and a couple others are stepping up to provide for the continuation of quality operation of the cemetery.

A mailing will soon be coming to the mailboxes of people living in the local area, pointing out the challenges of maintenance and the need for community support, both physical and financial.

To that end, on behalf of GLHG, and with the authority I believe you have allowed me, I/we donated the first contribution, \$100, to the GCA.

Stay tuned. I am trying to arrange a possible GLHG program in the spring.