The Lake Family
Founders of Ocean City, NJ

By: James F. Steelman
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The following information is consolidated from “A Genealogy of the Lake Family of Great Egg Harbor in Old Gloucester County in New Jersey Descended from John Lake of Gravesend, Long Island” by Arthur Adams and Sarah A. Risley.

Noted herein are references to some of the more famous of the many descendants with particular note of their inventions and the founding of the Ocean City Association. Also noted as a matter of personal interest are some relationships to members of the Steelman family. Steelman numbering system from Dorothy Sapienzo's research-Atlantic County Historical Association (Heritage Center).

**Early English History**

The Lake Family that founded Ocean City can be traced to England where the Lakes were an ancient, distinguished and honorable assemblage. The name Lake is in origin a ‘place name’ occurring as early as 1273, i.e. ‘William of the Lake’. The following distinguished English Lakes are noted-

- **Almeric Lake** of South Hampton whose sons were Arthur, Bishop of Bath who was born in 1569 and Sir Thomas Lake born in 1567 who was appointed Secretary of State by King James I.

- **General Sir Edward Lake** was descended from Lancelot. He was born in 1744 and served under Cornwallis in America. His line became extinct.

- **Sir Edward Lake** was born about 1600. He was an eminent lawyer and was loyal to Charles I during the Civil Wars. Two of his brothers Thomas and John came to America and lived in Boston.

- **Edward Lake** (perhaps a cousin of the above Sir Edward was born in 1641 and was a tutor of princesses Mary and Ann, daughters of James the Duke of York.

- **John Lake**, Bishop of Chichester was born in 1624. Although loyal to the crown he would not sanction King James’ acts re the restoration of the Roman Catholic faith and was therefore imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1688. It is unknown from which family John Lake of Gravesend, our Ocean City ancestor descended. He may have been related to John and Thomas, brothers of Sir Edward, but this can not be verified.
Gravesend

Gravesend was settled in 1643 by Englishmen under the influence of Deborah Moody who came from England to Massachusetts. The Gravesend patent was granted to Lady Moody and her associates, 39 in all on 12/9/1645. Among them were John Lake (1) and Thomas Spicer (John’s father-in-law. John married Anne Spicer) John and Anne had 6 children:

I. John- The Gravesend Family
II. Daniel- The Staten Island Family
III. Margaret
IV. Elizabeth
V. Michal- named after her grandmother Michal Spicer.
VI. William (2) The Great Egg Harbor Family

There was in addition to the Gravesend Family and the Staten Island Family a third branch descended from the Staten Island Family described as the United Empire Loyalist Lake Family of Canada.

Dr. Adams work referred to herein is primarily concerned with the Great Egg Harbor family who was descended from John Lake and Anne Spicer of Gravesend.
John Lake (1)
(    -1696)
md. (    )
Anne Spicer
(    -1709)

Children:
I. John (    -1729) md. Neeltje Clausen and remained in Gravesend
II. Daniel (    -    ) md. #1- unknown, md. #2 1863- Alice Stillwell
III. Margaret (    -    ) md. 1676 William Golding/ Golden.  William’s father
William emigrated from Ireland and later settled in Cape May Co.
IV. Elizabeth (    -    ) md.     Hendrik Janse
V. Michal (    -    ) md.     Nicholas Stillwell
VI. 2) William (    - c 1717) md.     Sarah Jenkins.  Sarah’s last name not proven.
She was possibly the daughter of Rev. Nathaniel Jenkins of Pennypack Church in Pennsylvania.
G. 1  (1) John of Gravesend L.I. (c 1696) md. Anne Spicer (c 1709)
I. John (c 1729)
II. Daniel
III. Margaret
IV. Elizabeth
V. Michal
VI. (2) William (c 1717)

G. 2  (2) William (John (1) (c 1717) Born in Gravesend L.I. md. Sarah Jenkins
William was a whaler and went to Cape May area as a whaler- c 1690. He removed to Great Egg Harbor area in 1693. He was appointed Oversear of the Poor for the area which was then Gloucester Co.: 1713.

Children:
I. (3) Nathan
II. (4) Daniel
III. Three daughters names not known one was probably Sarah who married in 1730 Elias Steelman 1.5.6@ son of James. Elias md. #2 Comfort Cressey.
@- Steelman family genealogy from Dorothy Sapienzo. G.1: 1 Hans Mansson (later Steelman) born in Sweden. 5 James, 6 Elias.

G. 3  (3) Nathan (c 1750-59) ((2) William, (1) John) md. ( ) Mary Scull (1761) daughter of Peter Scull.
Nathan owned acreage on the Great Egg Harbor River and was appointed a Freeholder for Egg Harbor by Gloucester Co. (prior to creation of Atlantic Co.) in 1729 and constable in 1733.

Children:
I. Amoriah md. 1760 Nemoiah Townsend
II. Nathan NFI

G. 3  (4) Daniel (1696- c 1774) (William (2), John (1)) md. 1730 Gartara Steelman (1-4-6) possibly a daughter of Hance son of James- more probably the daughter of Peter (1-4) and Gertrude/ Gartara Keen/Kuhn.
Children:
I. William *~b Gloucester Co. Militia
II. Abraham 6- moved to Cumberland Co.
III. Daniel (7)
IV. Andrew (8)
V. Sarah
VI. Jemima 9 md. Moris Risley

*~b  Served in the Revolution
   md. #1 1764 Sarah Lucas  
   #2 (    ) Susannah Ingersoll  
   * Daniel served as a private in the Gloucester Co. Militia.  
   Children:  
   I. Christopher 17 removed to Salem Co.  
   II. (18) Daniel  
   III. (19) Jemimah  
   IV. Tabitha  
   V. Sarah  
   VI. (20) John  
   VII. Lydia 21 md. Jonathan Corson of Upper Township  
   VIII. (22) Ameriah md.  
   #1 Mary Garwood, #2 Margaret Adams- sister in law to (20) John  
   IX. Mary 23 md. James English  
   X. Asenath 24 md. Dorcas Ireland  
   XI. Lucas 25  
   XII. Louis  

G. 4  Andrew* 8 (    -c 1805) ((4) Daniel, (2) William, (1) John)  
   md. 1777 Mary Ingersoll  
   Children:  
   I. Samuel 26 + md. Olive Price- 6 children  
   II. Nicodemus 27  
   III. Andrew 28 md. Nancy Good-Bartlett
m.d. #1 1790 Rebecca Pedrick (1768-1796) of Penns Neck
#2 1798 Dinah Risley (1757- 1825) was the daughter of Samuel Risley and Judith Somers descended from Adamses and Risleys- original proprietors of Hartford, Conn.
#3 Anna Leeds (1790- 1863)
Daniel was a renowned surveyor and was also the Collector of Taxes for Egg Harbor Township from 1789-1791. He was a member of the N.J. General Assembly in 1818, 1824, and 1826.
Children:
By #1- 2 girls, 2 boys
By #2- 1 girl
By #3- 1 boy, 3 girls

m.d. Isaac English
Children:
I. (55) Daniel md. Hannah Holdskom whose father was Christian Holdskom whose wife was Susannah Steelman daughter of Peter Steelman 1.5.1.5 and Hannah Leeds.
II. Tabitha 56
III. Isaac 57
IV. Mary 58
V. Sarah 59

m.d. 1796 Abigail Adams (1775- 1837) – she was descended from Jeremy Adams an original proprietor of Hartford, Conn. John lived in what later became Pleasantville. He was a salt hay farmer and was a constable in 1810. He devised a method to bank and drain the meadows to increase the salt hay yield.
Children:

I. Armenia 60
II. John- died young md. Deborah Gaskill
III. Asenath- died young
IV. (61) Daniel
V. Margaret 62
VI. Sarah 63
VII. Jesse- infant
VIII. (64) Simon
IX. (65) Lucas
X. (66) David

G. 6 (61) Daniel (1803- 1851) ((20) John, (7) Daniel, (4) Daniel, (2) William, (1) John) md. Sarah Ann Tilton (1808- 1886) daughter of Esperus Tilton* and Hannah Steelman 1.5.1.5.3.4 Tilton. Hannah was the daughter of Isaac Steelman 1.5.1.5.3 and Mary Andrews. Daniel hauled clams to Philadelphia and brought back goods which he sold in a store in Pleasantville. He first lived in Port Republic. His neighbor Squire Daniel Ingersoll gave him boards for a sign for his store if he would name the town “Pleasantville”. It was previously called “Smiths Landing”. Daniel was said to have died from the sting of a horseshoe crab.

Children:

Inventor (x) I. Jesse S. (1825- 1896)

md. Phoebe (Somers) Scull- no children. He was an extraordinary inventor. He invented the whistling buoy, a steering wheel for yachts, a shade roller, the first calculating weighing scale, a device to allow cable cars to cross street intersections, and a car that laid and took up its own track. Most useful were those that improved mowing machines. He received royalties from McCormick for these. He secured patents for 65 new inventions and improvements. He was engaged in the oyster business and had an iron foundry. He was also a Methodist preacher.
II. Hanna Ann 148 md. William Blake
III. John Tilton 149 md. Amanda Adams
IV. Daniel inf.
V. Armenia 150 md. William Good Bartlett
VI. Mary Jane 151 md. Josiah P. Risley
VII. Sarah Ann (died young)
VIII. Lewis S. 152
IX. Ezra A. 153 md. Harriet Ann Adams- he was a sea captain and was lost at sea, 1873.
X. Anna Bella- died young.

#2 1867 Harriet Somers (1825- 1914) widow of Edward Cordery. Harriet was a member of DAR and was the daughter of James Somers* pvt. She died in Ocean City.
Simon lived on Washington Ave- Pleasantville. He served in the N.J. General Assembly during the Civil War. With his sons Ezra B., Simon W., and James E. he was involved in the founding of Ocean City as a Christian seashore resort.
Children:
I. (169) Ezra Blake- Rev.
II. Mary Alethea md. John Race
III. Abigail Ann (died young)
IV. Anna Margaret 170 md. Somers Townsend Champion
V. Francis Amelia 171 md. Vincent Smith
VI. (172) Simon Wesley- Rev.
VII. (173) James Edward- Rev.
VIII. (147) John Christopher
IX. Sarah Ellen 175 md. Jonathan Timberman Adams

❖ Civil War Veteran

* Revolution
G. 6  
md. #1 1840 Rachel Scull (1819- 1886) – father John Scull  
#2 1887 Hannah Smith Somers  
Lived in Pleasantville- active business man- involved in the construction of the Turnpike from Pleasantville to Atlantic City.  
Children:  
3 girls- Elmira, Sarah Cornelia, Armenia  
2 boys- Albert P., Somers S. md. Merta Adams  

Inventor  
md. 1849 Diana Smith Robinson (1834- )  
Lived and died in Pleasantville where he was Postmaster and Tax Collector. He was a leading spirit in construction of the Turnpike between Pleasantville and Atlantic City. He invented a machine for mixing meadow mud and oyster shell to make fertilizer. He also invented an ingenious fly trap. He was associated with his nephew Jesse in the development of mowing machines- (see Daniel (61) )  
Children:  
I. Elizabeth Ann- died young  
II. John Henry 179 md. Amanda King  
IV. Ira 181  
V. David md. Harriet Potter  
VI. Ella- inf.  
VII. Ella md. George Reed  
VIII. Leon  
IX. Indiana  

G. 7  
md. 1854 #1 Alice Core #2 1891 Martha Henderson (Borden) Corson (1843-}
1929) who was the widow of John Chattin Corson. Ezra B. was a Methodist minister who in 1879 along with his father, brothers Rev. Simon Wesley, and James E., Rev. William Wood & William Burrel purchased Pecks Beach from chiefly the Somers family and founded the Ocean City Association. As Superintendent of the Association he organized an electric light co., a water co., a sewer co. and a railroad.

**Inventor** Ezra was also mechanically inclined. He invented a self winding window shade roller (had a factory on West Ave. in Ocean City), a sea rescue wagon, and a friction-less ball bearing that did not require a lubricant.

Ezra was very active: a member of the Board of Education, a Mason & Sons of Temperance. He was a delegate in 1900 to the national M.E. Conference.

Children: 5 girls and 2 boys, all but one (Mary) died as infants.


md. 1864 Mary Jane Scull (1846- ?) daughter of John Scull and Judith Steelman who was the daughter of Frederick Steelman (1.5.1.3.3) and Naomi Edwards. Simon W. was born and educated in Pleasantville and then the Pennington Seminary. He was a M.E. minister at numerous churches from 1867- 1900 when he replaced brother Ezra as president of the O.C. Association which became the Tabernacle Association in 1907. He was also president of the N.J. Methodist Publishing Co. which among other publications included the Ocean City Ledger. He was a director of the First National Bank of Ocean City and the Ocean City Title and Trust Co. He was a Mason, a Knight of Pythias and an Old Fellow.

Children:
I. Carrie Lorene (1867- ?) md. William A. Ferguson
II. Charles Pitman (1869- ?) O.C. Assoc. Secretary- 1912 and real estate broker.
III. (325) Wesley Elwell Rev. (1870- 1962) md. Carrie Souder Reed. He was O.C. Assoc. secretary following death of Ezra B. in 1900. He was a minister in several churches- lastly in Princeton, N.J.
IV. Henry Howell (1873- ?) He is (1911) a jeweler in Ocean City
V. (325.5) Harvey Young (1874-1945)

VI. Mary Luella (1880-1947) md. Arnold


md. 1863 Emily Mott Venable (1840-1928)

James was born in Pleasantville and attended school there and then Pennington preparatory seminary and Drew Seminary- B.D. in 1873 and Northern Illionois D.D. 1896. He established the O.C. Association with his father and brothers in 1879. He was also a founder of Atlantic Highlands in Monmouth Co., N.J. He organized in 1894 the National Park Association and founded National Park on the Delaware. He founded the Seabright Sentinel and the Atlantic Highlands Journal. In 1914 he was editor of the Ocean City Ledger.

Children:

7 girls (4 died young)


md. #1 (    ) Miriam O. Adams (1848-1870)

#2 1877 Anna M. Corson (1855-1933)

He was born at Smith’s Landing (Pleasantville) and attended Pennington Seminary. He learned the watch making and jewelry business from S. Wesley and in 1867 took over the business when S.W. became a minister. In 1874 he went to Philadelphia where he with brother Ezra started a window shade roller business. He sold this business.

Inventor He invented a self locking and balance shade roller and cord roller and managed the manufacturing plant for Duvall Co. of Philadelphia which expanded to Aurora, Ill. where he ran the plant for a number of years. He later moved to Toms River, N.J. He was a director of the O.C. Assoc. with his father and brothers. In 1883 he moved to Ocean City and set up a shade roller factory with 25-50 employees. He also manufactured self holding steering gears and safety winders for dredging fleets of the Chesapeake Bay. This plant was in Baltimore with son Simon.
In 1894 he moved to Atlantic Highlands to assist Simon with his production of his submarine ‘Argonaut Jr.’ and the Lake Submarine Co., He later was associated with that company back in Baltimore in building the submarine ‘Argonaut’. In 1898 the company moved to New York City. He lived in Brooklyn and then Rutherford, N.J. He was a pioneer of the Lake Torpedo boat company to build submarines for warfare. The company later moved to Bridgeport, Conn.

**Inventor**

In 1901/02 John C. invented his flying machine. This was announced in the New York Herald: ‘I have a practical everyday flying machine regardless of ordinary wind or weather for air, land and water’ signed- J. Christopher Lake. He therefore may have preceded the Wright brothers whose first powered flight at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina took place on Dec. 17, 1903. J.C. was induced to temporarily abandon the flying machine in favor of the submarine. He was vice president of the submarine company (son Simon was president) after the first submarine was built for the U.S. government he returned to promotion of his flying machine. He purchased property in Connecticut which subsequently became the ‘Bridgeport Aerodrome’ where he built flying machines commonly known as the ‘Lake Aerodrome’. He organized and was President of the Lake Aero Co. Inc. which manufactured flying machine inventions, air borne motor boats and flying boats. He also organized a realty holding company which handled aforesaid properties.

Children:
I. (326) Simon
II. Arletta 327 (1868- 1942) md. 1891 Clement Eugene Cordery Adams who was employed by the Lake Torpedo Boat Company.

**G. 7**
md. 1860 Anna E. Ingersoll (1837- 1909)

Ameriah was a successful sea captain for many years and established a lumber yard in Pleasantville which became with his son-in-law Alvin Risley the Lake and Risley lumberyard.
Inventor: He patented several popular amusement devices- the ‘Haunted Swing’ and the ‘Trip to Chicago’.

Children:
I. Anna (inf.)
II. Caroline (1863-1914) md. Alvin Peter Risley
III. Lettie (1865-?) md. Isaac Risley
IV. Joshua- died young
V. Hannah (1871-1937) md. Robert Zane
VI. Joshua (1871-?) md. Gertrude Scull

   md. Annie Lee (1843-1930)

   William was a school teacher and surveyor in Bargaintown. He moved to Ocean City upon founding by the O.C. Association and did all of the original surveys. He was the borough of O.C. engineer for 76 years in 1915, publication date of the Adams-Risley genealogy, at which time he was still engaged in his profession. He was a founding director of the O.C. Building and Loan Association. Hiram Steelman (1.5.1.2.1.1.3.9) (1844-1944) was also a founding director, the third mayor of Ocean City, and was the father of Emma Steelman, wife of Arthur Adams, the co-author of the Lake Family Genealogy and grandfather of this compiler.

Children:
I. Mark 348 (1863-1919) md. Maggie West- He is an undertaker in Ocean City.
II. Florence May 349 (1867-1945) md. Albert Gilbert who is a painter in Ocean City.
III. Christopher (1868-1889)
IV. Sarah W. (1872-?) who was deeply involved in D.A.R. (living in 1915).
md. 1898 Carrie Souder Reed (1873-1952)

Wesley taught school in Linwood, N.J. from 1887-1889. In 1889 he entered the office of the O.C. Assoc. becoming Secretary of the Assoc. on the death of Uncle Ezra in 1900. He became a M.E. minister in 1902 serving several churches, lastly in Princeton.

Children:
Randolph Elwell (1899-1995) md. Marion L. Taylor


Harvey was born in Petersburg- graduated from Pennington Seminary and became manager of the O.C. Assoc. after the Assoc. disposed of its utility companies, he ventured successfully into the real estate business developing O.C. Bayous- a large tract on the bay front. He was a member of the O.C. Board of Education and was very interested in athletics and physical training. He initiated an annual tennis tournament which to this day takes place every summer and is named after him. He was also an accomplished musician.

md. 1890 Margaret Vogel (1873-?) of Baltimore

He was educated in Philadelphia and Toms River public schools and took a business course at Clinton Liberty Inst. at Fort Plain, N.Y. In 1885 he went into business with his father in the foundry and machine business in Ocean City. In 1886 he invented an involute spiral gear for transferring motion between shafts. He applied this to a steering gear that was manufactured very cheaply. This was done in Baltimore by J.C. Lake and Son which also manufactured the safety winder utilized by oyster dredging vessels. He also invented a capping machine for soldering caps on metal fruit cans at the rate of 50,000/day.
In 1893 he responded to an advertisement from the U.S. Navy to submit plans for a torpedo boat vehicle he had been studying for several years. A feature that attracted the most attention was an air lock that permitted members of the crew to man diving suits and step out of the vessel to perform tasks. The contract was however awarded to the Holland Torpedo Boat Co. as Mr. Lake did not offer to build the vessel. He merely submitted the designs and specifications for the Government to build. The Holland Company started to build the 'Plunger' in 1894 but the venture was abandoned after the vessel accidentally sank at the dock.

Due to the radical nature of the venture, Mr. Lake was unable to attract investors. Finally, with the financial assistance of his father's sister Anna Champion he constructed largely with his own hands a crude 14 foot long wooden craft. This vessel was completed in 1894 and was called 'Argonaut Jr.'. Sea trials off Atlantic Highlands, N.J. proved her practicability. This venture enabled sufficient capital to be raised to build the larger 36 foot long 'Argonaut' which became famous as the first successful submarine. With this vessel Mr. Lake made a good profit locating and recovering cargoes from sunken vessels in Long Island sound. The U.S. Navy solicited Mr. Lake to submit plans for a submarine torpedo boat which was declared superior to anything that had been proposed both in this county and abroad. The Board on Construction composed of five Admirals congratulated Mr. Lake in his plans. However, despite their recommendations and those of Ex-President Taft who was the Secretary of War the appropriation was awarded to the Holland Co. The chairman of the sub-committee was later found guilty of defrauding the government and imprisoned. In 1901-1902 the Lake Co. built a successful vessel at Bridgeport, Conn. that was called the 'Protector'. Shortly after this, war was declared between Japan and Russia. The Protector was purchased by Russia and shipped to Finland where sea trials were successful. She was shipped 6000 miles overland across Siberia to Vladivostock and went into service before the war ended.

The Russian government had Mr. Lake erect a submarine assembly works at Liban, Russia where five additional submarines were built. The plant was later
moved to St. Petersburg where four of the larger submarines were built. This success led to orders from Austria, Germany, and Italy. Russia offered him 5,000,000 roubles to build works and would finance the business. Mr. Lake hoped to see his work recognized by his own country and returned home in 1910 and established a shipyard in Bridgeport, Conn.

Mr. Lake has taken out nearly 100 U.S. patents most related to submarine boats and apparatus. He was a member of the Institution of Naval Architects of England; the Schiffbautechnische Gesellschaft zu Berlin, Germany; the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, New York; and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and is an associate member of the Society of Naval Engineers of Washington, D.C. He was a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, the masons, and the Knights of Pythias. His clubs are the Engineers of New York, the Algonquin and Seaside Outing of Bridgeport.

Children:
I. Miriam Catherine (1891- ?)
II. Thomas E. (1892- ?) md. Gertrude Eager- works with his father at Bridgeport.
III. Margaret Vogel (1895- ?)
Note some of this areas descendants of William Lake that are redundant in the genealogy:
Adams
Bartlett
Champion
Corson
English
Ingersoll
Lake
Lee
Leeds
Risley
Scull
Smith
Somers
**Steelman**
Tilton

There are numerous other descendants of the Lake family. Those noted above appear in this abbreviated review and are prevalent in our area today. The family were all in all an exemplary example of a successful American family. There were a numerous ministers, educators, inventors, and generally prestigious individuals who were active in their communities and served their country in numerous conflicts including the Revolution, the war of 1812, the Civil War and continue this day to serve their country in World Wars I & II as well as present day conflicts. Many of the Lakes and their descendants have been and are members of the Sons and Daughters of the Revolution.