

# BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

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## JAFFA: DOWNEAST MAINE'S ISRAEL CONNECTION

More than 150 Downeast Mainers left the Moosabec Reach for Jaffa, to what is now Israel, more than 140 years ago. Both the triumph and tragedy of these people will be told and shown at the Beals Historical Society program meeting on Monday, September 17. An illustrated slide talk by Reed and Jean Holmes will take you from those early days to the present. The Holmes are authors of *The Forerunners* a book, which tells about how the Americans came to the Holy Land and what happened later.

Dr. Holmes received his Ph.D from Haifa University in Israel based on this research. His wife Jean has a Masters in Judaic Studies.

Please join us at 7PM on September 17 at the Beals Elementary School to learn more about how the past affected the present. If you have any artifacts, of this event, please feel free to bring them for display.

The meeting is open free to the general public. A 50/50 drawing will be held and light refreshments will be served.

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### REMEMBER THE DAY WHEN...

The Nellie Chapin left the steamboat wharf at West Jonesport bound for Palestine. The following account is from the Jonesport 1905 Census.

The story of the Palestine Emigration Colony is ever interesting to the Jonesport reader because of the thirty-six men and women from this town, who made that memorable visit. Space will permit us to give but a brief account of this event.

Elder J.D. Adams of Pennsylvania had for a number of years entertained the idea of establishing a Church of the Messiah at Palestine, hoping thus to bring about the restoration to Christendom of the Holy Land. After two years of work, he formed what was known as the Palestine Emigration Colony.

With one hundred and fifty-six persons, Mr. Adams made all preparations to settle a colony in the Chosen Land.

It was on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August, 1866, that the bark, Nellie Chapin, left the steamboat wharf at West Jonesport, bearing Mr. Adams and his Colony, and bound for Palestine, the Land of Promise. The voyage to that country was made in forty-two days, without any unpleasant or remarkable happenings, and at last, all hands were landed safely on the shore near the city of Jaffa.

The colony succeeded in obtaining a beautiful location for their future habitation, surrounded by a grove of oranges. They proceeded to erect tents, unload their ships, and raft their lumber ashore. To obtain good

drinking water they solicited the aid of the American Consul. Within a few days after landing, some members of the Colony were taken sick and died. An investigation proved that the natives were bringing them water from anywhere they could get it, when the colony had made provision for getting their supply from the city fountain. The members immediately hired an interpreter, whom they retained for his valuable services.

When the lumber was safely landed on the site of their prospective village, the colony had no one to act as leader in constructing the buildings; for their contractor and builder was one who had died from drinking the poisonous water. Not discouraged, however, the men went ahead and the houses were rapidly and decently constructed. The buildings were made two-story with flat roofs, except one, the Drisko's, which was three story and designed for a hotel. A church was erected as soon as their homes were built. The next step taken was the opening of a school for their children.

That a vegetable supply might be laid store, the colony then turned their attention toward the tilling of the soil. They planted their garden lots near their buildings, and their wheat patch, which lay two miles distant. The latter crop was almost a failure; for the Arabs, who would steal everything they could get, cut the crop when half grown and brought it to market where they sold it for the horses. Thereafter one of the colony was stationed on sentinel duty at this spot during the day. There was no danger from them at

night, for their superstitious beliefs, made them too cowardly to venture out of doors at that time.

Thus this Colony started their settlement with but petty annoying hinderances and might have been a success, but for the lack of confidence that its members were soon forced to hold towards their leader, Mr Adams. It appears that he imbibed too freely of the intoxicating cup, which was always offered one when making a visit. In fact it was a sign that your presence was not wanted if this was not done. The colony after remaining one year in their cozy settlement, decided to disband. During these months a few had died, and four children were born. Mr. Alton Rogers, a citizen of Jonesport, was one of this number who has the distinction of having been born in the Holy Land.

When the colony disbanded, some of their number came directly home, while others remained and passed several months in visiting places throughout the Holy Land. Then, to, on their way home some visited the World's Fair at Paris, France. The last of the colony except a few who never returned, reached home about fourteen months after their departure.

As a whole this colony may not be termed a failure; for its endeavors have proved the starting forth of other similar expeditions, who have made a success of their efforts. We feel safe in saying that very few persons who made this voyage and reached home safely, with their relatives, have regretted their experience. End quote. (continued)

For reader information, according to the book "Early Jonesborough Families of Washington County Maine", by Leonard Tibbetts and Darryl Lamson, Alton V. Rogers was the 6<sup>th</sup> of 7 children born to Benjamin Kelley Rogers and Lucy Drisko Leighton. Benjamin was a ship carpenter at Indian River. He went to Palestine in 1866 and returned in 1870. He and his wife are both buried at the Indian River Cemetary.

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**LOCAL HOUSE GIVEN TO SOCIETY**

The Beals Historical Society enthusiastically announces that Manford and Linda Durkee have gifted the Alvin Beal house to the society.

More information regarding the history of the house and the history of Alvin and his boat-building career will be in the next issue. Stay tuned.

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**MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

The membership Chairman reports a total membership of 160. In 2006 we had 208 members.

New members, for the year, include, Leah and Conor Burtchell, Jonah Fagonde, Dana and Thelma Kennedy, Brian and Coleen (Libby) Prenda, Dale and Lenell Fenton, Suzanne Wilson, Carroll and Ronie Strout, Elizabeth (Beal) Sawyer, Sarah Kelley, Gerald Fernald, Dorough Taylor, Thomas and Gloria Tanton and Joseph Langenfeld.

New Life members, for the year, include, Robert and Marshia Brown, Harvey and Marjorie Holste, Archie Alley, Jr. and Merle and Regina Beal.

Regular membership dues contribute to the general operating budget, including the mailing of this newsletter and life membership contributes, to the Endowment Fund, which will help support the operation of a new facility.

There is still time to renew your 2007 membership. Please help us exceed last years total. Thank you for your continued support!

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**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

September 17/Program mtg/7PM  
Sept 28/Jimmy Barnes Concert/7PM

**JIMMY BARNES  
REAL MAINE MUSIC**

In an effort to raise building funds, singer/songwriter Jimmy Barnes will perform September 28<sup>th</sup> at the Beals Elementary School at 7PM.

Jimmy makes his home in Mariaville where he continues the farming life on his grandfather's farm. He has fished commercially up and down the coast and has played the guitar and sang, first in rock and roll bands, then later playing country music. According to his website, [www.realmainemusic.com](http://www.realmainemusic.com), in 1997, Jimmy wrote a Christmas carol called "Downeast Christmas." The tune hit a nerve with Downeast listeners and was soon packaged up by many and sent to family and friends who had moved from the area. He followed his first recording with albums called "Fishin' for a Livin'," "Country and Eastern," "Old Sailor's Christmas," and his newest album, "Maine To Mexico," is on sale now!

Jimmy was invited to sing for past governor Angus King and his wife Mary Herman at the Blaine House and entertained at a global fishing safety conference in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. His songs have been played by a national community radio station in California and continue to be played in the state of Maine due simply to the demand from the listeners.

According to the Ellsworth American, "Fishin' for a Livin' is about the Maine that incorporates the hard-living, fun-loving, heartbreaking themes of country and western into East Coast experience. The Machias Valley News Observer says, "He earns listeners' respect with his talent, hard work and the courage to write about home."

Opening act will include original songs written and sung by local talent including Chris Beal! Hope to see you at the show!  
Admission Adults: \$7.00  
Children under 10: \$3.00

**EILEEN BEAL POETRY  
BOOK DONATED TO  
SOCIETY**

A limited supply of the poetry book "MEMORABILIA" has been donated to BHS for the purpose of assisting with raising funds for the capital campaign.

This book is a wonderful collection of poetic writings written by the late Eileen Lenfestey Beal. It is, in itself, a collection of local history, where the author takes you back in time to revisit the days and events of yesteryear.

The book is available at the Jonesport IGA, Nelson's Decoy in Jonesport, the TinCeiling in Machias and Mr Paperback in Ellsworth. Or you can send \$5.00 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling per book, payable to:

Beals Historial Society  
Attn: Book Order  
PO Box 280  
Beals ME 04611

Also "Tall Barney and His People" books are still available and can be ordered by sending \$20.00 plus \$2.50 shipping and handling to the above address.

**OFFICERS**

**President:** Carol Davis  
**Interim Vice President:** Kenton Feeny  
**Secretary:** Melinda Woodward  
**Treasurer:** Almena Alley  
**Other Directors:** Ruth Carver, Ray Beal & Brian Smith  
**Membership Chairman:** Pamela Davis  
**Acquisitions Chairman:** Paula McCormack & Pamela Taylor  
**Newsletter editors:** Ray Beal & Carol Davis  
**Publicity Chairman:** Ray Beal  
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