

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



JONESPORT – BEALS BRIDGE TOPIC OF BHS FALL PROGRAM MEETING

Vol. XV, No. 4 (Fall 2015)

An evening of local history will be “what’s up” at the Beals Historical Society fall program. The presentation includes the culmination of work and events leading up to the grand opening of the Jonesport – Beals Bridge. After so many years without it, why was it necessary? What were some of the concerns? Who helped “pave” the way for the 1,050’ bridge? How did local physicians feel about the lack of safe transportation to the island? Come and hear many personal accounts from the town’s citizens as well as those from

neighboring towns through letters written to the Editor of the Bangor Daily News. Maybe you have a story or two to share? This evening will prove to be one of great interest as we learn about the time and much effort it took to obtain the approval of and to complete the construction of the bridge we take for granted on a daily basis.

The program will be held at Beals Heritage Center on Friday, September, 18th at 6:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served and all are welcome to attend.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 18th, 2015

6:30 PM. Bridge Program Meeting
at Beals Heritage Center

October 17th, 2015

6:30PM, Gospel Concert at
Beals Gym

*Please mark your calendars
as we greatly appreciate
seeing your happy faces!*

GRANT WRITER

In an effort to raise funds for the completion of the “Cold Storage Area”, BHS contracted grant writer, Shenna Bellows of Manchester, Maine. Shenna is currently working on a grant to the “Maine Humanities Council” and thanks to her efforts BHS recently received a contribution of \$2500 from Mr. Charles Butt. The following is a portion of the letter she drafted to him.

“...We are the Beals Historical Society, located on Beals Island off the coast of Downeast Maine in Washington County, about an hour and a half north by land or X by sea from Northeast Harbor. Supported by 200 members, we oversee the Beals Heritage Center that houses photographs, documents and artifacts that capture the history of one of Maine’s traditional lobster fishing island communities. We host community events including a weekly story hour and fun educational activities for island youth. We also have two historic lobster boats – models that capture an important part of our lobster-fishing heritage. The two boats sit on a concrete slab next to the heritage center. Sadly, each winter,

despite our best efforts with tarps, the boats degrade further. That’s why we have launched a capital campaign to raise \$40,000 to construct a cold-storage building to house both boats.

...We think it’s important that Maine’s young people know their roots, and that’s why we have worked so hard to preserve historical artifacts and documents and these boats. The boats are truly remarkable.

The oldest lobster boat, built in 1902 by Maurice Dow, is the only one of its kind known to exist. In that era of boat building, there was an evolution occurring in lobster boat design, combined with the introduction of the internal combustion engine. The era of oar-powered lobster boats, such as rowboats, dories, pea pods, and sail powered boats, including the Friendship sloop, was giving way to boats of a different design, or boats that could be rowed, sailed, or power driven, called “reach boats.” The reach boat hull was somewhat of a schooner design, with a rounded stem and a slanted schooner-type transom stern, and rounded bilge. Our Dow boat captures the transition from oar-powered lobster boats to “reach

boats.”

Our second lobster boat is a Harold Gower Jonesport Model (square stern and other characteristic design features) originally built for a Beals fisherman Kenneth Beal. Harold Gower was a renowned Beals boat builder known for building “the Cadillac of lobster boats.” This model represents the pinnacle of wooden lobster boat design. With your help, we can preserve these boats for the next generation to know and learn from.”

As part of the grant submission to MCH, Shenna solicited support letters. One such letter was written by Jon Johansen and is as follows:

DOW, MAURICE

One builder that little is known about is Maurice Dow. We know he originally built at Roque Bluffs in the late 1800s and early 1900s. We also know that he built lobster boats for the area fishermen. In interviews with builders on Beals Island I learned that he built torpedo stern boats and that these were built off the boat and then added. Unfortunately there is little information on any of these boats. Some show up in the “List of Merchant Vessels of the United States” and Custom House

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records for Machias. We do know that he also built larger vessels, and some of which were used as sardine carriers.

In 1917 Dow consulted with some Biddeford men about building a shipyard there and then constructed an 800-ton four masted schooner. The design came from the Bowkers of Phippsburg. The only vessel constructed at Biddeford in 1918 was the JERE G. SHAW, a 4-master of 739 gross tons, by the Biddeford Shipbuilding Co.

To my knowledge there is not any boat of this vintage and type saved anywhere. Downeast boats were designed different than others from down the coast. They were skeg boats, meaning there was not a turn in the hull as it entered the keel.

Some were also built without a rabbit line (a groove on the keel, which the frames and plank were placed in.) Since there is not an example of the early lobster boats from the Beals Island-Jonesport area, this boat should be preserved.

GOWER, HAROLD

One of the best-known boatbuilders on Beals Island was Harold Gower and over the years there has been a lot written about him. He came from Canada and was brought here by William Frost in the early 1900s. Frost at the time was building boats on Beals Island but needed help. He learned that Gower was working on Grand Manan so convinced him to come to Beals and build boats

with him. He worked with Frost for a number of years, but after a time went out on his own in 1937. His first boat was the 32-footer BELVA M. The last one was the 39-foot REBECCA J., hull #111, built in 1973. Unfortunately Harold died while this boat was under construction and his nephew Doug Dodge finished it.

Since he built into the 1970's, there are still some Gower boats around (working and yachts). Gower was one of the best lobster boat builders on the coast of Maine and to make sure that one of his boats is saved for future generations should be a priority. (support letter ends)

Both Shenna and Jon made several

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BEALS HERITAGE CENTER BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please check one: Renewal New Date: _____

Name(s) as you wish it to appear on membership card and member roll on website:

Name: _____
(Please type or print clearly)

Your mailing address:

Street or Post Office Box: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

(Please review all types and check the one that applies)

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Annual | \$10 Annually | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior/65 Annual | \$5 annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Life | \$200 one-time payment | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior couple/65 Annual | \$7.50 annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple Annual | \$15 Annually | <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$5 annually |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couple/Life | \$300 one-time payment | | |

Over and above dues, I wish to donate _____

for _____ operating expenses, _____ building fund, or _____ endowment fund.

Receipt and membership card will be sent to you.

Instructions: Please print, complete and mail this application, together with tax-deductible check or money order payable to Beals Historical Society to:

*Membership Chairperson,
Beals Historical Society,
P.O. Box 280, Beals, ME 04611*

Annual memberships are for the calendar year and expire December 31st.

valid points in support of BHS "cold storage area" project. Our goal is to raise \$40,000. Mr. Butt has kindly contributed \$2500 towards it but as you can see we need just a tad bit more. We would much appreciate any size donation, but for anyone who donates \$200 or more, BHS will purchase a personalized brick with their name and the wording, "Friends of BHS" on it. All contributions are tax deductible. Thank you!

Just in case your 2015 membership renewal has slipped your mind or buried in your email, here is a kind reminder to please renew. Thank you!

The recent ordered personalized Veterans and Patio bricks have now been set thanks to George Davis! It is both an honor and a privilege to watch the beautiful Veterans monument develop with the names of those who were willing to fight for our freedom. We are proud of our rich heritage and the strong yet humble people it boasts of.



Condolences

We wish to express deepest sympathy to the family of Ernest Lape. We learned of his passing from his daughters who visited the Heritage Center this summer. Mr. and Mrs. Lape were faithful members of BHS and will be sadly missed by the island people.

BEALS HERITAGE CENTER FUND-RAISING DRIVE BUY A BRICK PROGRAM

The Beals Historical Society is continues its Brick Fundraising Program. The purchase of a brick will enable the continuation, of the heritage center construction, by completing the patio and entranceway of the center and the Veterans monument. Your purchase of a personalized 4x8 cinnamon colored brick with black filled lettering for \$100.00 is a tax-deductible donation. Or you may wish to purchase an 8x8 brick for \$150.00. With this size brick you may add an additional line or use a logo for an additional \$10.

YES! WE'D LIKE TO RESERVE A PERMANENT BRICK.

Please check one of the following:

- Brick Patio Veterans Monument

_____ Check here for 4x8 brick for \$100.00 (standard block lettering included).

_____ Check here for 8x8 brick for \$150.00 (add an additional \$10 for a logo)

4x8 Brick SAMPLE

			I	N		M	E	M	O	R	Y		O	F		
A	R	N	O	L	D		&		I	V	Y		J	O	N	E
			G	R	A	N	D	S	O	N	,		M	E	L	V

Please engrave our brick as follows:

4 x 8 brick lettering-21 spaces or add an additional line for the 8x8 brick

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO:
BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, ATTN: Treasurer, PO Box 280, Beals, ME 04611**

Name: _____ Phone: (_____) _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____ Amount Paid: _____

For further information, please contact Carol Davis at (207) 497-2675 or email cfdavis44@yahoo.com.