

# BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Vol. XVI, No. 2 (Spring 2016)

## THE BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS "FROM AWAY DOWNEAST" REVIVING & EXPANDING MAINE'S TRUE MUSICAL HERITAGE

During the past few years, a small group of Washington County musicians have come under the name "From Away Downeast." These musicians are dedicated to researching, performing, and reviving the musical heritage of Maine. The group's members include three Pembroke, Stephen Sanfilippo, an assistant professor at University of Maine Machias and Maine Maritime Academy, Susan Sanfilippo, a career museum educator, now curator for the Pembroke Historical Society, and Kris Paprocki, music teacher at the Pembroke, Perry and Charlotte schools, Jim Sherman, of Machiasport, long involved with the Machiasport Historical Society and Sunrise Senior College, and Allison Talbot, of East Machias, formerly children's librarian at the Porter Memorial Library in Machias, and currently a graduate student in English literature at Ohio State University.

The March 18th program will be held

at 6:30PM, at the Beals Elementary gym. It will include the performance of several Washington County songs that "From Away Downeast" has uncovered, including songs of fishermen, coastal traders, lifesaving, lumberjacks, and river log drivers, along with an open discussion of how such songs are found, why they are important to understanding our natural and manmade surroundings, and questions and comments from the audience. In addition to vocals, the group's members perform with banjo, fiddle, guitar, and harmonica. The audience is encouraged, to sing along.

Previous to the program, BHS will be holding its Annual Business Meeting, at 6PM. We will have the election of officers nominated by the committee followed by the approval of the 2016 budget.

The program is free to the general public. Light refreshments will be served.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**March 18 @6PM**

Annual Business Meeting

**@6:30PM**

"From Away Downeast"  
Program Meeting

**May 7 @6:30PM**

Spring Talent/Variety Show

**May 30 @10AM**

Memorial Day Program at Beals  
Heritage Center

**June 17 @6:30PM**

Program Meeting

**July 2**

4th Of July Events at Moosabec  
Ambulance Building

**August 19**

Doug Dodge Boat Building  
Presentation

**September 16**

Daniel Davis

**October 21**

Gospel Concert

*Please mark your calendars as we  
greatly appreciate your support!*

## NEW BHS RADA CUTLERY FUNDRAISER

BHS is now selling the #1 Made in the USA Rada Cutlery! Here's your chance to purchase the cutlery at a low cost and help support Beals Historical Society at the same time! Rada's lifetime guarantee will replace any product manufactured by its company returned to them due to defects in material or workmanship and the prices are very reasonable! My husband and I have used this cutlery for the past 37 years and love it! Please click the link below to place your order.

For the internet ordering # use: 505991 and for the password use: leslie55. Your order will ship directly to you and is shipped out two days after placing it. Please feel free to share the link with your friends. If you live locally, you may contact Patti Kelley, Teresa Carver, Tammy Tibbetts or Carol Davis to place an order. Thank you so much for your support of this most worthy cause!

<https://www.helpourfundraiser.com/storefrontCommerce/home.do>

## 2016 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

The Membership Chairperson, Eva Faulkingham, reports that 50 annual members have renewed their membership. If you would like to renew for 2016, please find the membership application at the end of this newsletter. Thank you so much for your continued support!

## PART ONE: MEMORIES OF LIFE IN BEALS ISLAND

by Erroll G. "Sonny" Woodward

### *Earliest Years*

Life in my younger years is divided into two parts. I grew up partly in Jonesport but mostly in Beals. I had roots in both towns as my grandparents, George and Almeda Beal, lived in Jonesport where I was born at their house. I enjoyed staying at my other grandparent's home in Beals when Mama, whose name was Ola, and I had Mumps together and Grammie Rose Woodward nursed us back to health.

The first home I remember at all was situated along the path that went in past the Reformed Baptist Church (later Wesleyan) and joined the road leading toward the Advent Christian Church about half way down the hill between Riley Norton's and the head of the Mill Pond. It was a rented house and was the only one along the mentioned path. In later years it was purchased and remodeled by Richard Carver. I spent about the first three or four years of my life in that house.

Thinking of those first years of life in Beals brings memories of two people, who touched my life in special ways. These are "Uncle" Eben Alley and Cora Look. These to me, as a three or four year old child, were "old people". It seems the folks of Beals or perhaps even Downeast Maine, have a penchant for adopting older folk who become known and respected as "uncle" or "aunt" so and so. Gram was known all over Beals as "Aunt" Rose Woodward.

I recall "Uncle" Eben Alley partly from my own memory and partly from Mama's telling of an incident that happened in front of our house. It happened that Eben was carrying mail or groceries past our house on what seems to have been a daily trip. Whatever he was carrying was too much to handle or the bag it was in broke scattering its contents onto the ground. Mama, seeing that he was in trouble gave me a replacement bag to take to Uncle Eben for which he was extremely grateful. He thanked me profusely and promised he would bring me a sucker as a reward

on his very next trip past the house. On this next trip I was waiting and ran to meet him with the purpose of receiving my sucker. Unfortunately, "Uncle Ebby forgot your sucker, Dear, but I'll bring it tomorrow." Tomorrow came and also the same anxious rush to meet Uncle Ebby. "Oh, dear, Uncle Ebby has forgotten your sucker again but he'll bring it tomorrow for sure." Well, many tomorrows have passed, I am now, at age 80, probably older than Uncle Ebby was at the time, and I have actually abandoned the wait for Uncle Ebby's sucker.

Cora Look was evidently one of Mama's friends. I loved her but hated to see her arrive at the house. I loved her because she "played piano" and sang for me. I hated her arrival because though she promised, she never played and sang the song I wanted. My cousin, Marcia, was my special friend and I wanted Cora to play and sing Jesus Loves Me and Marcia. Cora, after being at the house for a while, would ask if I'd like for her to play the piano and sing for me. I always replied in the affirmative and she would ask what I wanted. "Jesus Loves Me and Marcia". It seems Cora either had a short memory or knew only one song. She would pull up a kitchen chair to the "window sill piano", commence pounding on the tuneless window sill, and sing, "O, the ox won't milk. The cow won't roar...." By then, suspecting what would be coming, I would be shouting, "No, no, Jesus Loves...." Oh yes, well let's start again. O, the ox won't milk..." Soon I would be hysterical and Cora would take her departure. Thinking back, I wonder if she came to visit her friend or if she came for the sole purpose of torturing me. Anyway I never stopped loving her. We moved to Jonesport and she never got the chance to sing to me after we returned to Beals six or seven years later.

### *People of the Second Era*

The second era of life at Beals takes up when we moved back from Jonesport after Grampy Lewis Woodward passed away in 1940. I believe I was to enter 4th grade that fall. This era was when I was

old enough at age nine to start learning who people in town were but even so I recall mostly older ones. Perhaps this is because of reputation they had acquired though I had always been fond of older people. They seemed to have more time for us young'uns. I recall Avery Beal, Jerome "JP" Alley, Charles Henry Beal, Capt. Stephen Peabody and his son Tommy, Guy and Susie Carver, Ami Beal, Fred Beal (uncle Lewie Woodward's buddy in younger years), Uncle Oscar Alley, Frank and Oscar Wallace, Henry Smith (the town Jack of all trades) and my dear friend Pierre Fagonde, whom I had met during my years of living in Jonesport. Pierre, at that meeting, was painting a dory for my grandfather George Beal. I mention these people not because they were anciently old but because of reasons that were special to me.

When we moved back to Beals, we rented an upstairs apartment in what I think was called the Deliah Mitchell house. It sits at the top of the hill between the bridge and Barney's Cove. At present, 2011, it is owned by Guy Carver, Jr. The downstairs was occupied by Harold "Cracker" Gower, wife Nella, and daughter, Ena. They had a nice living room with a piano where I practiced. I also was taunted there by some kids peering in through a window who appeared to think music was sissy and I endured quite a bit of teasing. "Cracker" was a boat builder and I don't recall who else if anyone built boats in Beals at that time. It seems there must have been others as later on there were several that I knew about.

Avery Beal was a fellow who could be considered "a character". He loved to laugh, joke, and have fun. He was a talented violin player and usually played the march for high school graduation held at the larger Reformed Baptist Church. I always waited to hear how he would add a little humor to the solemn occasion of graduation. I was never disappointed as at the very end after all marchers were seated, he gave a little characteristic

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upward sliding swish kind of like the violin was saying, “zip” adding that touch of “Avery Humor”. Avery often helped load lobsters from Uncle Vernal Woodward’s lobster car into his smack, Flora Belle. Even before daybreak Avery was in good humorous form and would soon be making lighter work of the heavy job of lifting a loaded dip net up and over the waist of the Flora Belle. It took two people, one on the handle and one on the bail. Swinging the net to the count of one, two, three, it would be swung up onto the deck. To break monotony, sometime or other, Avery would count, “One, two, wait a minute”. At which time, he, on the handle, would wait while the other bailer would turn himself nearly inside out with trying to lay off the lift. Sometimes it would be, “All together boys, one at a time”, with the same procedure and results. What fun he was to have around but he was also a capable worker and deck hand aboard the Belle.

I always had a special fondness for Peter (Pierre) Fagonde and have very special memories of him. As mentioned, Peter was painting a dory at my grandfather’s wharf when we first met. I might have been seven or eight at the time. Seeing something exciting going on enticed me to visit and “help” Peter. Peter talked with me in his distinct French accent all the while I was hanging around and “helping”. From that day on, his greeting for me was, “Hah, when are we going to paint another dory?” Peter was a favorite with Pups and Mammie, my grandfather and grandmother Beal, and he often ate meals with them when working for Grandfather George. We loved Peter’s easygoing way and accent. It seems that one statement made that lived in our family was Peter’s reply as to which kind of pie he would like. The reply was something like, “Hah, she don-a make-a no deefferonc-a to me.” My last recollections of Pierre were after moving back to Beals and seeing him as a door-to-door salesman showing his product catalog at our house. In later years his grandson Alexis, Jr. married one of my cousins and we became quite good friends.

J.P. Alley was a businessman who operated a general store and fish business barely around the bend in the road from our house at Barney’s Cove. There “JP” had a long wharf with a long shed containing fish tanks for salting fish, a stripping and packing room on the upper end, fish flakes for drying the salt fish, and a gasoline pump at the outer end of the wharf. It was at this wharf that a gasoline delivery tanker flattened my new rowboat moored there. “Timer” Smith by cutting off the damage and replacing the stern rebuilt it. JP’s store was across the road from the wharf. The store had shelves, counters, meat and ice cream coolers, candy showcase, and cookie display boxes with glass covers. Cookies and much other merchandise were sold by the pound or measure and little was prepackaged except the canned goods, cereal, and crackers. Mothers in those days, had their own special molasses and vinegar jugs, bottles, or jars.

At the right rear of J.P.’s store was an office while straight back was the room where the barrels of molasses, vinegar, and salt pork were stored. The corned beef barrel was there also. It contained the beef saved from spoiling by being made into corned beef. This “store made” corned beef was delicious in a “corned beef and cabbage meal”. Now this meal is called a New England boiled dinner and is apt to include ham instead of corned beef. There was a hand operated grinding wheel attached to a small workbench in the back room. JP allowed people to use it for sharpening their tools. Down in the basement of the store was an excellent well of water. It was probably a spring. Several people carried water for home use from that well. The local male population gathered at the store in the evening to swap stories and relax from the day’s hard work. I expect this was repeated at the other local stores in town. This is where Dad did most of his trading, as it was practically “on our doorstep”.

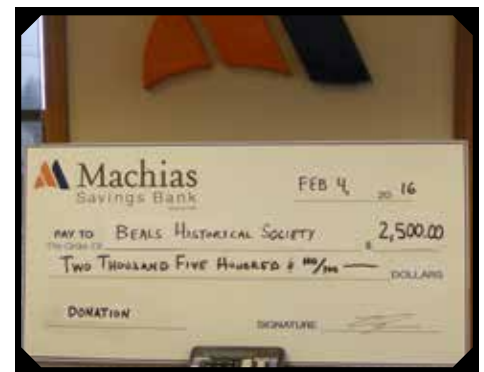
Uncle Oscar Alley, my Grammie Rose Woodward’s brother, also operated a small store. It was slightly smaller than JP’s but had some of the same products

plus some dry goods. It was where we purchased our Fourth of July fireworks, model airplane kits, marbles, and the like. At one time I had a pair of army surplus pants bought there. Uncle Oscar also sold life insurance from this location. His store was located at the end of the cemetery across the road from the hearse house (formerly town office) that became our home in 1941 after Dad bought and moved it to Barney’s Cove. Before the days when telephones were more common, Uncle Oscar’s store had one of the few phones in town. Folks needing a phone would often use his store phone, ask the operator for the charge, and pay Uncle Oscar for its use.

Ami Beal operated a store that was located east of the school. It was very convenient to go there for a treat at recess time. Nissan’s cream rolls, fruit, candy, or cookies were favorite choices. My favorite was the cream roll, and like

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## BHS CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GRANT AWARD



On behalf of the Beals Historical Society, the Executive Board wishes to express sincere appreciation for the generous grant award of \$2,500 from Machias Savings Bank. BHS Capital Campaign effort to raise \$40,000 has now reached a grand total of \$25,000. We are now waiting to hear from the last three grant proposals. Hopefully it will be positive news so we can start construction in the spring. BHS is very thankful for all of the grant support to date!

other kids, I scooped out the cream and ate it before biting off the end of the pastry. Mmmm, back then it was real whipped cream of sorts and would sour if not sold and eaten soon. Ami's was one of two stores that sold tobacco products.

While thinking of stores, over the years there were others with which I was not very familiar. Among these, some at the same and some at different times, were that of Stevie and Lizzie Peabody, Frank Wallace, Harold Alley, Emma Beal, Avery Beal (this also had the post office at one time), Will Beal at Perio Point, Erroll Woodward (my dad and myself), Clifton Alley, and the Alley's Bay Co-op. My grandfather Beal at one time owned a share in the Alley's Bay Co-op. store and at another time Uncle Vernal Woodward owned it. I leave it to someone else to write up the histories of these stores and others I may have missed except Dad's and mine. Ours started as a lunch shop just a few yards

from the Beals School. Started as a 10' X 12' building it soon was expanded to 12' X 22'. Students daily placed orders for their noon lunches which were ready and waiting for them at noon. The expanded size featured lunches, canned goods, school supplies, jukebox, and pinball machine. The business was sold to my cousin Vinton Beal soon after I entered the U.S. Navy in March of 1951.

Henry Smith was another special Island character. Henry did "engineering" projects that might well have challenged a modern day MIT graduate. He moved houses, dynamited wells, and took care of The Island's odd jobs. His means of transportation was a bicycle that served him well as both automobile and truck. It was not unusual to see Henry walking beside his vehicle that was carrying a small rowboat or washtub full of water or clams. I wonder," Did I ever actually see Henry moving a boat with his bicycle or is that now a part of his legend similar to

that of Tall Barney"? It certainly seems real enough in my mind's eye.

I must mention Fred Beal because, as stated earlier, he was my Uncle Lewie Woodward's early years companion. I tell this little anecdote with a touch of timidity as I am not in the habit of saying things that might embarrass someone but this was passed down through the family grapevine so it must be somewhat common knowledge. It seems that Uncle Lew and Fred were not against having chicken dinners using chickens that had been appropriated from wherever they might be found. As many people do, Fred had a favorite expression as many people do. His was," My life." One day while passing and peering into a hen yard, Fred is reported to have said in an admiring or longing tone, "My life, what a pretty red rooster." I had a fondness for talking with Fred as he had such a gentle speech and emanated a kindness not always easily detected in folks.

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

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

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*