

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Vol. XXV, No. 2 (Spring 2025)

TALL BARNEY BEAL

2025
MEMBERSHIP
RENEWAL OR NEW

*Excerpts from Velton Peabody's Bio sketch of Tall Barney Beal.
Written in the year 2000*

Ten generations of the Beal family have lived on Beals Island, off the coast of Down East Maine, fished its cold Atlantic waters for lobsters, herring and cod, braved its dense Fundy fogs and 18-foot tides, dug its mudflats for marine worm bait and steamer clams, bunted its black ducks, coots and white-tailed deer, searched its fields and granite shore for wild blueberries, blackberries, strawberries and cranberries, logged its wind-warped spruce and fir.

The family that produced Barnabas (Tall Barney) Beal stems from Col. William Beale, a partner in the firm of John Beex & Co. who came from London on the *Fortune* a year after the Mayflower landed at Plymouth.

By the mid-1600's the Beale or Beal family was established in the Kittery-York area of the southern Maine coast, where they engaged in fishing and the operation of passenger and horse ferries across the York River.

One of the first members of the family to break away from the southern Maine coast was Col. Beal's great-great-grandson, Mainwaring Beals Jr., who removed from Cape Elizabeth two hundred miles up the coast to Buck's Harbor on the lower Machias River in 1763-4. By 1775, Mainwaring Beal Jr. and his now-numerous family had relocated on then northwest side of Beals Island, opposite what would become the mainland town of Jonesport, then known as Moosepecke, twenty miles back down the coast from Buck's Harbor.

This first settler of Beals Island, and the man for who the island and later the

town of Beals were named, was himself a man not to be taken lightly despite his fondness for preaching and poetry writing. Mainwaring Beals Jr. is said by tradition to have stood over six feet tall and to have weighted 300 pounds (Note 6). It is said he once sent away for special chairs to accommodate his enormous frame.

By the time Tall Barney Beal was born on Beals Island on December 13, 1835, the Revolution's first naval engagement at Machiasport was history, the waters around Beals Island were generally safe from the royal fleet and the Beal family was well planted on Beals and Great Wass Islands and on the neighboring mainland.

Little is known of Tall Barney's youth other than that revealed in the census record, but it may be assumed that, like other island youths, he started work early in life. It is not unusual even today for a Beals Island boy to begin digging clams at 10 or 12 years old and to begin hauling lobster traps by age 14 or 15. In Tall Barney's era, when there was a coastal shipping trade, islanders often went to sea by age 14.

It is known from the Milbridge, Maine, town record that Tall Barney Beal was married on Pond Island in that town, about 20 miles west of his native community, on Dec. 19, 1855, soon after he became 20. His wife was Phebe Ann Stanwood, 15-year-old daughter of Daniel and Annie (Pinkham) Standwood of Milbridge.

For a time, Tall Barney and his bride occupied a camp on otherwise-

With the New Year, comes the renewal of your BHS membership. For your convenience, please find the attached membership application. Dues have not increased and the fee is very minimal. Annual membership dues are utilized for BHS general operation costs. We hope you will continue to support BHS as it is a most worthy nonprofit organization. We greatly appreciate your support. Please feel free to share the newsletter with your family and friends. Thank you!^o

BHS Heritage Center hours are by appointment. You may call 207-497-2675 to schedule a day & time or you may send an email to cfDavis44@yahoo.com.

PERSONALIZED BRICKS

Anytime is a good time to purchase personalized bricks for either the Veteran's Monument Park or the Patio. For the 4"x 8" brick, you have three lines each with 21 letters and spaces for \$75. The 8"x8" brick offers four lines with 21 letters and spaces for \$125. The Veteran's brick information includes the rank, name, branch of service, war and years served. You can be creative with the Patio brick. It can be your favorite Beal's Island memory, memorialize your loved ones, honor the living, a school memory, etc. It's your choice with the patio brick. Please find the personalized brick application attached. Thank you!

Continued on next page

unoccupied Pond Island, where he did some lobster-fishing. They apparently continued to visit Pond Island for much of their married life (Note 15), but soon after marriage they made their primary home on Beals Island. Some family sources say Tall Barney's parents objected to his marriage and that consequently the newly-married couple also lived briefly at Pond Point on the west side of Great Wass Island before finally moving back to the island where he was born.

Barney was what might be described as a general fisherman, meaning that he pursued various kinds of fish, depending on the tide and the season. For clamming and fishing close to shore, he used a dory, an open boat easily powered by his strong rowing-arms, but for trips to the offshore fishing grounds and to market ports to the westward, he used a two-masted fishing schooner, the *Essex*, built for him in Milbridge in 1860, when he was 25 years old. The *Essex*, according to the *Nineteenth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the Untied States* (1888), was 49.4 feet long, 14.5 feet wide and 5.6 feet deep with a gross of 20.75 tons and a net of 19.72 tons. The schooner was assigned the official number 7473.

Andrew J. Peabody, a retired Jonesport sea captain who grew up on Beals Island as one of Tall Barney's neighbors and whose father Ammi Peabody was one of Barney's fishing companions, recalled that Uncle Barney, as he called him, and a crew of eight or ten men would take the *Essex* to the Grand Manan Banks, and stay two to four weeks at a time, whatever time was required to load their boat with fish. One such trip by Barney to the fishing grounds was captured in verse in an 1870 ballad attributed to John Radley of Jonesport.

There are among Barney's descendants those who claim that he was a great hunter and they have the evidence to back it up. Barney's grandson, Avery E. Beal, used to tell of the time that he, as a lad, saw his grandfather, Tall Barney, coming toward the shore in a small, lap-streak boat after a bird-hunting trip. The

youngster ran to the shore to greet him and was so impressed with the hunting trophies that he never forgot the sight. Barney had neatly stacked the birds by their bills in the risings all around the boat. Granddaughter Delcena Lenfestey recalled that Barny used to bring the birds home by the barrel-full for his wife to prepare for the table or give away to neighbors.

Tall Barney was a man of contrasts, a gentle giant. On one hand, he was feared for his unusual size and strength. On the other, he was regarded as a kind-hearted family man who would not pick a fight but also would not stand idly by while another was threatened unjustly. Decendants tell of his bringing home hungry strangers to share the family meals and of written orders he gave grocers to supply the needs of destitute families and he would see that the bill was paid.

Tall Barney and Phebe had twelve children, all of whom reached maturity except one, Merrill Alley Beal, who was born last on May 31, 1885, and died in infancy of scarlet fever. Of the six remaining sons, the oldest, John A. 2d, born April 23, 1858, became a leading developer of the fishing industry on Beals Island and today is remembered by some as the father of the community; George Washington, born in March of 1864, became a fisherman in Milbridge; Freeman Willis, known as Tall Will, born Feb. 9, 1866, served as postmaster on the island and as merchant and fish and lobster dealer; Charles Henry, born Aug. 14, 1872, was a merchant and fish and lobster dealer on Beals; Nehemiah Ingalls, born Jan. 14, 1876, and named after a hermit who lived on a nearby island, became a lobster dealer in Milbridge; and Napoleon Rogers, born Sept. 23, 1878, was a herring seiner and boat captain. All stood six feet or more except Charles Henry, who missed the mark by one inch.

Barney Beal's five daughters also apparently were not short-changed where physical stature and strength are concerned. It is said that one of these daughters—the specific one is not

known – at one time got ready to make bread for dinner (that would be the noon meal on Beals Island) and found that she had no flour. She knew there was a dory-load of flour in barrels down at the shore. Apparently, Barney and his able-bodied sons were not around, so she went down to the shore, put a barrel of flour under her arm, climbed the seawall, took the flour into the house and made her biscuits.

Four of these daughters married distant Beal cousins. Amy Ann, born Feb. 15, 1860, married James Franklin Beal; Lucinda Jane, born April 26, 1862, was married to Elihu Ellis Beal; Sarah Margaret, born Aug. 23, 1869 became the wife of Lowell Edard Beal; and Charlotte Althea, born Oct. 31, 1881, was married for to Mauriece Leroy Beal, then to Nathaniel Faulkingham. Daughter Julea Amanda, born Dec. 10, 1873, married Thomas Edgar Norton.

Concerning Barney's death there is little dispute. The oral tradition says clearly that he died of heart strain after lifting heavy loads. An abstract of his death certificate indicated that Barney died Feb. 1, 1899, at age 63 of "dilatation [dilatation or enlargement] of heart." He seems to have been ill for some time. As early as 1880, a census taken noted on his official report that Barney, then 45, was afflicted with "lung trouble." According to family members, Barney in his last days suffered from severe

Continued on next page

BHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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swelling of the legs and was cared for in the next-door home of his son Charles Henry, where he died.

Tall Barney, his wife and the son who died in infancy share a common plot in

the island's central cemetery. A seven-foot monument, containing bare facts of their births and deaths, towers over the surrounding gravestones in much the same way Barney overshadowed his

fellows when he moved among them in life. Whether the monument's apparent symbolism came about by coincidence or by design is unknown.

BEALS HERITAGE CENTER FUNDRAISING DRIVE BUY A PERSONALIZED BRICK PROGRAM

The Beals Historical Society offers the chance to be creative in personalizing a brick for your favorite person, pet, place, event, occasion, or simply something that is near and dear to your heart. Purchasing a personalized brick will enable the continuation of the brick patio, and/or adding your favorite Veteran to the Veterans Monument Park Area. The Veteran's 4 x 8 brick consists of the Veteran's rank, name, branch of service, war served in and years served. Your purchase of a personalized 4x8 cinnamon colored brick with black filled lettering for \$85 is a tax-deductible donation or you may wish to purchase an 8x8 brick for \$125. Purchasing the 8 x 8 brick gives you an additional line or instead of the line you may purchase a logo for an additional \$10. Price includes shipping.

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

Please check one of the following:

- Patio Veterans Monument
- Check here for 4x8 brick for \$85.00 (standard block lettering included).
- Check here for 8x8 brick for \$125.00 (add an additional \$10 for a logo)

Please engrave your brick as follows: For a 4 x 8 brick use three lines with 21 letters including spaces and for an 8 x 8 brick add use four lines.

**PLEASE MAKE YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER PAYABLE TO: BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY,
ATTN: Treasurer, PO Box 280, Beals, ME 04611 Thank you for your contribution!**

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____ Amount Paid: _____

*For further information or suggestions with a design for your personalized brick,
please contact Carol Davis at (207) 497-2675 or email cfdavis44@yahoo.com.*

Beals Heritage Center



Beals Historical Society Membership Application

Please check one: Renewal New

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

(Please type or print clearly)

Your mailing address: Street or Post Office Box: _____
City: _____ State _____ ZIP: _____

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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 |

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 Dec. 31.