

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



2020 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

To date, we have processed 92 renewal membership applications and 7 new. Additionally, BHS currently has 70 life members. To date, we have a total of 169 members. We would like to see substantial growth in our membership in the coming months by reaching a goal of 200 members and with your help

we can make this happen. If your 2020 dues have already been paid, you would have received a membership card for the new year. If not, we would ask you to please activate your 2020 membership at your earliest convenience. Please enclosed membership application.

Vol. XX, No. 4 (Summer 2020)

RADA CUTLERY

The following is the link to purchase Rada Cutlery in support of Beals Historical Society. This cutlery is made in the USA and is very reasonably priced. There's also nice, reasonably priced gift sets that would make great Christmas presents for your friends and family. Please go online and support BHS this holiday season! Hopefully you can copy and paste the link below into your browser. Thank you so much!

<https://radafundraising.com/?rfsn=1006189.1c548&fbclid=IwAR2qpei-gcD-NnKZLiTaYAiWsQLsRYltuXcQSATvdEZla4y7sf6D7a5gA>

HISTORY OF THE FORMER BEALS BRIDGE

The following article is based on newspaper articles, editorials, personal accounts and letters to Beals selectmen. The people of Beals and Jonesport had to share their story by every possible means of communication in order for everyone in the state of Maine to understand their need for a bridge.

According to an article written by Jay Hinson, a good old-fashioned rally of townsfolks from Jonesport and Beals Island was sponsored by the Jonesport Chamber of Commerce for the purpose of alerting the voters about the need for a good turnout for a special election in which the referendum question in regards to a \$1,000,000 toll bridge connecting the two communities will be put before the people.

Hinson continues by saying that a special purpose of the rally, which will be held at the Jonesport auditorium, will be to explain that this bridge will be a toll bridge and that these tolls will be used to retire a bond issue and to maintain the bridge in good repair.

The 700 residents of Beals Island are working earnestly for the bridge which would stretch for a half mile from Jonesport across a stretch of fast-running and sometimes treacherous water.

At present most of the islanders' 160 cars and trucks are left on the mainland

at Jonesport, but, if the bridge is built, it is expected that much use of it would be made by both local and out-of-town vehicles.

Edward Beal, first selectman of the town of Beals, said Wednesday evening that the construction of the bridge would have three major results: most important of all it would give constant access to the island for ambulances, doctors and other medical care; it would cause the town to grow and prosper because of faster and more convenient access, and thirdly, it would result in a growth of interest in the island by tourists and potential summer residents who would make use of the island's many fine beaches and lovely wooded plots.

At present, the residents must rely on a scow-type car and passenger ferry which is, to put it charitably, unreliable, unsafe and inadequate. At the slightest sign of bad weather, it is made fast and islanders are practically marooned. In foggy weather the slow-moving, awkward ferry is a menace to navigation and is in constant danger of being sliced in two by other faster crafts.

When the ferry is inoperative, Beal said, and a bed-ridden patient must be transported to the mainland, it is now necessary to pick the patient's bed

Continued on next page

UPDATE ON BEALS HERITAGE CENTER HOURS

Covid19 hours for the Heritage Center are Monday – Thursday, 10AM – 1:30PM. We hope you are able to stop by for a visit. Due to new State guidelines, please wear a mask and hand sanitizer is available once inside. Thank you and we hope to see you soon!

AMAZON SMILE

Just a reminder that you can support BHS through AmazonSmile. Just go to AmazonSmile.com and chose Beals Historical Society for your charity. Each time you place an order Amazon will make a donation to BHS. It's that simple! We thank you in advance for your support of BHS!

up and carry it bodily onto a lobster boat or some such similar craft across slippery beaches and up narrow ladders-sometimes in driving rain or snow.

Edward Beal knows what he's talking about because his own daughter had to be taken to the mainland during a bad rainstorm in this very manner.

At present those using the ferry pay \$1 for the vehicle and driver and 25 cents for each additional occupant. A pedestrian pays 50 cents. It is expected that the tolls on the bridge would be about the same. End of Jay Hinson's article.

Next please read letter to the editor of Bangor Daily news from local people. This was another effort to spread the word about the great need for the bridge.

Physician's View by John Young, M.D.: Being a resident physician in the town of Jonesport, it is also my privilege to serve the town of Beals as a medical adviser and family physician

in most of their general and medical problems. I am, therefore, in a position to know something of their needs and the hardships relative to communication with the mainland and especially their problems pertaining to illness.

I recall vividly a maternity case in early practice which was complicated by a severe hemorrhage. It happened in the middle of the night during a terrific gale in March. It was necessary to send the ferryman to Machias, over twenty miles away, to get some much-needed medication. With a bridge the patient might even have been transported to the nearest hospital.

On another occasion, at one o'clock in the morning, one maternity case developed convulsions of pregnancy-always a dreaded complication of pregnancy, even in the most modern maternity hospital-but this occurred in one of the most remote sections of Beals, the Alley's Bay section. After emergency treatment, the ferryman and I bundled

the patient up in blankets, placed her in the truck cab (one of three vehicles then on the Island. There are now almost two hundred registered there) and, in the middle of the winter, headed for the mainland. She was transferred to my car and thence to Machias...good training and experience for a young country doctor, perhaps, but hardly the most humane way to transport, a desperately ill patient.

Very recently, a dead low water, it took me two hours between two and four a.m. to get across the Reach to see a desperately ill patient. All of the available ferry equipment was grounded out. These few illustrations might be endlessly repeated by any physician who has served this area.

More important to me, however, than the personal inconveniences of travel is the future of the economic development of this area of Maine. A bridge across the Jonesport-Beals Reach would

Continued on next page

BUY A BRICK PROGRAM

The Beals Historical Society iscontinues 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 theVeterans 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.

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	S
		G	R	A	N	D	S	O	N	,		M	E	L	V	I	N

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.

substantially help this entire area which has lagged so far behind the rest of the state.

Beals, unlike most of the towns in Washington County, has kept her population relatively stable and has retained the vigor of its youth and spirit of independence which urged it to petition for independent status as a town in 1925. It will not, however, retain this happy status for long unless something happens to bolster its economy. I feel very definitely that a yes vote on Monday for the bridge would be in large measure a contribution from all of our state citizens to a deserving isolated area which has certainly made a splendid contribution to the state and nation in its own small way.

Waiting for the Ferry by Allan B. Chesterton: I have been principal of Jonesport High School for many years and I am now the Superintendent of Schools in the union of which Beals is a part. This has given me firsthand knowledge of the need and the worthwhileness of the Beals bridge.

In order for the people of Beals to secure a large number of necessities and comforts of life, it is necessary for them to go to the mainland periodically. Medical attention, dental care, post-secondary schooling, etc. are not available on the island. I wonder just how many of you realize the hardship which is involved when you have to go to and from the island by boat? How many of you have gone down a ladder after dark to a boat waiting below? How many of you have stood in a snowstorm waiting for the ferry boat to come from the island to transport you to your home? Usually these people will find the tide at its lowest mark on at least one way of their trips and will have to make a descent of ten feet or more to get aboard the boat ferry.

Yet, with all of these hardships, the people of Beals have striven to better themselves. The percentage of graduates from Beals High School who are attending post-secondary institutions of higher learning is well above the state

and national average but there are still a large number of graduates who are unable to attend these schools because of the great hardship which is involved in going to and from Beals by boat.

It is my sincere belief that the bridge tolls will more than pay for the maintenance of the Beals bridge. Therefore, won't you, the voters, go to the polls on September 12 to vote for the Beals bridge?

Voted by Legislature: by Ewart Lenfestey: Before we were incorporated as a town in 1925 we were part of Jonesport.

Not because we disliked our friends and relatives in Jonesport, we desired to become a town ourselves.

The main reason was because of the difficulty in sending our children across the water to attend secondary schools.

Our bill to become a town was rejected in two different sessions of the Legislature, but we did succeed the third time and have proved ourselves to be self-supporting and also maintain a grade A high school.

In our annual town meeting of 1951, we voted to build and operate a car ferry. This met criticism from many sources, but in spite of the view-point of many it has been successful. Now the increase of business and travel, with the handicap of strong winds and rough seas, makes it insufficient.

Close investigation by our legislators and engineers gave them a better knowledge of our need of better transportation.

Due to the fact of our accomplishment in previous undertakings we feel this bridge in no way will bring indebtedness to the taxpayers of our state.

We admire our legislators who have confidence in their ability to discharge their duties in state affairs.

To prove your confidence in these men why not go to the polls September 12 and vote yes to this bill which they have favored?

End of Editorials, but there are many more that can be viewed at Beals Heritage Center.

The following information was gathered at Mr and Mrs Guy Carver's home where a score of people gathered into their small parlor to tell writer, Peter Starrett how important the bridge would be to them.

In an article entitled, "Beals Islanders Are Praying Vote Will Bring Them Bridge", by Peter Starrett, Selectman Edward Beal stated, I think we are going to get the bridge. I don't even dare think that we wouldn't get it. I'm sure people up in this part of the state understand we have to have it. I just hope folks in other parts of the state understand too. A fisherman explained, "I lost my brother. He had appendicitis and there just wasn't anything we could do for him." Another elderly boatsman said, "That old reach looks pretty on a day like today, but you remember its right out in the open sea and when there is an east wind and the tide going out it's as bad a piece of water as you'll find anywhere in the Atlantic." Carver said, "A million dollars is a lot of money and we know it, but we aren't asking the state to give it to us we just want the loan of a little credit."

Peter writes, "Under the bill presented by Rep. Lawrence Stanwood of Steuben and unanimously passed by both branches of the Legislature last winter, the state would issue a million dollars' worth of bonds and build the bridge. The bonds would be retired by the collection of tolls on the bridge over a 50-year period. Beals Islanders and others using the bridge would eventually pay for it.

According to a newspaper article, Jonesport, Beals Citizens held a rally on the evening of the Bridge vote to encourage support. The following is a section from this article.

Hardships: Lloyd Cummings, third selectman, and a grocer in Jonesport, outlined the plight of the people on the island who cannot easily shop for their food, but must accept for the most part what is sent over for them. A bridge would allow them to come to the mainland and make their own choices.

Representative Lawrence Stanwood,

Continued on next page

and Senators Oscar Brown of Eastport and Hollis Wyman of Milbridge, spoke optimistically about the outcome of the election and praised the people of Beals and Jonesport for their initiative and energy when present in Augusta.

Lawrence Smith introduced Captain Walter Farnsworth, a retired U.S. Navy serviceman, who has headed up the committee working for the bridge. The captain was given a musical salute by the band playing “Anchors Aweigh”.

Captain Farnsworth told of his work in promoting the bridge idea, his TV appearances and thanked the newspapers and everyone working for the bridge for their cooperation with him and the people of the two towns. He said that he had planned his campaign by visualizing himself, as not on the bridge of a ship, but on a bridge spanning from Beals Island to Jonesport.

Bangor Daily News published the following article entitled: A Few Decide For Many

As expected, the voters of Maine were conspicuous by their absence at Monday’s special referendum election. The official count won’t be known for a few days, but a representative sampling indicates that the voting may have been the lightest ever.

In at least two of the smaller communities, Amity and Moose River, the count at the end of the polling day was one ballot per town. Only 110 of Houlton’s 5,000 voters marked ballots. Portland has 30,000 voters; only 1,300 went to the polls. Bangor’s showing was not quite as poor but it was poor enough as 1,070 votes cast against 12,939 voters.

Thus did a small fraction of the voting population decide on five issues relating to state affairs. It makes us wonder what, if anything, can be done about it.

The only bright spot of the election was approval of the Jonesport-Beals Island toll bridge project. We think the

STATE OF MAINE State Highway Commission	
JONESPORT - BEALS BRIDGE	
Toll Rates Effective - August 9, 1958	
Passenger car	\$1.00
Truck or bus, 2 axles, single rear tires	1.00
Truck or bus, 2 axles, dual rear tires	2.00
Truck or bus, 3 axles	3.00
Truck, 4 or more axles	4.00
Trailer	.50
Horse vehicle or motorcycle	.50
Pedestrian or passenger	.10

Vehicle rates include driver.

bridge will not only be a boon for the islanders but a sound investment for the state.

The “yes” vote for the bridge is all that made the special election worth its expense.

Newspaper headline: Beals Islanders, Overjoyed by News of Bridge, Stage Big Cavalcade, Ring Church Bells, Blow Whistles

Beals Island, Sept. 13—Folks on Beals Island, overjoyed at the voters’ approval on Monday of the million-dollar bridge linking them with Jonesport on the mainland, showed their sincere appreciation by embarking on an impromptu 10-hour cavalcade on Tuesday, thanking people from Steuben to Machiasport for their help.

Only the time element precluded a trip through the entire state, according to one enthusiastic islander. The idea for

the caravan of thanks occurred about 9 o’clock in the morning to some of the ladies on the island who forthwith summoned their menfolk, who were at work in their boats hauling lobster traps, by radio telephone.

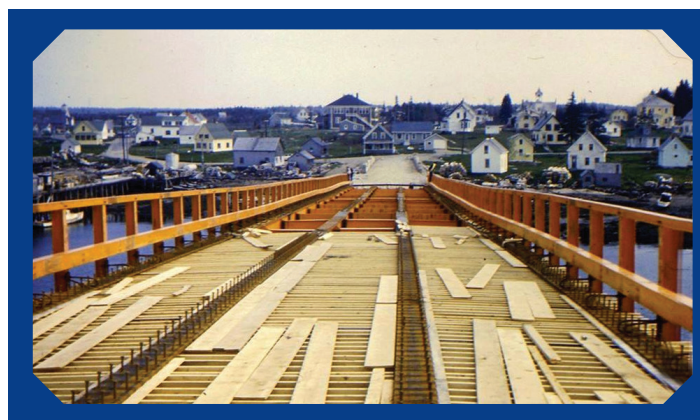
By 11 o’clock 26 men and women, including Fred G. Beal at 84 the oldest resident of the island, were assembled in seven cars and began their trek. The cars were decorated with bunting, placards and streamers and the Beals people made a point of stopping in each of the towns and thanking strangers and friends alike for their positive voting.

After touring through about a dozen towns and villages the cavalcade returned to Jonesport where 15 more cars were spontaneously added and a parade was formed from one end of Jonesport to the other. People were singing, crying and laughing. Church bells were ringing and the whistles at Jonesport’s two factories were tied down for one long ear-splitting duet.

Over on Beals Tuesday a festive air had settled since early in the morning when it became obvious through radio and the newspaper offices that the bridge was a reality. At 1 o’clock in the morning four self-appointed sentinels, Mrs. Ruth Carver, Mrs. Leila Beal, Mrs. Leta Beal and Wiley Mitchell went around and awakened or notified their neighbors of the good news. Many of the residents were keeping an all-night watch anyway and soon joined in the celebration.

FYI—the largest vote was 30,754, polled on the bridge referendum question.

We hope you have enjoyed reading about some of the work involved in making the old bridge a reality. Plans are in the making for a “new Beals Bridge” article in the “2021 Winter BHS Newsletter”.



Condolences

It is with much sadness that we wish to offer heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Arthur S. Woodward. Arthur was so proud of his Beals Island heritage and frequently shared his wonderful memories, of island living, with me via email. Very thankful to have saved those emails and have shared many of them on BHS facebook page. R.I.P. Arthur. You are sadly missed, but not forgotten by your Beals Island friends.

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)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| ☐ Individual Annual | \$10 Annually |
| ☐ Individual/Life | \$200 one-time payment |
| ☐ Couple Annual | \$15 Annually |
| ☐ Couple/Life | \$300 one-time payment |
| ☐ Senior/65 Annual | \$5 annually |
| ☐ Senior couple/65 Annual | \$7.50 annually |
| ☐ 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 December 31st.