

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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CENTENNIAL ADDRESS: “A HERITAGE OF FAITH”



by BHS President Daniel F. Davis

INTRODUCTION: It is only fitting that we should meet here at Alley's Bay Chapel for this special service in recognition of our town's hundredth anniversary of incorporation. I say this for several reasons, the first of which is that this Chapel has historical significance as a center of both secular and Christian teaching. It was constructed at the lower west side of Great Wass Island to serve as the Slate Island School in 1881. After its closure, it was moved to this location to become the Alley's Bay School around 1889, and when the "new school" just up the road was built in 1905, this little structure was converted into a Sunday School for the children of the neighborhood and became the home of the Alley's Bay Advent Christian Church.

A second reason that the Chapel is a fitting gathering place for this occasion is that it has served the people of Alley's Bay and Beals since its establishment as a place of worship for people from all Christian faiths within the communities of Beals, neighboring Jonesport, and beyond. That interdenominational Christian fellowship has continued ever since the early 1900's, but more so over the past 25 years. Today, the Chapel still serves its nondenominational function for Christian gatherings of people from a variety of churches throughout the Moos-a-bee area and beyond.

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.

And the third reason this little chapel is a suitable place for this gathering is that it was founded as the family church home of the John Alley family, the first settler of Alley's Bay's, and has continued to be the church home for many of his descendants from the 1800's to the present—a number of you who are gathered here this evening, myself included are among his descendants. This Chapel has been our church home for generations, and we pray that it will continue to fulfill that role for another 120 years and more.

CHURCH HISTORY: I have entitled tonight's centennial address "A Heritage of Faith," in recognition of the religious foundation upon which this community was established as far back as 1774. Based on historical information from the Beals Comprehensive Plan of 2003, Beal's first settler, Manwarren Beal, Jr., was a righteous and fair-minded man, but as far as is known, he was not actually affiliated with any religious denomination, although he had a reading acquaintance with the Quakers, also known as the Society of Friends, and appears to have been highly influenced by Quaker thought. From his own writings and lifestyle, it would appear that Quaker characteristics and beliefs were in evidence in the life of Manwarren Beal. His personal writings, both in letters and prose, are indicators of a deep personal faith, reverence for God, and a profound respect for his fellow man. Thus, it is safe to say that religious faith was instilled in our community from its inception in 1774 and has been active throughout its hundred years of existence.

Manwarren Beal's personal faith in

God is reflected in a poem he wrote six weeks before his death in the summer of 1800, which I would like to share with you at this time:

*July is the month I on begin--
'Tis near about the seventeen.*

*The grass in bloom is fine and green;
The days are spent that I have seen.*

*The days, my God, Thou lend to me,
My life my death is all with Thee;
My Lord, Thou lent me many days--
To spend in truth and give Thee praise.*

*My thoughts have not been dead,
That passed through my heart and head;
The meditations of my soul,
Have (has) ever been my chief control.*

*My God, of life my glass has run--
To sixty-three, six weeks to come;
And still, my God, my time's unto Thee.
I hasten to eternity.*

*My God, my thoughts do meditate--
I patiently Thy time do wait;
My hope and faith is all in Thee--
Supported by true charity.*

*I am a worm but of the dust--
My morals mean for to be just;
And what, O Lord, more can I be,
To rise unto felicity?*

*O may my leaf be ever green--
To my last day for to be seen;
And when my time no more shall be,
My God, receive my soul to Thee.*

*The world to me is a burden
(burthen) come--
But still I glory in Thy name;
To tread Thy just and even path--
In all my life unto my death.*

*My God, to mediate on Thee--
The greatest comfort that can be;
I find in it to my soul's peace--
The sweets of love never to cease.*

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*Pardon, oh God, the sins I've done--
Still be my guide in time to come;
And hold me up in Thy right hand--
To do Thy work at Thy command.*

A family member poetically eulogized the life of Manwarren Beal saying of him:

*"He was humane, kind, and just;
And in his God he put his trust--
His morals were exceeding good;
He would not deny the hungry food.*

*Of all his virtues, I cannot write--
In doing good, he took delight;
He was not fond of every preacher--
But followed his own inward teacher.*

*In his last hour he was calm of mind--
And without a groan,
his breath resigned;
He gave good advice
to all he left behind--
And to his Maker's will he was resigned.*



As historian of Beals Historical Society, I like to incorporate historical fact into my presentations. Tonight, I would like to share the history of the churches that have served our community through the years.

The first religious organization on Beals appears to have been the Advent Christian Church, which was formed on June 26, 1881 by Elders N. Smith and McKenzie of Indian River. Elder Smith was the first pastor. The Reverend Robert F. Emerson of East Rochester, New York, reorganized this congregation in 1897 with 54 members. It is believed that the Adventists may have originally met here at the Chapel before the church edifice at the Mill Pond was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1904.

The beginnings of the present-day Wesleyan Church came on September 9, 1895, when Reverend C. S. Hilyard of Jonesport preached his first sermon on Beals as a representative of the Canadian-based Reformed Baptist movement. His ministry led to more than 90 conversions and the formation of the Beals Reformed Baptist Church in October of that year. Ground was broken for the church building on October 14, 1896. The edifice was dedicated on February 6, 1897.

The Beals congregation of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, known today as the Community of Christ, was organized in 1898. Services were first held in Jonesport, with only a Sunday School at Beals. In 1905, this denomination erected its church building in anticipation of conducting regular services there for all ages, with itinerant ministers coming from the mainland until Farrell Lenfestey was ordained and became pastor.

In the 1980's, a number of members of the Beals RLDS Church organized on their own, meeting at the Mill Pond, and became the Church of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. They later acquired the former Union Church in West Jonesport, where they presently meet.

OUR SPIRITUAL HERITAGE:

Let us now look more closely at our spiritual heritage.

As Americans, we have a rich heritage founded by people who held firmly and faithfully to Christian values and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This great truth has been proclaimed by our political leaders, as well as the common man, down through our nation's 250-year history. The same can be said of our island community throughout its hundred years of existence as an incorporated municipality, and even before.

Historically, we have had a great Christian heritage that has shaped our community's thought and action. On this occasion, I would like to highlight three principles of belief that have become the basis for the precious heritage that we have enjoyed for a century and more.

First of all, Islanders have been known for their work ethic—a reflection of Biblical precepts espoused throughout Scripture. Manwarren Beal and his family came to this land in the confidence that if they worked hard enough, they could develop and improve the land to meet their needs and the needs of others as well. They saw their efforts as an investment in the future, and not merely as a means-to-

an-end for personal daily survival, but to establish a sustainable environment for themselves and future generations.

Having become acquainted with Quaker beliefs and values, Manwarren understood that God created man to work, to till the soil, to overcome the land, and to become good stewards of all that God had given into his hands. Work for men, such as Manwarren, was a way to honor and serve God, and in so doing to serve one's fellow man—not only providing for personal and immediate needs, but to provide an abundance that could be shared in charity with those of less fortune. As a Quaker, Manwarren believed that work was virtuous and worthy of a man's dignity. For that reason, he and his family worked as unto the Lord. That's the kind of work ethic that our community was founded upon—working with dignity and pride and as unto God. That same attitude toward work has been passed down from our founding fathers, from generation to generation. It is the same work ethic that motivates and drives the fishermen who daily ply the surrounding waters, the clammers who labor on the flats, the teachers in the classrooms, the factory workers, blueberry harvesters, public servants, and a host of others—who through the efforts of their hands and minds, provide for the needs of their families and the population at large.

A second principle of belief that our Christian heritage has brought to our community is an abiding belief in a sovereign and supreme Creator God. Our forefathers knew there was more to life than working, providing for their needs, and making money in the process. For the most part, we have been privileged to live in a Christian community where God is not only recognized as Creator, but worthy of glory, honor, praise, and worship. Our forefathers saw God as omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (all knowing), and omnipresent (everywhere), and for that reason they built houses of worship in the earliest years of settlement as

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places to come together in Christian fellowship to worship Almighty God. They lived their faith before their fellowmen in their conversation, labor, and in conducting the affairs of the community. As we know, Manwarren Beal had at least some association with the Quaker faith, but few know why they were called Quakers. We are told the name was first used to refer to members of the Society of Friends in an English court when its founder, George Fox, said of the awe and respect one should have for the Scriptures, “You need to tremble before the inspired Word of God.” The Quakers, indeed, held the Word of God in high esteem and with reverence. The name “Quakers” has stuck ever since.

A holy fear for God and His Word was not unique to the Quakers, however. This view was held by the Puritans, the Huguenots, and the Catholics who settled the Maryland area. People today often fail to recognize the sacred nature of the Word of God and performing their work as unto God. Rather, they see God merely as a nice idea, but not actually a part of one’s reality. In fact, most people today see God as unnecessary and His Word irrelevant. We desperately need a return to our forefathers’ understanding of the power and awesomeness of God working among us as His people.

The third and final principle of belief that I would like to make this evening is that the people of our community have incorporated Christian values into their daily living. They have been welcoming to the stranger, charitable toward those in need, forgiving toward those who offend, compassionate toward those who suffer, and comforting to those who have experienced loss. Those are Christian qualities that have helped make Beals a special place in the hearts of generations from the days of its early settlement to the present. Qualities such as these, combined with a deep and abiding faith in God our Father, have blest us with a shining jewel in the waters of Moos-a-bec Reach and an example to communities around us—even to those from afar. These are

Christian values that are common to small towns such as ours, all across the country—towns in which people are always ready to lend a hand in times of adversity, just as we have witnessed with the flooding in Texas and other states.

CONCLUSION: I must confess, sometimes it seems that we, as a community, have abandoned God and failed in our calling; that we have departed from the Christian community that we once were. Thankfully, there is still a remnant of people who believe in Jesus as Lord. That’s why you are here tonight. You still love Christ as Lord and Savior. For many of you, there was a time when you established a personal relationship with Him and you became aware of His love, mercy, and grace extended to you. You also became more aware of God’s holy nature, His justice, and His omnipotence. Others hold firmly to a belief in the Second Coming of Christ to raise our loved ones to live anew, to judge both the living and the dead, and to establish his kingdom on earth. And because we believe as we do, we need to pray that God will bring revival to our nation, and more specifically, to our community. Where once at least 7 churches thrived as houses of worship and religious instruction, today our churches are just barely hanging on, and some have even closed their doors.

We need to pray for a great awakening. We need to return to our Judeo-Christian values—values that came from a knowledge of and a deep-seated belief in Scripture. Our heritage as a community is strongly established in Biblical values—the same values that became the foundation of our most beloved national documents, such as

the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights. Those beliefs made the American society what it has been for more than 200 years—but those values have been eroded away in recent decades.

God has granted this community a hundred years of His blessing and providence. As we have come together in celebration of this milestone in local history, may we be reminded that we need to be faithful to our heritage as given by our founding fathers. Let us unite as a people to become the salt of the earth and a light that is set upon a hill that cannot be hidden. May we be faithful to the task at hand, as we strive to maintain and preserve what others have handed down to us. Let us labor for the common good and for the betterment of our island home, that it might endure, Lord’s willing, yet another hundred years. And may we leave to posterity a community that is even better than we found it.

2025 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL OR NEW

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



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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: _____

E-mail 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 |

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.