

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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THE WRECK OF THE JOHN C. MEYERS

The following story, written by one of Beals Islands long standing citizens and businessmen, is taken from the 1926 Ocean Breeze Beals High School Yearbook. The Heritage Center has a wonderful collection of old yearbooks, which contain many interesting stories like this one. We invite you to visit the Center to see what you might find for Island area history and folklore.

By Vernal O. Woodward, '26

In the month of November 1925, the four-masted barkentine, John C. Myers, loaded with pulpwood, left Nova Scotia under the command of Captain Leander Look, a citizen of Beals. Captain Look is a very capable man and for some time has commanded many ocean-going steamboats.

As the weather was fair Captain Look decided to set sail for the United States. As soon as they were out of port the wind began to blow very hard and it also hailed; however, the vessel made very good time from Parsboro to Grand Manan.

Just a short distance from Grand Manan the fog settled over the water and the wind continued to blow, making a heavy sea. Captain Look decided to go into Machias Bay because his vessel would not fetch out by the head of Moose-Peak Light, because of a shattered keel and strong head wind. Captain Look had the sailors on the bow looking for buoys and rocks as he thought it was almost time to turn into Machias Bay. Suddenly breakers were seen all around the vessel, she being so large it was impossible to

turn her quickly enough and she ran onto the sharp rocks of Libby Island. As soon as the vessel struck, the masts and sails went over the bow and the pulpwood began to move over the vessel together with booms, rope and wire. A torch was burned, but help did not come for several hours. The vessel broke in two, and the after part which the crew were on, backed in between two large rocks forming a gulch, and they had to watch their chance and climb down over the davit lines and run ashore on the pulp wood while foaming seas were out. The negro cook was afraid to leave the vessel but was finally compelled to. After all the crew were ashore as they thought, they heard some one shouting for help. They looked back among the pulpwood and there was the first mate struggling to keep from drowning. Captain Look and the boatswain running over the moving pulp wood got hold of his hand and dragged him ashore, but he was hurt so badly he could not walk and had to be carried across the island to an old cabin until the Cross Island station crew came and took him with the crew to Machias. There the crew, who had lost

all their belongings, was given sufficient clothing, and the mate was sent to the hospital.

Captain Look returned home and every evening his home was crowded with people to hear the story of the wreck and how the crew escaped in the fog with one chance in a hundred to reach shore alive.

For many days after the wreck, pulpwood was seen drifting around the neighboring islands and in the quiet hours of the night one could hear the pulp wood being thrown onto wharves and rocks.

Thus the Barkentine John C. Myers was lost.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

Membership Chairperson, Eva Faulkingham, reports a total of 115 renewal memberships, 8 new and 63 life members for a total of 186 members for 2013. Please check your membership cards to see if you have renewed for this year or not. We much appreciate your support! Helps to pay the bills! Thank you!

BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL GOSPEL CONCERT

BHS Annual Gospel Concert will be held at the Beals gym on Saturday, October 12, at 6:30PM. We hope you will join us as we enjoy listening to local talent singing the beautiful hymns of yesterday and today. If you would like

to participate or know of someone who would, please email cfdavis44@yahoo.com or call 497-2675. Thank you!

Hotdogs and goodies will be sold. Admission for adults \$5 and children \$2.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**October 12, 6:30PM
Gospel Concert**

Please mark your calendars.

*We greatly appreciate your
attendance!*

A HUGE Thank You

*to BHS member Carol Closson
for "Center" sitting at the Heritage
Center this summer! She only had a
couple of visitors but maybe through
this announcement, more people will
stop by to visit her next year!*

THE HISTORY OF BEALS

This story was also taken from the 1926 Ocean Breeze yearbook and was written by one of Beal's school teachers, Doris Almena Beal who later married Erwin Alley also of Beals.

By Doris Almena Beal '26

Beals is an island situated on the southeastern coast of Maine. The first settlers on the island were Manwarren Beal and his family who settled sometime between the years 1772 and 1794. (now believed to be 1774)

Many were the hardships that these people endured. It was during the eight years of unceasing conflict of the Revolutionary War that the home of Mr. Beal was robbed by an English privateer. The account goes, that at one time, when Mr. Beals was very sick in bed with a slow fever, a vessel, bearing an American flag, appeared off the island. She immediately pointed her bow towards the shore and came to anchor in Barney's Cove. Then the crew pulled down the Stars and Stripes, and flung to the breeze the Union Jack. The men soon came to the home of Mr. Beal and demanded what money there was in the house and were told by Sally, the daughter, that there was none. They replied that unless it was handed over to them, they would blow the house to pieces. Failing in this persistent demand, they began to search for money, and finally to plunder the house; for at this time the home was well stocked with provisions for the winter. The crew seized everything they could carry away, even to the clothes on the beds; and that which they were unable to take with them they destroyed. In this manner a hogshead of molasses was broken in and its contents spilled on the floor, and several of the domestic animals were killed. Having thus deprived the family of all means of support, the English plunderers left the house. The daughter, Sally, as she stood in the door crying, because of the destitute condition in which they were left, and wiping her eyes with a home spun apron was approached by one of the English officers and presented with a new "ban danner," silk handkerchief.

This was only one of the many incidents, which caused them trouble. For example, the Indians did many things to hinder their welfare.

Notwithstanding these and many other hardships they survived. Other people came

to buy on the island and the population increased, although very slowly. A post office was built which was carried on by Mr. John A. Beal. Later fish stands and smoke sheds were erected by Captain John A. Beal and C. H. Beal, two of the prominent townspeople, who in times past have done much for the welfare of the people of the island.

The population increased more and more rapidly. Schools were begun, many pupils attending them until they reached the highest grade, which was the ninth grade. Few could afford to send their children to school in the nearest town, which is Jonesport, and thus the people suffered for lack of an education although they have all managed to gain enough knowledge to earn a living.

In the years 1921 the people of the island, thinking that they could do better by themselves and maintain a High School went to the Legislature in Augusta asking that they be incorporated as a town. They did not succeed the first term, nor yet the second term of the Legislature, but by steady perseverance the third time they went to the Legislature they gained their Independence.

After they returned home a day was set for celebration and this was indeed a joyful day. The 4th of July in the year 1923 was celebrated for the first time at Beals.

A town meeting was held in July after the return of the delegates. In this meeting it was voted that an annex consisting of an auditorium and rooms for the High School should be built on the school building. This annex was finished in 1925 so that a High School is now carried on there successfully in a well-equipped school building.

Three churches have been built at Beals, with good seating capacity and in late years improvements have been made on all of these such as electric lights.

There are three boatshops on the island in which work is furnished for many of the men. Some of the best boats along the coast are built here, which are sold in many places in New England. Near one of these is a well-equipped machine shop.

Stores have been built one by one until there are now seven in number, which are well stocked and furnish a good line of goods.

A ferry is now under construction. This is

to be large enough to carry two automobiles. It is believed that this will be a great benefit to the people and be the means of bringing a larger population to the island and an increase in business.

There is one lobster pound, which has proved successful. Lobster fishing is the main business of the people, for the majority of the men follow in that vocation and are now bringing in some very good hauls.

A band and orchestra have been organized which furnish good music for many occasions.

Everything is prospering now, and if it remains thus Beals will soon be a town well worth the name and one of which to be very proud.

Note from BHS Editor: John A. Beal and C.H.Beal or Charles Henry were sons of Barnabus Coffin Beal Jr. or Tall Barney as many refer to him. If you have further information on any of the subjects mentioned in this article, we would implore you to please email it to cfdavis44@yahoo.com or mail it to Beals Historical Society, PO Box 280, Beals ME 04611. BHS would much appreciate ANY details you might remember regarding either of these editorials. Thank you!

BHS NEEDS YOUR HELP

Please help us reduce the cost of mailing the newsletter by sending your email address to cfdavis44@yahoo.com. Thank you!!!

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