

# BEALS HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Vol. XVIII, No. 4 (Fall 2018)

## HEAD HARBOR'S SEALAND MOVIE NIGHT

Friday, October 26, 2018 will be Beals Historical Society's movie night. At 6:30PM meeting in the Beals Elementary School gymnasium, a DVD will be shown featuring the Head Harbor Settlements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This hundred-year history of Sealand is the product of research done by BHS historian Daniel F. Davis in 2010-2011 and presented to local historical societies in Beals, Jonesport, and Addison. This presentation has been made available to the general public in an attempt to keep alive the story of the Head Harbor settlements from a time long past, and to honor the efforts of those who sacrificed

their time, energy, and limited resources to make it all happen. Some of the information to be covered includes the historical background of Head Harbor and the status of its settlements from the early 1800's through post WW II days, the changing occupations and their effects on the island's population, the influence of the Maine Seacoast Mission on this remote island community, and the final days of Sealand as the settlement was dismantled and abandoned due to the rapidly changing economics of the day. Old photos and a few artifacts are included in the DVD recording. Light refreshments will be served.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**October 26th –**  
Sealand Presentation  
by Daniel Davis on DVD

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

## 2018 MEMBERSHIP

If you would like to support BHS by becoming an annual member, please find the membership application enclosed in this newsletter. All annual dues are used to fund the general operations of BHS. This includes, heat, lights, insurance and archival supplies. Your support is much appreciated! Thank you!

## ISLAND LIFE

*The following is an article written by Nancy Beal at the time Obeline Crowley turned 100. In an effort to reach those who do not receive local news and to preserve local history, we are sharing it with our members.*

Around the turn of the 20th century when they were still teenagers, Obeline's father, Frank Bourque, and his brother, Laurie, shipped out of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia on a large fishing vessel and were part of crew that set out in dories, fished all day, and brought the catch back to the mother ship. While ashore in Boston, they were befriended by Beals Island herring seiner, Guy Carver (Sr.), who may have been there on fisheries-related business. Carver convinced them to come Downeast and go seining for him.

Frank discovered that fishing was not his calling, but he stayed in the Moosabec area, became a naturalized citizen, anglicized his name to Burke,

and enlisted in the coast guard, where he would serve until retirement around 1950. Assigned to the lifesaving station on Great Wass Island—the southern of two islands that make up the town of Beals—it was not surprising that he met and married a Beals Island girl, Fannie Alley. Obeline was born on August 29, 1917, and two brothers, Sanford and Nathan, followed.

In a five-page handwritten account of her life, penned recently by Obeline in the neat penmanship she undoubtedly taught in her classroom days, she recounts that Fannie and the children didn't go with Frank when he was stationed away from Beals ("up to the west'ard," she says, describing southern Maine, as the fishermen she grew up around do, by reference to the prevailing southwest wind). They didn't even see him much when he was assigned to Great Wass, she says, for he had limited time off. "He almost seemed like a stranger to me

at first," she writes. Happy times were enjoyed in the summertime, she adds, when mother and children camped near the lifesaving station and could be with Frank as a family.

In her childhood, Obeline says, there were "many children to play with" since, without a bridge (completed in 1958), there were few cars and little traffic on the roads. Children walked back and forth to school (including for lunch at noontime) and used the roads for "sliding" in the winter. In 1935, she graduated from Beals High School, a tall, green structure that stood where the Historical Society Building now stands, and also housed the lower grades. There were seven in her graduating class, she writes, including two boys. In 1939, she married one of them, Jerome Crowley, and began to make a home.

After graduation, Obeline took a job in the local post office under Susie Carver  
*continued on next page*

*continued from previous page*

(the seiner's wife) and performed her duties in the back of what is now the home of Joe and Twyla Charczynski. The post office moved around a lot, typically housed in someone's home, and Obeline went with it. She recalls loading mail into the wheelbarrow of the fabled mail carrier, William "Billy Peck" Beal, who rowed his dory back and forth to Jonesport each week day, carting the outgoing and incoming mail, including, she laughs, the heavy Sears catalogues from which island folk did most of their shopping.

In 1943, the Crowleys' only child, Leon was born and Obeline quit her postal job to stay home with him. Baptized at age 16 in what was then the Reformed Baptist Church—now the Wesleyan Church—she taught Sunday school and served as the Sunday school secretary. In 1948, she and Jerome embarked on yet another enterprise.

#### *An island store*

The J. P. Alley store in the Barney's Cove district of Beals was owned and operated by Jerome's grandfather and Lester Alley. When J. P. decided to retire in 1948, Jerome and Obeline decided to buy the business. In addition to groceries, they carried grain, hardware, fishing supplies, trap materials, kerosene and, eventually, heating oil which they delivered in a truck brought across the Reach on a lobster smack.

In the 20 years that they had the store, five-year-old Leon, whom his mother describes as "a very active boy," eventually grew big enough to scramble up the shelves and bring down the items his parents couldn't reach. This often resulted in more than the desired item coming down. "I wasn't a very good clerk," admits the 73-year-old retired educator, but his memories are vivid.

Leon recalls that kerosene was cranked out of a tank into jerry cans and that a splash pan caught each spilled drop, which was carefully returned to the tank. Like most old country stores, the Crowleys' had a roll-top desk and a check protector. At first, items that



*Obeline Crowley*

needed refrigeration were kept (out of sight) in a reach-in locker. Later, a common meat case with a glass front was installed. There were Saturday specials—seven cans of canned milk for a dollar—and a Coke cooler appeared. Leon seldom missed the arrival of the candy salesman who, thanks to an enthusiastic young consumer and an indulgent mother, always went away with a good order.

Typically, families ran up a tab during the winter when fishing stopped, and the charge slips were kept in a metal container with springed drawers, a number on each designating the customer. "Most paid in the spring," says Leon who was, not always happily, left in charge of the store as a teenager and who, on at least one occasion, called in his own replacement when his parents were out of town so that he could play music with his friends.

#### *Change of career at 51*

Jerome Crowley also had a clam shop on a wharf in front of the store, and a hand in another shop in Jonesport. (Obeline kept the books for both.) When the bridge was built in 1958, however, island life began to change, and island enterprises found themselves in competition with larger enterprises on the mainland to which island residents could now drive. In 1968, the Crowleys decided to give up the store, and sold it

to Harvey and Sylvia Alley.

Obeline's only child was grown and out of the house and there was no longer a store to manage, a job which Leon says had fallen mostly to her while Jerome was off lobster fishing. Teaching was "always something I wanted to do," she says, and, at the age of 51, she drove herself off to college to become trained for it. From 1968 till graduation in 1972, she attended the University of Maine at Machias and emerged with a teaching degree.

For the next ten years, she taught at the Ella Lewis School in Steuben. For the next 10-plus years, when she retired, she substitute-taught at Beals Elementary School where Leon was teaching principal. After that late-life career, she and Jerome did some traveling down the eastern seaboard, making friends who often returned the visits. In her retirement, she took on the weekly task of preparing Sunday dinners for her extended family—after they all went to church.

Obeline doesn't have any contemporaries left, but most who know her associate her with her teaching career, especially since her son, Leon, taught and was principal in most of the Moosabec area schools, including the new Jonesport-Beals High School established in 1968. Additionally, his eldest son, Christopher, has taught at Beals Elementary School for over two decades and is now its principal.

But Obeline was 51 when she became the oldest of three generations of teachers. In the first five decades of her life, she had already made her mark and, nearly a century later, she remembers most of the details.

## **FYI**

*We now have Velton Peabody's new genealogy book for sale at \$50. A limited supply of books are available at Carver Heating. Also still available we have BHS genealogy book, "Tall Barney and His People" for \$5 and can be purchased at Carver Heating as well.*

## 2018 GIFTS

1. Photos of Veterans, Mariner Bunker and Willard Kelley to be displayed in the Veteran's Exhibit. Donated by Donna Bunker.

2. "The Salt Book" by Pamela Wood and "Salt 2 Book" edited with an introduction by Pamela Wood. Donated by Patricia Hubbard.

3. Beals Town Reports from years 1971-72, 1977, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984 and an unidentified photo postcard. Donated by Joanne Kelley

4. A 1978 JBHS Class Will. Donated by Pamela J. Libby.

5. From the collection of Clinton and Lottie Beal donated by their son Ray. Beals School book, "Friendly Village" copyright 1936, "A Magician of Science", copyright 1926, "Time to Play", copyright 1948, "All in a Day", no copyright. A Beal High School baton used by Ray to usher in with graduates in 1962. Beals High School letter with basketball and baseball pins, and a 1962 Beals High School Jacket. A bill to reorganize the Beals and Jonesport School. 5/18/1977, Architectural Field Report #2 for Beals Island School dated 8/1/1979, Cover for the letter of intent to convey property from the town of Jonesport to the Moosabec Community School District dated 2/1/1980, Informational Letter from Dept of Education and Cultural Services regrading Annual December meeting for the puprose of electing or reelecting a Superintendent of Schools, Agenda for Moosabec CSD and School Union No. 103 School Committeeds & Trustees, 12/19/1982, Beals school Dept School Committee meeting minutes dated 12/14/1982, Beals School architectural design of ballfield, 3/18/1980, Deed for Beals school p[roperty transferal of land a gift from Nancy Sullivan on 10/2/1972, Architectural drawing of the Jonesport-Beals High School, 11/15/1979, Contract Documents for Beals Island School, May 1979, JBHS school play, "Heir apparent: In Line for the Throne", Jonesport-Beals island Bridge Official Opening program-copy, Preamble for Moosabec

school teacher negotiations, 5/22/1980, Certificate of Appreciation to Clinton Beal for assisitance with Head Harbor Island research, 6/10/1999, Playbook called, "Late Holiday" performed by Leonice Alley, Addie Norton, Leta Lenfestey and Lottie Alley.

We hope to include more for 2018 in the next newsletter. We do appreciate all who think of BHS when needing to find a home for their treasures.



## 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

## MEMORIES

*If you wish to share your memories about being raised on Beals Island, please email Carol at cfdavis44@yahoo.com or please mail them to: BHS, PO Box 280, Beals ME 04611. Your memories might include stories about your parents or grandparents as well. BHS and its readers would love to hear about the way life used to be on our beloved Beals Island. Thank you!*