

# Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

Autumn 2021

## Message from the President

I am deeply sorry to report that JHS Treasurer and Genealogist Catherine (Farnsworth) Perry, age 74, passed away peacefully at home on September 14<sup>th</sup>, surrounded by her loving family. She was a Certified Public Accountant and volunteered to serve as Treasurer when JHS was organized in 2003 and had continued to serve actively until the month she died. Her accounting knowledge and professionalism will be extremely difficult to replace.

Cathy also collaborated with past JHS officers Donnie Woodward and Charlie Alley in creating a Genealogy database which includes more than 87,000 names, dating back to Pilgrims who arrived on the Mayflower.

Without knowing that Cathy would soon be gone from us, the JHS Board of Directors publicly honored her at an outdoor mussel-tasting event in August with a Certificate of Appreciation for her outstanding service. See page 4 for more information and photos of that event.

*Bill Plaskon, President*

## 2021 Board of Directors

### Officers:

*William Plaskon, President*  
*Jean Guptill, Vice President*  
*Charles Alley, V.P. Emeritus*  
-- Vacant -- Treasurer  
*Ashley Faulkingham, Secretary*  
*Eric Kelley Jr., Historian*

## To Jonesport in 1984

by Barbara Ostberg, Ipswich MA

The lobstering industry and its paraphernalia are as much a part of the coast of Maine as are the spruce trees. The boats are everywhere in all weather, and many is the yachtsman who owes thanks to the lobsterman who found him circling in the fog and led him to safety. But besides adding to the picturesque setting, providing a bounty of tasty creatures, and saving the lost mariner, this industry is also responsible for the lobster pot with its surface tackle, the colorful painted buoy, its line and toggle.

In our six years of sailing the Maine coast we had tangled with one line, a record that was achieved at the cost of eternal vigilance. That summer we caught our second.

We were headed East and had just passed Petit Manan, the lonely light that is the dividing line between the world of easy access to provisions and yacht clubs with moorings, and the world of lonely coves and working harbors. For us it was also the dividing line between the known and the unknown. The wind was southwesterly at about 15 knots and we were racing along on that perfect point of sail, the reach. The skipper (and husband) was below plotting courses into this unknown and I was at

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### Directors:

*Byron Carver Jr.*  
*Kylie Hinkley*  
*Andrew Hutnik*  
*Betty Kelley*  
*Charlene Nelson*  
*Nancy Sawyer*

(To Jonesport in 1984 continued)

the helm, occasionally checking the newly purchased auto-helm as it guided the boat, and peering with delight at the clouds and the distant shores. Of a sudden, I felt the boat check and looked aft only to find a mess of lines, buoys and toggles between the stern of the boat and the dinghy. The inexcusable had happened.

I shouted for the skipper, who arrived with knife in hand to cut the line. Unforgivable to the lobsterman who may then lose a pot, but sometimes necessary for the sailor. The mess of lines and toggles and buoys remained. "Let's pull up the centerboard" I suggested, "and maybe the rest will slide over." Part did, but in the process a line jammed in the centerboard trunk leaving us with a centerboard (necessary for stabilizing the boat on certain tacks) that was unusable, and loose line floating below. The skipper went in the dinghy with the boathook but to no avail; the water too rough, the line too jammed. He did ascertain that the line was also wound around the screw. Now we were in trouble. It was this that brought us two days later to Jonesport.

In the meantime there was naught to do but keep on sailing as best we could, eventually to Shorey Cove on Roque Island, a wide open harbor with no facilities but into which we could easily sail and drop anchor. Even with the skipper in the icy water and then partially beaching the boat, all efforts to loose the line failed, although he was able to unwind it from the screw, which made the engine usable. The only solution was to have the boat hauled. Our beloved *Cruising Guide*, supported by the *United States Coastal Pilot*, suggested we might find a boatyard in Jonesport, the nearest town.

Jonesport was clearly a working harbor. Wharves with immense pilings indicating the degree of tide lined its shores, and in its harbor was only one yacht among the lobster boats and draggers. We anchored. A cursory check through binoculars failed to disclose any boatyard, so we rowed in our dinghy to the yacht for advice. "No," said the sailor on board, "that boatyard went out of business when the owner died." On the town wharf we found a lobsterman working on his boat. His pants were hanging low on his hips, his face was as red as his beard, he heard us out and then surmised, "Only one guy can help you. Benny Beal three docks down." We tied our dinghy to the wharf and started off.

We took the first road to the left that seemed parallel to the waterfront and had walked a ways before it dead ended. "Oh, no," replied the man we queried, "Benny Beal is down off the main street." He looked at us speculatively. "That's a long walk. Hop in." This was the first of the many pick-up trucks we were to ride in. He drove us to Beal's wharf, spotted Benny's truck, and dropped us off.

No one was by the truck, no one in the shop, but a lovely golden was wandering about. The dog alerted us to the arrival of a boat and the three men climbing the twenty foot ladder.

The first and oldest, it had to be Benny Beal, stepped onto the wharf with a most noncommittal look. It was neither welcoming nor unwelcoming. The identical expression was on the face of the younger man and the boy as they, too, mounted the wharf.

The skipper stepped forward, introduced us, and told Benny that we were there seeking help. Benny shook the proffered hand and with no change of expression listened as Dick presented the problem. With a minimum of words but all the necessary ones, Benny began to propose possible solutions: No there was no way to haul the boat, yes there was a diver but probably couldn't help, might be best to tie the pot line to the

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Dick and Barbara Ostberg



Ostberg's 35' centerboard sloop

(To Jonesport in 1984 continued)

wharf or to a mooring and wait for the tide to rise. We started down the wharf when the young man, who must have been in his early twenties, very trim with a trim beard, spoke up. "Suppose we drop the bucket on it. It would save time. We wouldn't have to wait for the tide."

Benny considered, and interpreted for us. The proposal was that the pot line be attached to the 500 lb. weight on a dragger and the weight dropped. The conclusion was that "something ought to give."

We were back in a truck, this time Robert Johnson's, the young man. He dropped me at the IGA as it was late Saturday afternoon and provisions were needed, and took the skipper to our boat with the young boy, Mike, stepson of the druggist. The dragger and our yacht met shortly, the necessary lines were bent on, Benny shouted "Get back, get back" and let go 550 pounds of rusty steel into 45 feet of water; and *zuck!* the centerboard was free.

In the meantime I was at the check-out counter trying to load my four bags of groceries into my two boat bags. The woman on the counter watched with concern. "You walking to the municipal wharf?" she asked. "I'll get you a ride." Almost before I could reply she had the next man in the line carrying my bundles to his pick-up truck.

The skipper met Benny back on the pier. He refused the offer of money, shook hands firmly, and said, "Take care of the boys." We did.

Shortly thereafter we sat on board our boat, anchored for the night in the harbor, and watched dusk settle over the town. We were strangers. We had arrived on a Saturday afternoon when most workers were at home with their families or doing their thing elsewhere. We were listened to with respect and concern when we asked for help. The men who manned the pick-up truck brigade thought nothing of sharing their front seats and putting their own destinations aside. We met friendliness from all, and that best kind of intelligence which can take an odd problem and come up with a novel and successful solution. Jonesport, we love you!

The setting sun framed the church tower marked "spire" on our chart and from its belfry each hour came a song.

*Writer Barbara Ostberg, now 98, lives in Ipswich, Massachusetts, and is still very active in a number of civic organizations, including the town's historical society, where she was guest speaker in July.*



Steve Perry was the only member to identify the use of last quarter's mystery tool, but he didn't know its name. Used for splitting granite, it is a tool with many names: feathers (or shims) and wedge (or plug). The paired feathers were inserted into a line of holes drilled into the granite, and the wedges were driven in with a hammer to cause the split. Jonesport's Hardwood Island Quarry, mentioned in last quarter's Mike Corbett piece, was operated by Rockport Granite Co. of Massachusetts. The quarry produced a dark reddish-gray granite with a white and pinkish feldspar, known as Moose-a-Bec Red. According to the website "Stone Quarries and Beyond" by Peggy and George Perazzo, granite from Hardwood Island Quarry was used in many noted buildings including the main entrance of the Suffolk County Courthouse in Boston, and the 25 columns in the Catholic Cathedral in Newark, New Jersey.

—SMEJ



### IGA Grocery in Jonesport

Visiting boater Barbara Ostberg, a stranger to town, was shown great kindness when she shopped at the IGA in 1984.

As many folks will recall, the building didn't always house a grocery. How many of its earlier incarnations do you remember? Won't you please drop a line to Bill Plaskon (contact info on the last page) or me and share a sentence or two—or more—of your memories associated with this building.

What did you see there?

What did you do there?

What stories about earlier activities there did a parent or neighbor pass down to you?

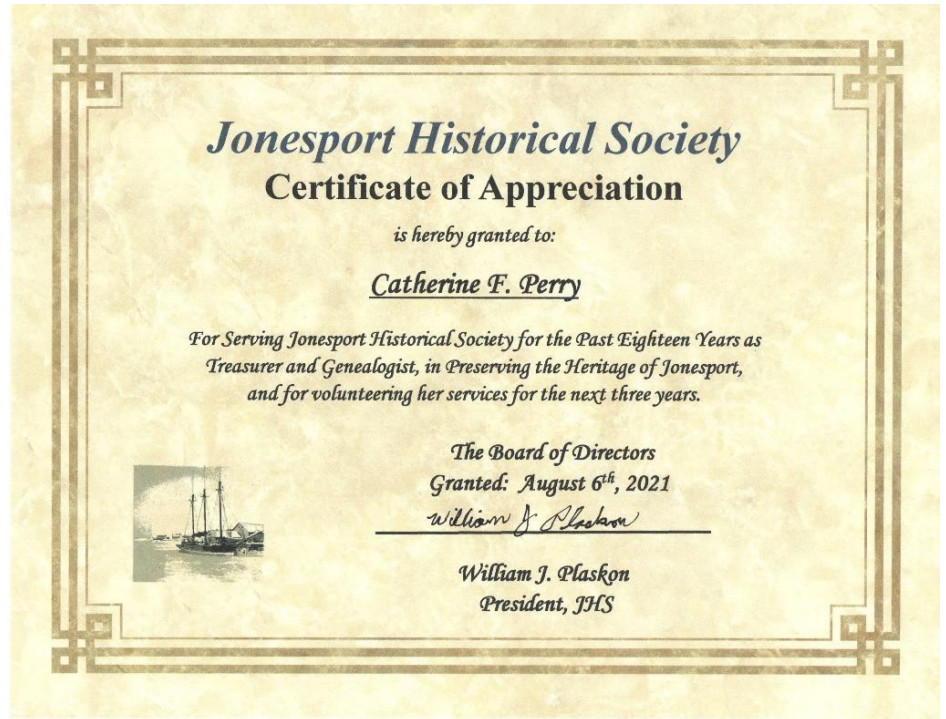
Was there some "first" in your life that occurred there? Please share it with us.

SMEJ [sharon@6pine.com](mailto:sharon@6pine.com)





Cathy Perry with Certificate  
Photo by Ronie Strout



At the outdoors mussels-tasting event given by Ralph Smith at his Moosabec Mussels plant in Jonesport on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021, JHS President Bill Plaskon honored Treasurer Cathy Perry with a Certificate of Appreciation which reads: "For Serving Jonesport Historical Society for the past eighteen years as Treasurer and Genealogist, in preserving the heritage of Jonesport, and for volunteering her services for the next three years."



More than fifty Jonesport Historical Society members and guests gathered August 6<sup>th</sup> at Moosabec Mussels, Inc. to hear owner Ralph Smith present some of his own history and that of his firm, and to enjoy generous samples of the family-run company's mussels and quahogs.

**Membership Form (Q)  
2021**

**Please print all information clearly. Use a separate form for each person. Membership is 5.00 per year per person.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Maiden Name (optional)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone (required for ID)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Town** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_ **Contact me about volunteering**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **5.00 2021 Membership**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **2022 Membership (\$5.00)**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **2023 Membership (\$5.00)**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Tax Deductible Donation**  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Amount**

**Make check payable to *Jonesport Historical Society***  
**Mail to: Jonesport Historical Society**  
**P.O. Box 603**  
**Jonesport, ME 04649**

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Located at 21 Sawyer Square  
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The Jonesport Historical Society Museum and Heritage Center is open in 2021 only upon request May through October. Please call to make an appointment.