

# Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

## Message from the President

Janice Cristo has regretfully resigned from the JHS Board of Directors. She will be selling her house in Jonesport and moving out of the area. Although Jan has been on the board for only the past two years, she played a major role in creating Jonesport’s Downeast Heritage Trail website, and with scanning and preserving the Sawyer schooner records from the late 1800s. She often helped me with grant writing and public outreach projects, and she took her role as board member very seriously. I will miss her dearly.

Ashley (Peabody) Faulkingham has returned to the JHS board and has agreed to fill the position of Secretary. Welcome back Ashley.

One of the jobs I like the most as JHS President is helping people find information about their family history. Recently a visitor to the museum was looking for information about her family. I was able to trace back one of her ancestors to Peregrine White, who was born on the Mayflower in 1620 before the ship reached land.

*Bill Plaskon, President*

*Jonesport Historical Society member Mike Corbett died last winter, and was buried with full military honors at Acadia National Cemetery in Jonesboro earlier this month. Susan Corbett shares with us a history paper her husband wrote decades ago. After a career in the Coast Guard, Mike retired to Jonesport in 1983, and he was soon taking classes at UMM. His history paper on Jonesport earned an A. Although later scholarship would provide more detailed names and dates, Mike’s paper nicely captures the story of his town. Excerpts are below. —SMEJ*

## Excerpts of Mike Corbett’s 1984 College Paper on Jonesport History

Route 187 makes a twenty mile lazy loop off of U.S. Route 1. At the apex of that loop is the town of Jonesport. The physical location gives the town its well-deserved reputation for fiercely independent Yankee types. Self-reliance has been the watchword in Jonesport since the area was first settled around 1772.

Jonesport’s physical and geographic nature test the mettle of its inhabitants on a daily basis. Because the town is located so far at sea, the average temperature is normally 10° to 15° lower than its neighboring  
(Corbett Paper continued page 2)

## Summer 2021

### 2021 Events

**Reserve the date:**

**For current JHS Members only!**

**Thursday August 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30PM**  
**Rain Date Friday August 6<sup>th</sup>**

**A free outdoor mussels cookout at Moosabec Mussels, Inc. located at the end of Old House Point Road, generously provided by owner Ralph Smith & Family, followed by Ralph’s outdoor talk on the History of Moosabec Mussels.**

**More info will be sent by E-mail**

## 2021 Board of Directors

### Officers:

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

### Directors:

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

(Corbett Paper continued)

coastal towns of Addison and Jonesboro. This temperature difference is also a major factor in the high percentage of foggy days. The hardiness of local fishermen, clambers and wormers comes from years of working outdoors in weather conditions that most people (from away) would consider intolerable.

Offshore from the mainland lies a protective barrier of islands. These myriad islands and their accompanying shoals and rocks have been the training ground for countless crack navigators. The reputation of Jonesport ship and boat handlers is known far and wide, and is well deserved.

Those that don't make their living from the sea, i.e. farmers and woodsmen, are tested in a different manner, but by an equally unforgiving teacher. Mother nature provides lessons in the form of rock ledges, swamps, hillsides, and of course weather. Beavers building dams could be considered teacher's aids, as could black flies and mosquitoes. Winters in Jonesport are long and frequently they are hard. The short Spring and Summer are all the more precious because of the dreary Winter.

In Jonesport, the image of the Downeast rock-bound coast is somewhat softened. The rocky shoreline exists, to be sure, however there are at least two beautiful sand beaches available; one at Sandy River, and one on the back side of Roque Island. Elsewhere, the coastline is softened by marshlands, lowlands and inlets.

It is generally accepted as fact that fishermen and trappers were coming to the Jonesport area as early as 1750. This is the approximate beginning of the white history of this region. Prior to that, the Passamaquoddy Indians were seasonal visitors, taking advantage of the abundant shellfish, wild berries and game.

Since the earliest record of a permanent settlement of any size in the area is that of Calais in 1763, and Machias in 1764, it is safe to say that there was no permanent settlement in the Jonesport area prior to 1763. Records indicate that one Francis Cummings emigrated from Damariscotta to Roque Island in 1772. Mr. Cummings brought his family with him: his wife, Mercy [Kelley], her father, and daughter Annie. These early settlers built a log cabin on the island and passed the winter there. In the spring, the family moved to Machias; with the exception of poor [Mr. Kelley] who didn't survive the winter.

Two years later the Cummingses returned to the Jonesport area, settling on the mainland along Moosabec (then called Moosecky) Reach. The property they settled on was deeded over to them by John Coffin Jones, the proprietor of the land. Mr. Jones gained proprietorship of the land in January of 1789 as payment for the loss of his sloop in the Siege of Castine during the Revolution.

The Cummingses were preceded as permanent settlers by Thomas Kelley, brother of Mercy Cummings. He emigrated from Damariscotta with his [2<sup>nd</sup>] wife and settled in the section of Jonesport now known as Kelley's Point. [Their 2<sup>nd</sup> son] Joseph, the first male child born in the area, married Olive Beal, the first female child born on Beal's Island. Olive was the daughter of Manwarren Beal, the first settler on Beal's Island.

Elihu Norton, who arrived sometime before 1790, settled in the section of town now called West Jonesport, or Tough End. Mr. Norton's moose snaring prowess is responsible for the naming of the section of town known as Snare Creek, where he set up several moose snares.

The growth of the area that was later to be called Jonesport was slow at first. It was originally a subsistence community of settlers eating the fish they caught, and the crops they could grow. Trade was virtually non-existent in these early years. But the inhabitants soon found that they could catch more fish than they could eat. These fish were dried, salted and pickled and brought to market by sailing vessels ranging as far as Boston and Portland. Lumber was another commodity to be harvested in abundance. Soon sawmills were springing up in the area. Boat builders turned the local lumber into ships, and shipyards began to dot the coast. With the



Michael Dennis Corbett  
April 24, 1945 – January 2, 2021  
United States Coast Guard  
CWO3 (Retired)

(Corbett Paper continued page 3)

(Corbett Paper continued)

growth of these industries, the attendant service industries grew, and soon enough, the area was bustling with activities. Great shoals of sardines were discovered offshore, and the sardine packing industry fairly exploded onto the scene.

With industrial growth and population growth came political unrest. The original area of the Jones land grant encompassed Buck's Harbor, Machias, Machiasport, Jonesboro, Roque Bluffs, Beals Island and Jonesport. The political division we are concerned with was from Jonesboro westward. Town meetings were held in the village of Jonesboro, a distance of some twelve miles from the section known as "the Reach." Reach residents petitioned for separation. Articles of Separation favorable to both sides were drawn up by P. Whitney of Jonesboro, and Clement Hopkins and Nathaniel Sawyer of the Reach. The articles left [1832] Jonesport (as the new town was called) in possession of most of the offshore islands including Roque Island. The first town meeting was held in the old schoolhouse on Indian River Road.

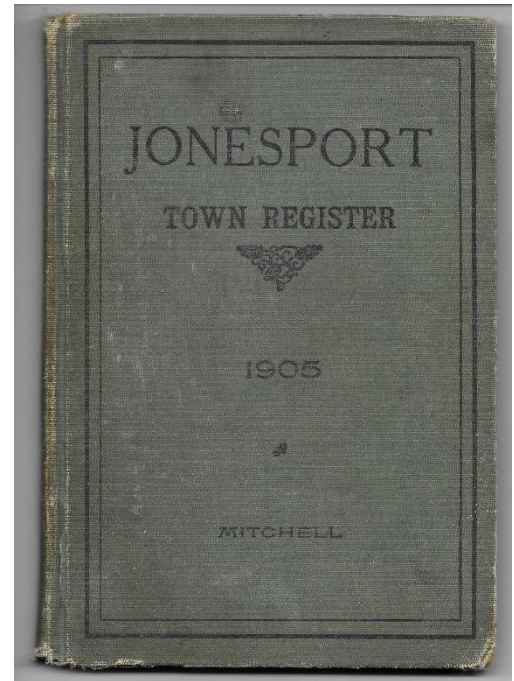
In 1878 Jonesport began to look like a typical seacoast town. She had merchants in the various services of general store, milliners, flour and meal, fish; manufacturers pursuing the ship-building trade, smiths, boat builders, and even a carriage builder. Subsequent years saw saddlers, joiners, cobblers, confectioners, tobacconists and even a purveyor of sporting goods as early as 1907. Many of the services provided were ocean oriented. There were ship's chandlers, riggers, sailmakers, etc.

In the late 1890s, the sardine industry took off and caused further mercantile expansion. Sardine factories flourished in Jonesport. Lobster canneries grew along with the sardine canneries, but never attained the same heights. The granite industry was burgeoning at the same time as the sardine industry, and this provided excellent ballast for ships carrying canned and dried fish to Boston and other ports. Of course, special vessels were built in Jonesport for the express shipment of granite. The granite works on Hardwood Island look as though they could be set in motion with a little grease, oil and expertise, although they haven't shipped or chipped there in decades.

Jonesport today is laid out much the same as it was at the turn of the century. Although the canneries are gone, and the employment they provided has dried up, replacement industries such as clamming and worming have sprung up, and lobstering has increased. Boat building is still a flourishing trade, in fiberglass as well as the traditional local woods.

Jonesport's long-term relative isolation has not served the town well. It was acceptable a century ago because almost all coastal towns in Maine had the same handicap. With the improvement of transportation, most coastal towns slid into the mainstream rather nicely as the coastal highways connected them to the rest of the world. Because Jonesport was geographically out of the way, the main highway (Route 1) bypassed it and left it relatively isolated, thereby allowing, or rather, forcing it to cling to the old ways. These old ways became so ingrained over time that the town is now having to struggle to keep up with the world.

—Mike Corbett, circa 1984



It seems that this is one of the texts Mike used in preparing his history paper. Half of it is history, the other half a census of everyone in Jonesport and Beals in 1905. Our Historical Society reprinted this 112-page 1905 publication in 2011, and has soft-cover copies available for purchase.

### What is this?



This three-part tool is a small, 6" version of what comes in many larger sizes. A slight *hint* of a clue to its use is contained in the Mike Corbett history paper in this edition of the *Newsletter*. Do you know what this set of metal implements is used for, and what it/they are called?





**Joseph Kelley**

**First child born on the mainland of Jonesport  
December 13, 1774 - March 17, 1866**



**Olive Beal**

**First child born on the island of Beals  
April 24, 1776 - December 25, 1851**

**Joseph Kelley married Olive Beal on March 17, 1802  
They are buried in the Barnabus C. Kelley Cemetery on Kelley Point Road**



Statement of Accounts of the Town of Jonesport in the year 1832 & 1833  
 viz. The account of money Raised in each year & committed to collectors  
 for collection & the account of how much of said money is collected & expended  
 and for what purpose & to whom paid & likewise how said money was applied

Account of money raised in the year 1832  
 For the support of schools 150.00  
 For the support of Post 40.00  
 For the support of Town expenses 110.00  
 300.00  
 Amount Over Paid in Appling Tax 5.24  
 305.24

AB the Beach Middle School District  
 did not school this money but schools 14.94  
 the Beach Middle District over drew this money  
 to the amount of 5.89  
 John Alley did not draw his money for  
 the support of his school 4.94  
 Making a deficiency of all the school money  
 was expended of \$49.05 to defray the expenses of the  
 town this year 1833  
 Beals 336 and District Beals 60.

Account of money expended in the year 1832  
 To Elias Hinkley Indentures Legist. 2.50  
 To J. Hornworth for do do do 3.75  
 To Joseph S. Hinkley Indentures to Jonesport 1.25  
 To Nathl Sawyer for his services town officer 15.00  
 To Clement Hopkins his services as town clerk 15.25  
 To Town of Jonesborough for their claim for 91.53  
 For Town Debt viz 129.34  
 To Daniel Hodges board of attendance of Jonesport 2.00  
 To Thos Donover for board of John Donover 25.00  
 For Schools Expenses viz 174.83  
 To Wm Cummings teaching school at Bay 24.90  
 To John Sherry " " " 2.30  
 To Phineas Water district at Water 11.48  
 To Wm Cummings teaching school at Water 48.20  
 To Margaret Sawyer teaching - do Beach Station 7.28  
 To S. Bryan Beach Eastern 20.00  
 To Juliet Tucker & Ann Tucker 14.11  
 303.66  
 Remains Unexpended 1.58  
 305.24

Amount of money committed  
 To Phineas W. Water for Collection  
 for the year 1832 305.25

Amount Collected by P. W. Kelly  
 as per Treasurer's Account for 1832 264.62  
 Amt not collected by Mr Kelly this year 140.62  
 305.24

17,930

Division of the School Money of Jonesport, in 1832  
 150 \$ Paid to be divided among 150 Scholars

Mason's Bay district 30 Scholars	55¢	21.90
Shorey Island district 10 do	83	8.30
Beach Western do 66	83	54.68
Beach Middle district 18	83	14.94
Beals Island do 10	83	13.25
John Alley 6	83	4.98
Beach Eastern 17	83	14.11
Indian River 17	83	14.11
150 Scholars		\$179.30

Jonesport's First Town Report  
 Presented to the Town  
 By Newman Wilson.

Nathl Sawyer  
 Clement Hopkins

322.00  
 305.25  
 15.55

Jonesport's first Town Report - 1832  
 Signed by Nathaniel Sawyer and Clement Hopkins



State of Maine

County of Washington. On this fourth day of June, 1833, personally appeared in open Court of Probate now holden at Columbia by Hon. John Dickinson, Judge of Probate of said County, Elihu Norton of Jonesport in said County, aged seventy-three (nearly seventy-four) years, who being first culy sworn according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832:

That he entered the service of the United States under the following officers and served as herein stated: viz.

As near as he can recollect, in August 1777 he enlisted as Sergeant in a Company or Regiment under command of Col. John Allan, raised by Massachusetts for the defence of the Eastern settlements; that he thereupon served until after the capture of the American Naval Force at Penobscot; that he was constantly during that period in the Service and served in said capacity over two years; that when in the Service he was sometimes placed by Col. Allan in the artillery under command of Lieut. William Albee stationed in the blockhouse at Machias, part of the time in the infantry under command of Lieut. Louis L. Delesdernier, and part of the time on excursions on the water in the vicinity of Machias by order of Col. Allan, the object of which was to observe the Indians and keep them from rising against the United States, as well as for defence in case of British aggression; that during that time the only engagement he was in was in repelling the British armed Brig Hope, commanded by one Dawson; that just before his discharge he was in an expedition towards Castine, then called Bagaduce, and on arriving at Frenchman's Bay they learnt the success of the British in destroying our ships at Penobscot, upon which the troops with which he was were either discharged there at a place called Beaupoint, or sent back to Machias, and he was one of the discharged by certificate of which he has lost and does not recollect by whom it was signed.

That prior to his services of record he had served under Capt. Jeremiah O'Brien in capturing the Margarett, the first prize, it is believed, of the Revolution; also as a volunteer under Col. Edy, the particulars of which he does not deem it material in this application to set forth.

That he resided at the time of his said enlistment at Pleasant River, so-called, now Addison, then resided there and at Jonesport this day; that he has no documentary evidence of his service.

He hereby relinquishes all claim whatever to a pension except the present, and declares that his name is not on any pension roll.

Elihu Norton (signed)

**Elihu Norton's Pension Letter - 1833**  
**Typed by Jeannie (Norton) Pepper from a hand-written letter**

**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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Jonesport Historical Society

P. O. Box 603

Jonesport ME 04649

207-497-2395 or 207-747-8228

Located at 21 Sawyer Square

jonesporthistoricalsociety@outlook.com or jonesporthistoricalsociety@peabody.lib.me.us

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