

Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

Message from the President

Being on the JHS Board of Directors since 2003 has given me the opportunity to meet and work with many interesting people: historians, authors, artists, film makers, musicians, business entrepreneurs, religious leaders, and adventurers, to name some. One of those people came to visit this past May. Cara Giaimo is a writer for *Atlas Obscura*, an on-line guide to the world’s hidden wonders. Her employer sent her to learn the story of Jonesport’s Barna Norton and his claim that he owned Machias Seal Island, and to add it to their 18,000 other on-line stories. To read Cara’s fascinating 16-page report, go to www.atlasobscura.com. Under “Search Destinations,” enter “Barna Norton,” and then click “The Man Who Went to War With Canada.” Enjoy her article, as well as this edition of your Newsletter.

Bill Plaskon, President

My Jonesport Childhood

by Cathy Perry, Treasurer and Co-Founder of the Jonesport Historical Society

My father, George Alton Farnsworth, was born in 1908, the only child of Ed (E.E.) Farnsworth and Olivia “Levy” Kelley Farnsworth. He made his entry into the world in the hayloft of his parents’ barn on the Kelley Point Road in Jonesport. His mother was tending to the sheep when she went into labor and a neighboring midwife arrived quickly to help her deliver her 12-pound-plus boy. I am sure it was not easy and might explain why he was an only child.

After George graduated from Jonesport High School in 1927, he was lobster fishing with his father when he was recruited to play tackle for the University of Maine football team (he knew nothing about the game) and, in the process, earned a degree in Marine Engineering. He went to work for Mobil Oil and served as a Merchant Marine during World War II. He met my mother, Margaret “Peg” Stimson Farnsworth at a wartime USO function in NYC where she was a hostess.

I was born on Staten Island, NY, but came to Jonesport at six weeks of age, in time for the drought of 1947. I do not remember the dry wells or my mother’s fears that I would die of diaper rash because they couldn’t haul enough water from the spring to properly wash my nappies. I also do not remember my near-death experience when Larry Wayne Carver (JHS member Fred Carver’s brother) fell out of my grandmother’s apple tree into

(**Childhood** continued, page 2)

Winter 2020

2020 Events

(subject to change)

- Jun 11- Historic Maine in 3-D Photos
- Bernard Fishman
- Jul 9 - Maine and the Civil War
- Donald Rivard
- Jul 23 - History of Moosabec Mussels
- Ralph Smith
- Aug 27-Passamaquoddy History and 1819 Recordings
- Dwayne Tomah
- Sep 24- Weir Fishing
- Former Weir Fishermen

2020 Board of Directors

Officers:

William Plaskon, President
Charles Alley, V.P. Emeritus
-- Vacant -- Vice President
Catherine Perry, Treasurer
-- Vacant -- Secretary

Directors:

Kylie Hinkley
Andrew Hutnik
Eric Kelley
Janice Kristo
Charlene Nelson
Michele Romanini-Pollard
Nancy Sawyer

(Childhood, continued)

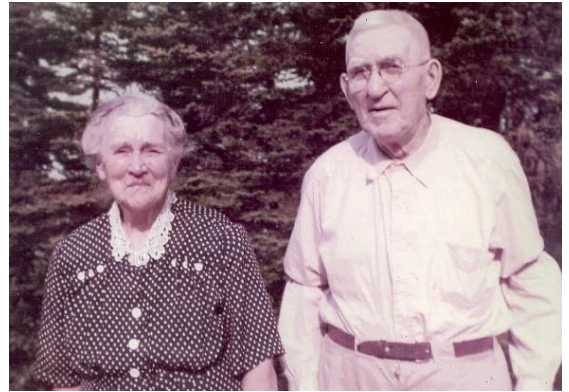
my bassinet. He was trying to get a closer look at the new baby when the branch broke, or so I was told. I do remember the road trip in 1950 with my father. I sang “The Bumpy Road to Maine” to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell” all the way from Staten Island to Jonesport. The roads were bumpy in those days, no interstates, but I am sorry I put my dad through that. My sister had just been born and, with my father out at sea for long periods, my mother was not able to care for us both. Lucky me—I got to go live on my grandparents’ sheep farm.

Life on the farm made for a perfect childhood. Well, maybe not the chickens. One of my chores was to climb in the hen-house each day and collect the eggs. The chickens hated me for stealing their babies and chased me every chance they got. The sheep were a different story. My grandmother had a lamb whose mother had died in lamb-birth and she was bottle feeding it. I loved to help with that chore. Daisy slept with me every night and she was my live stuffed animal. She lived until I was in high school and always ran to the fence to greet me while all the other sheep ran away. I still dislike chickens and love sheep.

My grandmother was a retired schoolteacher by the time I knew her. She had taught in Jonesport and on the islands where she took the mission boat, *Sunbeam*, to work in the Fall and home in the Spring. She made my education her top priority and she was a wonderful teacher. I learned to read, and I learned what hard work looked like. Their home was nothing fancy. It looked like a typical New England farmhouse with the ell attaching the house to the barn, but it was made from two houses they had put together. One of the houses was moved from Kelley’s Point and the other from the head of the Kelley Point Road where my grandfather had a grocery store. The mismatched ceiling height was not too noticeable in the kitchen, but upstairs it caused many stubbed toes. My grandfather was sea captain on sailing vessels in his younger days but was lobster fishing when I lived with them. Lobster prices were down and I remember watching in horror as he dumped crates of lobsters into his garden at the back shore, where the Burke house is now, hitched up his draft horse, Queenie, grabbed his plow, and mulched them in for fertilizer. I also remember watching him winch his boat, *Olivia K*, into his boathouse at the end of the season. It was located on the stream by the current home of JHS members Lauri and Dax Logue. It was no easy feat to hand crank a water-soaked wooden lobster boat, and I was in awe.

My great-grandmother, Esther Jane Donovan Kelley, also lived with us. She would have been 99 or 100 years old when I moved in, and my grandmother took care of her. I really do not remember too much about her because I was not allowed to go into her bedroom or disturb her. When she did join us for

(Childhood continued, page 3)



Ed (E.E.) Farnsworth and Olivia “Levy” (Kelley) Farnsworth, circa 1948.



Queenie – 1938



George Alton Farnsworth on *Olivia K*, 1946



Torpedo on *Olivia K*, 1946

(**Childhood**, continued from page 2)

“hupper,” my name for the evening meal, I was under strict orders to be quiet, almost impossible for someone who talked and sang constantly, but I tried. She passed away at home at the age of 104. I mostly remember the love and devotion shown to her by her daughter.

Another member of the household was Torpedo. He was a rescue dog my father had saved in India during the war and smuggled home on a tanker for a life with his parents. Torpedo and I played well together—I tried to eat his Milk Bone dog biscuits and he once ate my entire birthday cake. He went everywhere with my grandfather and, since I also went everywhere with my grandfather, we were like the Three Musketeers. Ed was the deputy sheriff in Jonesport at the time, as well as a fisherman, and it seemed to me that all he did was transport drunks. If they were a friendly drunk, they got to ride in the cab of the truck with the three of us. If not, they got to ride in the back of the truck regardless of snow or rain. I remember pulling into people’s dooryard with the bright lights on and the horn blaring to let off our passenger. Several gentlemen told me over the years that they remembered that too. My grandfather said he rarely took anyone to jail because their old lady would be harder on them than Machias would ever be. I am sure he had other duties, but that is the one I remember. Coincidentally, my grandfather and Torpedo died on the same night in 1955, but it is not known who went first.

I returned to Staten Island in time to start kindergarten. My father was transferred by Mobil Oil to Beaumont, Texas, in 1961, but I remained in Massachusetts for high school. Thanks to Greyhound and a friend with a car, I made many trips to Jonesport to visit my boyfriend, Johnny Norton, and my grandmother, of course. I have been fortunate to be able to spend part of every year in Jonesport, except 1959 when we made a National Lampoon-like vacation trip from New York to the recently opened Disneyland in California, but that is another story. I am so glad I was able to move to Jonesport year-round in 1993. It has always been and always will be home to me. If I close my eyes, I can smell the cherry blend tobacco from my grandfather’s pipe, and I can hear my grandmother flapping her apron at the chickens to rescue me.

When I brought my first born to Jonesport in 1972, at a month old, the only question I was asked was if it was a girl or a boy. They knew the name was Kelley. I had chosen it as far back as high school. I am glad that my grandmother had a chance to know her namesake great-granddaughter before she passed away in 1977 at 99½ years of age.

—Cathy Perry



What is this? This glass bottle, about three inches long, was among the artifacts brought back from the Jaffa Colony, and now part of the collection belonging to JHS member Jean Holmes. A similar item was found by Chris Hart along the shore of Sawyer Cove. If you know its name or its use, send us an email.

Factoid: The Sawyer Building, gifted to Jonesport Historical Society by John Vassar Sawyer, II, in 2011, is nearly 124 years old. Groundbreaking for the D. J. & E. M. Sawyer Store was held on the 2nd of May in 1896.



Identification—or not

Several people have guessed about the identity of this 3 x 4 inch iron object from the Autumn edition. Some thought it was part of a sailboat rigging. Some thought it was a door knocker or door pull. The majority of guesses were that it could be hardware for a whiffletree to hold horses in line, or some type of a horse hitch ring.

Old News The first issue of the *Jonesport Enterprise* newspaper was published on January 9, 1901. The masthead below is from the very first issue. The three news columns are from the second issue, published on January 23, 1901.



Some Pretty Things Said 'of The Enterprise.

Our brethren of the press have been saying some complimentary words for the ENTERPRISE, for which we thank them. The following will show how the first issue of the JONESPORT ENTERPRISE was received by the press of Maine:

Maine newspaperdom welcomes the Jonesport Enterprise into its fold.—Lewiston Journal.

The Jonesport Enterprise, published by W. E. Lewis at Cherryfield, Me., is the latest candidate for journalistic honors. It is a four-page, six-column semi-monthly, and judging by the appearance of the first number it is well calculated to meet the local demands of its constituents.—Biddeford Journal.

The Jonesport Enterprise, Vol. I No. 1, Jan. 9, 1901, came to our sanctum on Thursday, last. It is a neat folio, 21x31, to be issued semi-monthly at 75 cents per year. W. E. Lewis, publisher, at Cherryfield, to whom all communications should be addressed. Jonesport is a hustling town and to make the publication a success will require a good deal of hustling and patronage on the part of the people and publisher. The Union extends a welcome.—Machias Union.

We are in receipt this week, of the first number of the Jonesport Enterprise, issued from the Narragansett Times' office, at Cherryfield. It is a neatly gotten up paper and its appreciation by the people is manifested by its large advertising patronage.—Ellsworth Enterprise.

Maine's Greatest Sardine Factory.

To the Maine sardine industry is Jonesport indebted for the distinction of having the best equipped canning establishment of this kind on the globe.

For this distinction the town is also under obligation to the William Underwood Co., Boston, which began business in 1881 in a wooden factory with crude equipments such as was seen along the coast in the days when the foundation of this industry, which has grown in magnitude and importance until it has become a source of millions annually to the state, was being laid.

It was in the summer of 1899 the William Underwood Co. began the construction of its present factory with its expensive and unique plant which is visited by packers from all over the United States and the Canadian Dominion.

The building, an imposing brick structure which from May till December is an industrial hive affording remunerative employment to a small army of men, women and children, besides scores of weirmen, greets the eye of the visitor as he enters the town from the west and drives along the highway that skirts the shore of Moosabec Reach, the thoroughfare of commerce at all seasons of the year.

Capt. Abijah Bagley, the present commander of the three-masted schooner *Carrie C. Ware*, is a veteran of the U. S. Life Saving Service. His connection with the service dates back to the early part of the seventies when the government established a station at Browney's Island, the first erected in this part of the 1st district, and he was appointed captain. In years after the station was changed to Crumple Island for reason it being a more exposed locality. Capt. Bagley remained in command of the station until 1881 when he resigned and was succeeded by Capt. Reuben Hall, brother of Capt. Oscar Hall the present commander. Capt. Bagley's crew was as follows:

Surfman No. 1	—Fred M. Smith
" "	2—Willard Norton
" "	3—D. R. Dobbin
" "	4—Geo. Dobbin
" "	5—Jefferson Dobbin
" "	6—Richard Bagley

One of Jonesport's well known pilots along the coast is Capt. E. F. Bryant, who has seen 25 years sea service, during which time he has been master of different vessels belonging to W. F. Mansfield and the late J. W. Peasley's fleet. In recent times, however, Capt. Bryant retired from the sea and is now successfully conducting a bakery and restaurant.

**Membership Form (Q)
2020**

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 **2020 Membership**

\$ _____ **2021 Membership (\$5.00)**

\$ _____ **2022 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**

Jonesport Historical Society
P. O. Box 603
Jonesport ME 04649
207-747-8228
Located at 21 Sawyer Square
jonesporthistoricalsociety@peabody.lib.me.us

The Jonesport Historical Society Museum and Heritage Center is open July and August, Tuesdays and Saturdays, 11:00—3:00, or on request May through October. Please phone to confirm.