



Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

Message from the President

During the past six months I updated the Archives database with 737 new items. More than half of them consisted of 300 local newspaper articles, and about 100 photos of people, many by Jonesport professional photographer John Riley. There are many other items that are of historical significance. There is a rare photo of the tenement houses used by some of the employees at the Underwood canning factory. Military items include WWII and Vietnam medals awarded to Robert Frank Higgins, and the Civil War discharge papers of Jeremiah Beal Norton, Jr. Brief histories of the American Legion Post 108, Jonesport Lodge No. 188, and Indian River Grange have been added to our collection of Organizations. Added to Town History is the Annual Report of the Town of Jonesport for the Year 1902. The last page of the report lists all the school districts and teachers, including the Roque Island and Slate Island schools. Under Hobbies and Recreation, you will find three beautiful model boats by Alvin Beal: a lobster boat, a torpedo-stern boat, and a sailboat. Last but not least, the Regional Interests category now has about a dozen photos with accompanying text of the new museum in Jonesboro, ME. The museum is housed in the original crate that Charles Lindbergh used to bring his Spirit of St. Louis plane back from Paris to the USA in 1927.

Notice in the column on the right that we have three presentations scheduled for this summer. Kevin Johnson has given JHS presentations in the past that were very popular, the last one in 2013. We recently came across a story in the Island Journal titled *Will Frost's Rum Runner Boats* by Roger Moody. We contacted him to see if he would do a presentation for JHS, and he enthusiastically offered to give us an expanded story. Last summer the *Old DownEast Humor* presentation was postponed due to unforeseen circumstances. This summer it is re-scheduled, and the stories that Billy Milliken and Eric Kelley will tell in their DownEast accents should make for a most enjoyable evening.

Bill Plaskon, President

Spring 2025

2025 Events

(6:30 PM at 21 Sawyer Square unless otherwise noted; and subject to change.)

Jul 17 – *Jonesport: The Postcard View*

- Kevin Johnson,
Photo Archivist,
Penobscot Marine Museum

Jul 24 – *Maine's Legacy of Smuggling from 1776 through Prohibition*

- Roger Moody,
Author of five books on
aspects of Maine history

Aug 7 – *Old DownEast Humor*

- Billy Milliken & Eric Kelley

2024- 2025

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Grave Consequences

Sharon (English) Josephson
Ipswich, MA

Back then, none of us had ever heard of Johnny and Edna. But if they hadn't surrendered their gravesites to some hard-pressed kin in coastal Jonesport, Maine, and thus needed replacements for themselves, I'd be much the poorer today.

We'd never heard of Cassie Armstrong, either, but she was in charge of Greenwood Cemetery real estate back then—it must have been the early 1970s—and she knew that there were sites to spare in the cemetery lot of my great-grandparents, Jamie and Lizzie (Dobbins) Bryant. The resourceful Mrs. Armstrong tracked down my mother, Barbara (Faulkingham) English, in Quincy, Massachusetts, and surprised her with the news that she was heir to the unoccupied five-eighths of the Bryant cemetery lot in Jonesport. Moreover, Mrs. Armstrong knew of a “dear couple” who would become fine neighbors for our relatives already interred there. Would my mother consider relinquishing two of the five gravesites in her lot?

Mumma, whose parents and all four grandparents were from Jonesport, had grown up in South Portland, not way Down East, and had been down home only a few times in her life. Having no intentions of being buried there, she wrote back to Mrs. Armstrong, pleased to give the proposed “fine neighbors” two of the spare gravesites in the old Bryant family lot. We thought no more of it.

Several years later I had occasion to be way down the coast of Maine, and I got in touch with the cemetery lady for directions to my great-grandparents' grave. So it came to be that on a foggy day in July some fifty years ago I met the very kind Cassie Armstrong next to Sawyer Memorial Congregational Church in Jonesport. She pointed out the house near Sawyer Cove that my grandmother had grown up in, took me to see my Bryant great-grandparents' headstone—no Johnny or Edna there yet—then accompanied me to coffee with Mumma's cousin Beatrice (Faulkingham) Woodward in the very West Jonesport house my Gramp Osmond Faulkingham had been born in on

the Fourth of July 1885. The fog never burned off that day five decades ago; I could never see into it beyond a few houses at a time along the narrow main road, and the photographs I took all came out faint-edged and pale. I kept them anyway.



Former Bryant home (now Foucher), foggy day in 1975

Serendipity works at its own speed, and it was in no rush to bring the gravesite episode full circle. When my kids were grown, and long after my Dad had died, Mumma and I talked of taking a few days to explore way Down East, maybe go see Jonesport. But life got in the way, and one or the other of us always needed to postpone. It wasn't until the year after she too had died that I finally got back to Jonesport—and then almost by chance.

My husband and I made a four-day weekend of it in September of 2000. We'd not particularly aimed for Jonesport, just Down East, a leisurely day's drive from Ipswich. It was only because I'd dug out the old fog-tinted photos at the last minute that we continued along those extra miles beyond Camden and Bar Harbor and down the long peninsula to Jonesport, and we used those photos to identify the ancestral homesteads and locate the graves. An elderly second cousin from Cape Cod, family genealogist Leonard Tibbetts, had told me which relatives were now living in Gramp Faulkingham's boyhood home, but I didn't venture to knock on the door once we'd found the place. It was enough for me just to remember going there with Cassie Armstrong years before to have coffee in the kitchen with the pressed tin ceiling. Jack and I stopped instead at Tall Barney's Restaurant for a lunch of meatloaf and carrots, mashed potato and thick brown gravy.

Barney's was a homey place, and the shoved-together Formica tables in the middle of the room clearly constituted the local hangout. A half dozen

lobstermen in plaid flannel shirts over thermal jerseys lounged there drinking coffee and joshing one another. Their Down East accents, so evocative of my Gramp, drew me in. I went from our booth along the interior wall over to the big guy holding court, and introduced myself.

“My Gramp Faulkingham grew up in West Jonesport, beyond the corner, that house Ira Guptill lives in. You know any old-timers who might remember folks from back then?” The group of fishermen looked at me speculatively. My Boston accent had deserted me. Head honcho Mark Carver nodded toward a pair of old-timers finishing their blueberry pie in a nearby booth. “Try those two” he suggested, introducing me by way of “Oscar—lady has a question.”

I tried them, the promisingly senior fellows in the booth. “Well now” one deliberated, tapping the side of his thumb on the tabletop, “that’d prob’ly be old Albion’s family.”

“Ayah” I prompted—it just slipped out. Albion was my Gramp’s big brother.

They pondered a moment. Then one suggested to the other, “Albion raised Tuddy, didn’t he, out on the light stations?”

“Ah—Tuddy!” I exclaimed. “Haven’t heard that name in years. Mumma talked of a Tuddy who locked her in an outhouse down here when she was little.”

They nodded enthusiastically. “Ayah. That sounds like our Tuddy.”

As my husband watched in amusement from our booth, Mark Carver rose from the center tables and went behind the cash register. He hauled the phone onto the counter and dialed a number. “Tuddy” he boomed, “there’s a woman down here at Barney’s says you locked her mother in an outhouse, and she’s some damn mad.” Then he passed me the phone. Within minutes, Mumma’s long-ago tormenter was having pie with us at Barneys. He was tall and weathered and still handsome at near eighty. Tuddy Kenney, my rascal of a second cousin, was the first of my current Jonesport

relatives to welcome us to town and to put us on their Christmas card list. He wasn’t the last. That one contact led to many others. Not all are relatives. But they all offer friendship, and they all have bits and pieces of history to share, a mosaic of context in which I can appreciate my grandparents’ lives.

Jack and I probably wouldn’t have bothered going all the way to Jonesport if I hadn’t had those washed-out photos from the few hours I spent so many decades before with Cassie Armstrong, the kindly cemetery lady who arranged for replacement gravesites for the generous “fine neighbors” Johnny and Edna.

This gravesite story finally came full circle when I learned from Jonesport historian—and my newly-found fourth cousin—Donnie Woodward that Johnny had been a Bryant, my grandmother Beryl (Bryant) Faulkingham’s cousin. Through Donnie I connected with a retired South Portland teacher, Jonesport-born Maxine (Smith) Morris, and we turned out to be cousins four different ways, through our Faulkingham, Kelley, Sawyer, and Beal lines. In inimitable Jonesport fashion, Maxine’s husband’s Aunt Edna was Johnny Bryant’s wife.

Johnny and Edna’s relinquishing their first gravesites to Johnny’s grieving brother and niece has led me to treasured Jonesport history, countless relatives, and a wealth of fine friendships.



Jamie and Lizzie Bryant stone, Greenwood Cemetery, 1975

Ginnie's Food Shop: Where Was It?

By David Crook

It has now been almost half a century since one of Jonesport's most treasured gathering spots closed its doors for good. Virginia Wilson Dyer opened Ginnie's Food Shop in 1951, and for 29 years this was the place to go to meet friends for a hearty early breakfast, lunch or dinner. The JHS archives contain a wealth of photos and recollections of Ginnie and her restaurant.

Ginnie had started her restaurant career years earlier. After she graduated from Jonesport High School she went to work in her then mother-in-law-to-be's restaurant, "Ye Cozy Corner," (located at Clark's Corner, corner of Main and Bridge St.). Years later, she and her second husband, Lewis Dyer, opened Ginnie's, which over time built a devoted following.

To me, this Sunday Special menu quote from 1960 says it all: *"We know our place isn't too fancy, but we know that you will be satisfied with the quality of food served, plus the friendly and home-like atmosphere."* Among the menu entries was pot roast with whipped potatoes, salad, rolls, dessert, and coffee or tea—all for \$1.25.

A 1980 tribute to Ginnie by Maralyn Mazza describes as many as 20 customers lined up at 7:00 a.m. waiting for Ginnie to unlock the doors. *"After a hearty breakfast of ham and eggs and homemade biscuits, many of this same crowd will be back again for coffee and more conversation at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m....All one must do to feel the pulse of this fishing village is sit at the long red formica counter, with white spots worn by the elbows of generations, and listen."*



Minnie Johnson (left) with Ginnie, 1964

JHS historian Eric Kelley recalls eating his lunches there during high school. A hamburger, fries and a coke were less than a dollar. The young crowd ate up front near the juke box, while the older folks ate further back.

Ginnie was a born entertainer, famous in town as a storyteller. In her JHS video history she is asked, "Did you ever lock the doors?" "Well" she answers, "It didn't do any good, 'cause they come in the window." One night someone stole the pies she had baked for the next day. A few days later the empty pie plates appeared on her doorstep. Another morning she came in to find a mess—ice cream melted on the freezer and sauce everywhere. Kids had crawled in through the window and had a party.

Where was Ginnie's? The restaurant was part of the Roger's Block, across Main Street from the present Hamilton Marine, at the corner of Rosemary Lane. The Roger's Block was destroyed by fire in November 1989.

Membership Form

2025 (Q)

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

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Make check payable to *Jonesport Historical Society*

Mail to: Jonesport Historical Society
P.O. Box 603
Jonesport, ME 04649

NOTE: The above form is for new JHS members only. If you are an existing member, you will receive a renewal form with our annual newsletter in late April.

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