

# Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

## Message from the President

Ever since November 2014 there has been a tradition that the JHS Board of Directors celebrate the end of another successful year by going out to dinner at one of the restaurants in the area. Spouses and partners are also invited, and each family pays for its own meals. We never use members' dues or donations to pay for such an event.

At this past dinner in Helen's Restaurant in Machias I took the opportunity to thank the officers and directors for volunteering so much of their time and services for getting through an exceptionally busy year.

Several board members volunteered to help process the bulk of the membership dues and donations that were received during May and June. Several of them learned how to navigate through the Jonesport Heritage Center (JHC) three databases by borrowing a JHS PC and practicing in their own homes. In late June the oldest town citizen was awarded the Boston Post Cane with a wonderful ceremony thanks to a great team effort.

During July and August, we started to get back to a pre-COVID schedule. The big July event was the Twentieth Anniversary Celebration of Jonesport Historical Society, when the entire staff organized into committees to plan the Open House in the JHS meeting room, decorate the meeting room, welcome the more than fifty guests, provide the food and drinks for everyone, run a door prize every half hour, and show a continuous running slide show.

We also had a total of 95 visitors to the JHS Museum in 2023. I really appreciated those board members who volunteered to be docents during regular open hours in July and August, especially the day when twelve people came in at the same time. We had two public presentations by guest speakers which each drew a full house, we showed three free movies, and our Historian interviewed two more local senior citizens.

On another note, Sharon Josephson, editor of the Quarterly Newsletter since the first publication five years ago, is retiring. She has done an outstanding job of not just editing but also writing some of the stories, even though she has never lived in Jonesport. We are looking for someone to take on the job for a while starting with the Spring 2024 edition. Please email us or call me on 207-747-8228 if you are interested.

*Bill Plaskon, President*

**Winter 2024**

**Public events scheduled for 2024 will be listed in the Spring Newsletter**

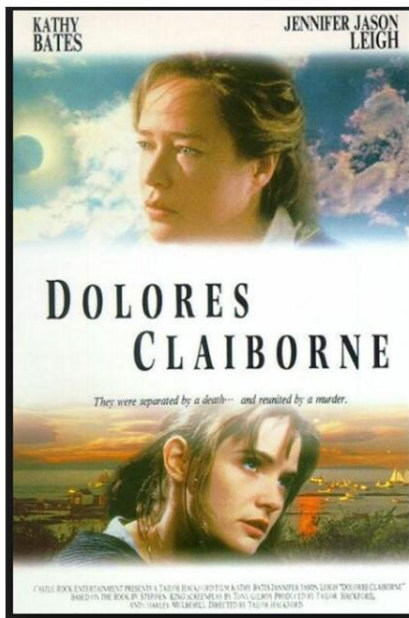
**2023 – 2024  
Board of Directors**

### ***Officers:***

*William Plaskon, President  
Jean Guphill, Vice President  
Charles Alley, V.P. Emeritus  
Nancy Sawyer, Treasurer  
Eric Kelley Jr., Historian  
Betty Kelley, Secretary*

### ***Directors:***

*Gregory Campbell  
Barbie Cirone  
Aaron Dennis  
Holly Dennis  
Andrew Hutnik*



**Total Solar Eclipse Over Jonesport  
Sixty Years Ago**  
by Bill Plaskon

While recently scanning old newspaper articles to add to the Jonesport Historical Society Archives database, I came across two items from 1994 that caught my attention as a long-time amateur astronomer. The articles were about a special town meeting where 28 town residents voted unanimously to give a Canadian movie maker permission to use the name “Town of Jonesport” in a 1995 motion picture called *Dolores Claiborne*, which was based on a murder mystery story written by Stephen King.

The movie was filmed mostly in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, but the setting was supposed to be Jonesport in the year 1963. It is a story about a physically abused wife, played by Kathy Bates, and her sexually abused young daughter, played by Jennifer Jason Leigh. The abusive husband/father is played by David Strathairn. The climax of the movie takes place during a total eclipse of the Sun. The anticipation of the eclipse played such a large part in the story that the movie’s title in French was *Eclipse Total*. Although the story is fictitious, there actually was a solar eclipse over Maine during the late afternoon of July 20, 1963, and Jonesport was in the 53-mile-wide path of totality, when the sky turned dark for one minute.

Many of the 300 members of JHS have had interesting careers. One long-time member is Rich Crouthamel, a former meteorologist now living full time in Jonesport. When I asked him what the weather was like in Jonesport on the day of the 1963 eclipse, he got access to NOAA’s

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On April 8, 2024, there will be a solar eclipse visible in Maine.

From Jonesport, it will be only a partial eclipse, with around 97% of the sun hidden by the moon. But from other places in the state, including Houlton, it will be a total eclipse lasting for more than three minutes.

—SMEJ

(Eclipse continued from page 2)

repository of all U. S. historic weather observations. Jonesport does not have its own weather station, but NOAA records indicate that in Eastport and Bangor it was partly cloudy and the eclipse was visible through thin clouds.

I would like to hear from any of our members or friends who witnessed the total solar eclipse that day what they remember about it. Were you in Jonesport or a nearby town? What safety device did you look through during the partial phase? Did you note anything strange during totality, such as feeling the air temperature changing, seeing stars or planets, seeing solar prominences (flame-like images around the Sun's circumference) or the corona (the Sun's outer atmosphere), birds or other animals acting differently? If I receive enough responses, I may put them together for a future newsletter story.

My wife and I traveled to Woodruff, South Carolina, to watch the solar eclipse of August 21, 2017. Totality lasted about two minutes, during which time we heard locusts buzzing.

There has not been a total solar eclipse over Maine for the past 60 years, but on April 8, 2024, there will be another one. The best and closest site from Jonesport to see totality will be Houlton, Maine, in mid-afternoon, where totality will last three minutes and eighteen seconds. The Sun's activity will be near its eleven-year cycle maximum, so there will be a good chance to see prominences and a spectacular corona. Also, the planets Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter should be visible in the darkened sky. The only problem could be the weather, since it will still be chilly and there is only a 50% chance of having clear skies in mid-afternoon during the month of April. This will be your last chance to see a total solar eclipse in Maine this century.

“Experience is so vicarious these days, only recollecting makes it actual.”

—unnamed narrator in the short story  
*The Tarbox Police*  
by John Updike

## Where They Came From

by Sharon Josephson

According to authors Tibbetts and Lamson in their 2004 *Early Jonesborough Families*, the first permanent European settlers here were Manwarren **Beal** Jr., John **Sawyer**, Thomas **Kelley**, and Francis **Cummings**.

**Beal's** ancestors had come to York, Maine, c 1655, from Plympton, Devonshire, England. He and wife Lydia Welch lived in Cape Elizabeth, then moved c1768 to Mt. Desert Island, in 1770 to Buck's Harbor, and by 1774 to Beal's Island. Olive, their 9<sup>th</sup> child, was the first white girl born here.

**John Sawyer's** ancestors had come from Lincolnshire and central England. Great-grandfather James, born in Ipswich, Mass., c 1632, became a weaver in Gloucester. John's grandfather established the first ferry at what is now Portland Harbor. John, born in Cape Elizabeth, moved with wife Mary Jordan c 1770 to Steuben, then by 1773 to Sawyer Cove, Jonesport.

Per the authors, it is probable that **Kelley's** father, Samuel, was a Scotch-Irish immigrant from northern Ireland. Thomas Kelley, born c 1740, came to Roque Island c 1772, then soon moved to Kelley's Point on the Jonesport mainland with wife Sarah, sister of the above John Sawyer. Their 2nd son, Joseph, was the first white child born at Jonesport. (Joseph married the above-mentioned Olive Beal.)

**Francis Cummings**, born at Isle of Wight, England, c 1740, came to Damariscotta, then Roque Island, Machias, Chandler River, then to Jonesport before 1780. His wife, Mercy Kelley, was sister of above-named Thomas Kelley.

**Membership Form (Q)  
2024**

**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**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| \$ <u>5.00</u> <b>2024 Membership</b>    | <b>Make check payable to <i>Jonesport Historical Society</i></b>                      |
| \$ _____ <b>2025 Membership (\$5.00)</b> |   |
| \$ _____ <b>2026 Membership (\$5.00)</b> | <b>Mail to: Jonesport Historical Society<br/>P.O. Box 603<br/>Jonesport, ME 04649</b> |
| \$ _____ <b>Tax Deductible Donation</b>  |   |
| \$ _____ <b>Total Amount</b>             |   |

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**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 April.

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Jonesport ME 04649  
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Located at 21 Sawyer Square  
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