

# Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

## Message from the President

A strange thing happened in the history of JHS this past year. Although regular visiting hours to the JHS museum in July and August were canceled due to COVID-19, and the museum was only open by appointment, we received 25 requests to open the museum for about 50 visitors. I don't think we had much more than 25 open requests in total since the museum opened in 2012. Maybe people had more time during the pandemic to research their ancestry, to search for gravesites, to learn more about Jonesport history or the houses they own in town, to donate photos and artifacts for our collection, or to offer help with scanning documents. Whatever the reason, we were happy to greet them, even if it was from a social distance wearing face masks.

The following story about Peabody Memorial Library got me searching for a relevant old news article. What I found instead is an interesting chronology of the Jonesport Library, starting on page 5. Enjoy.

*Bill Plaskon, President*

## Hans and Eleanore Taubenberger, 50-plus Years of Volunteering at Peabody Memorial Library

by Lina (Taubenberger) Beal

Hans and Eleanore Taubenberger, my Mom and Dad, moved to Jonesport from New York City in the late 1940's. Dad served in the U.S. Navy during World War II but he had lived in Addison in the Basin and went to school there, as his father and mother worked at the Lang Quarry. I was born in Jonesport December 1948. My four brothers were born between 1950 and 1961.

Books and reading were always an important part of our lives. Mom saw to it that we made regular visits to the library. The children's section was small and located in the back of the “stack” room. The rule was “Children are to be seen but not heard,” especially in the library. The librarian, at that time, was Jennie Leighton. She wore long, dark dresses, button-up shoes, and her hair in a bun. She made sure “Quiet” in the library was observed. My favorite book was *Pee Wee the Mousedeer*. I've lost count of how many times I took that book home. Later I read the Nancy Drew series, the Hardy Boys books, *Time* magazine, *National Geographic* magazine, and anything else I could find.

(Taubenberger continued, page 2)

## Winter 2021

### 2021 Events

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the status of 2021 events is uncertain at this time.

### 2021 Board of Directors

#### Officers:

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

#### Directors:

*Byron Carver, Jr.*  
*Jean Guptill*  
*Kylie Hinkley*  
*Andrew Hutnik*  
*Betty Kelley*  
*Janice Kristo*  
*Charlene Nelson*  
*Nancy Sawyer*

(**Taubenberger**, continued)

In the early 1970s, the Jonesport Literary Club wanted to take on a community betterment project. They decided to work on upgrading and modernizing the Library by culling unused books and adding much-needed shelving. Mom and Dad had already been volunteering their time on various library projects, so this endeavor became just an extension of their volunteerism.

One night in early August, 1974, Mom and I were working at the library weeding out old unused books. At that time, the library doors were secured using a padlock. We neglected to bring the lock inside with us. This proved to be a big mistake. We finished for the night and tried to leave. We discovered that someone had locked us in. We were trapped in the library! Not to worry; we just went back to work, thinking that eventually someone would come looking for us, which my father did. He saved us!

Mom and Dad worked as volunteers and over the years brought various library projects to completion. They happily spent many hours laboring there for nothing more than the satisfaction of getting a job done for their beloved library. Dad repaired plumbing, doorstep railings, lighting, door hardware, just about anything that could be repaired or replaced. He helped to get a well drilled which eliminated the need for the cistern located in the library cellar. This old cistern was the cause of a lot of the dampness in the library. Mom spent many hours weeding out unused books and cleaning the library as well as supervising several of the library workers over the years. The library was originally heated with coal. The paintings had never had the coal dust cleaned off them. Mom and I carefully cleaned one painting, revealing details unseen for many years. Both parents helped, each year, to organize and work at the annual Spring clean-up and grooming of the library grounds.

When the library building outgrew its ever-expanding agenda and needs, i.e. handicap accessible bathroom and entrance, larger computer area; and a meeting room and emergency exit became necessities, Mom and Dad, along with the rest of the Board of Directors, and several other dedicated people helped secure the money to build an addition. Through their hard work the expansion became a reality. Dad even checked on the construction almost daily just to make sure everything was going as it should. The Board named the newly-constructed area of the library “The Taubenberger Wing” in recognition of Hans and Eleanore’s 50-plus years of volunteer work at Peabody Memorial Library. A bronze plaque in the library commemorates this decision. My parents were very honored and proud of this recognition.

Over the years, Peabody Memorial Library has had a series of dedicated librarians. Each, in their own way, has added to the history of the library. Who can forget those who typed the many cards for the card catalog, or Barbara Hall’s ever-present jigsaw puzzles? Listing their names could very well mean that I might omit

(**Taubenberger** continued, page 3)



Peabody Memorial Library



Library Annex Under Construction, 2006



Hans and Eleanore Taubenberger

(**Taubenberger**, continued)

someone, and I certainly don't want to do that, but their smiling faces and willingness to assist patrons have always been very much appreciated.

It would be difficult to visit Peabody Memorial Library and not find the Taubenberger touch somewhere. One of Mom and Dad's greatest joys was working there. Their many years of volunteering was a small way they could provide the citizens of the area with an opportunity to enjoy all a library had to offer, whether it was reading materials, cultural events, computers, movies, or something else. Libraries aren't just about reading materials anymore. In today's world, in order to survive and be successful, libraries need to offer an ever-expanding variety of services. My parents would probably have trouble understanding this need to offer so much more than just reading materials, but one thing is for sure: they loved the many years of volunteer work they did for Peabody Memorial Library. Although Mom and Dad are both gone now, their legacy lives on in the Taubenberger Wing of the Peabody Memorial Library.

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## Roque Island Conservation

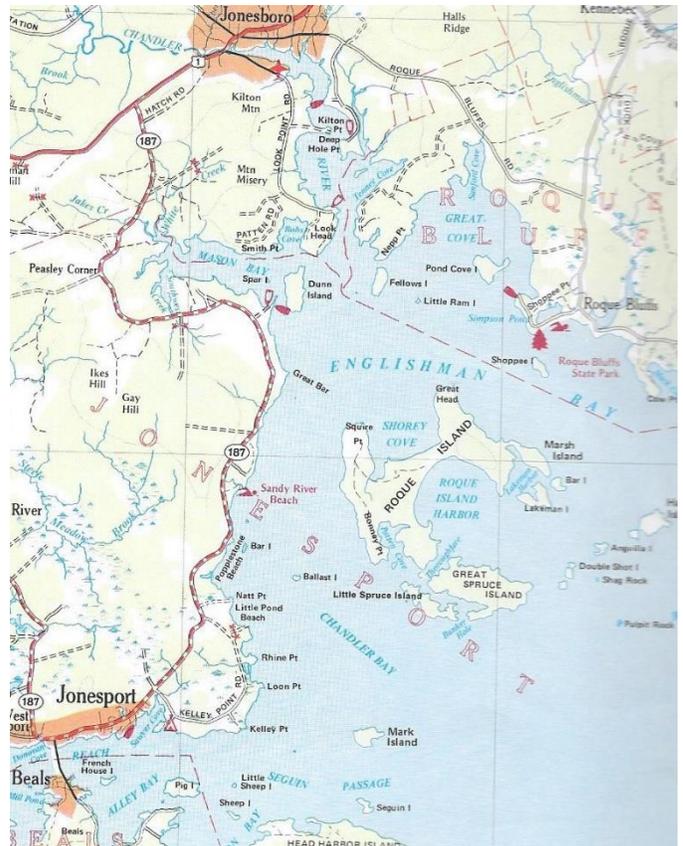
By George G. Herrick

A copy of the privately printed *A Natural Resources Inventory of the Roque Island Archipelago, Maine* (2020) has been given to the Jonesport Historical Society. Compiled by ecologist Norman C. Famous, Roque's Senior Naturalist, over 28 years of field work and study before his death in 2018, and edited by his widow, Marcia Spencer Famous, the 93-page book provides a catalogue and assessment of Roque's natural resources and the historical background to them.

This survey gives us a list of 475 species of vascular plants found on 1,209 acre Roque, 201 species of lichens, 103 species of mosses, and 310 species of birds observed. The species lists will offer useful comparison with those of other conservation areas in Eastern Maine and provide valuable baseline information against which future studies will be compared. Appendix E provides a list of 75 distinguished scientists who visited the island, often conducted studies, and voluntarily shared their information. These lists will also be useful for consultation with other conservation organizations and land trusts.

How did all this begin? Listening to the growing discussion and debate about Global Warming in the 1980s, the Roque Island Gardner Homestead Corporation (RIGHC), Roque's family ownership company, now recognized the need for environmentally sound management and so commissioned the local Spencer-Famous environmental consulting firm to prepare a study of our natural resources and design a plan for protecting and monitoring them. By 1992 RIGHC had adopted a Long Range Conservation Plan

(**Roque Island** continued, page 4)



(Roque Island, continued)

and a Mission Statement to implement them. Enthusiasm for the early efforts of the Spencer-Famous team fostered support of the RIGHC membership in systematic birdwatching, data collection, creating specimen collections, developing a natural history museum, mapping and related activities as the pace of Spencer-Famous study gathered momentum. It took 28 years to complete the Famous inventory.

Deciding to export the RIGHC mission to the mainland, family members founded a non-profit company, The Eastern Maine Conservation Initiative (EMCI), to support academics and professionals pursuing the environmental sciences, wildlife conservation, cultural geography and historical research; and to carry forward the impetus of Roque's own programs and to serve the same cause in nearby mainland projects. Over \$250,000 has so far been granted to EMCI projects (usually for \$3,000 each) as various as herring spawning, thousand-year-old forests, migrating birds, native American archaeology, rockweed, coastal wildflowers, cleaning up salmon rivers, snapping turtles, cultivation of mussels and clams, and so on. The lists goes on, and will continue to do so. This initiative has served to connect RIGHC with and learn from dozens of other conservation professionals. In the Downeast Region there are 5 universities, 25 land trusts, 15 conservation organizations, and 6 state and government offices with conservation agendas to liaise with. The Jonesport Historical Society has so far been the recipient of three awards from EMCI.

Just as important as the relationships between individual ecosystems, say island to island, are the links that human beings create between ecosystems and the impact they have on their own. We call this Cultural Geography and this is the proper study of the many historical societies that have been founded in Eastern Maine in the last thirty years. EMCI supports this effort as well, even as we at Roque have tried to preserve the vanishing past in memoirs, diaries, albums and jottings for those who come after us for Roque's little historical society.

One of the first amateur naturalists was Parson Gilbert White of Selborne, England, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century who recorded in his famous diary all natural events on his property. Even so today, in the efforts described here, the amateur enthusiast is an ally of the scientist. Fishermen, for example, with their lifetime knowledge of local waters, have proven an invaluable source in some studies. Woodsmen and foresters are known for their almost innate knowledge of woods. And amateur birdwatchers have always had much to contribute as they are watching all the time. We are all in it together, we are all naturalists now.

As the writer Henry Beston wrote in *Outermost House* (1928): "Once again, I set down the core of what I believe. Nature is part of our humanity, and without some awareness and experience of that divine mystery man ceases to be man."

*George G. Herrick, former Chairman of Roque Island Gardner Homestead Corp., is continuing Chairman of its Natural Resources Committee and was Founder of Eastern Maine Conservation Initiative. Mr. Herrick has been going to Roque Island in summers since 1944.*

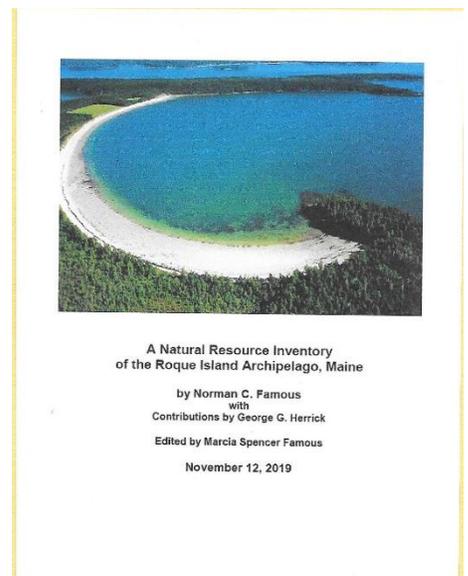
*Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter, Winter 2021*

Aerial view of Roque Island



The Jonesport Historical Society has so far been the recipient of three awards from Eastern Maine Conservation Initiative.

Roque natural resources inventory book, published in 2019



## JONESPORT LIBRARY AND READING ROOM ASSOCIATION

**September 7, 1893-** The first meeting was held in the vestry of the Congregational Church. Mrs. B.B. Mansfield was elected secretary and Mrs. D.J. Sawyer was elected president. The membership fee was-\$1.00 annually. Col. Peabody gave \$50.00. The library was located in the building owned by M

r. Nickerson (the Feeney beauty shop which burned down in 1989). Rent started at \$3.50/month but was reduced to \$1.00/month 1894. Mr. Rufus Stevens was the first librarian.

**1894-** Social Committee formed to raise money for books and a building. Fred Smith was the librarian for the winter 1893-1894. He was paid \$10.00. Mr. Nickerson was the asst.

**March 2, 1894-** Committee voted to burn the two copies of "Camille" by Alexander Dumas to protect the public.

**1895-** Mrs. D.D. Kelley was the librarian. Mr. Gibson of Boston was hired to draw up plans for a building. Col. Peabody gave \$50.00.

**1897-** Sent \$100.00 to Col. Peabody to invest with Kidder-Peabody.

**1898-** \$2.00 from George A. Peabody for building fund sent to Kidder-Peabody plus \$50.00.

**1900-** Free public library started with Mrs.D.D. Kelley as librarian. The books and magazines were given to the town. The town now supported the library.

**1903-** The Jonesport Library and Reading Room Association was reorganized to earn money for books and a building fund. Membership dues were \$.25 /year.

**1905-** The library contained 1007 books. It was moved to Dr. Adam's room behind the drug store (the former Woody Alley barbershop).

**1906 – 1914** The building fund grew to \$1276.

**1914-** Mary Lothrop Peabody left a sum of \$15,000 in her will for a library building honoring the memory of her late husband, Oliver White Peabody and her brother, Samuel Kirkland Lothrop. The money not used for the building was to be invested. The interest was to be spent on books. (It was first invested in Pittsfield Trust and then in Eastern Trust.) This is the Peabody Memorial Fund.

**1915-1960-** The Association continued to earn money for books for the Peabody memorial Library. In 1960 with Marion Hall as President and Verne McFadden as vice president, the association disbanded giving all funds to the library. \$1281 was in government bonds.

## Peabody Memorial Library

**August 14, 1915**-The Peabody Memorial Library Corporation is formed.

**1915**- The library was established August 30, 1915. The building cost \$13,925.83. It was 30ft. by 60 ft. in size. The unused sum was invested in a fund in the name of the Town of Jonesport. The annual interest of \$64.49 was to be used to purchase books.

**January 1, 1916** - The library is dedicated.

**1915-1940**- Mrs. D.D. Kelley served as librarian. Gertrude Smith, Marion Hall, and Jennie Leighton acted as Assistant librarian or librarian as needed. Gertrude Smith was the cataloger.

**1930** - Bert S. Look willed the Badger painting of the schooner Frank Benedict to the library. The library received the painting 1938. Joined the Maine Library Association.

**1939** - Shelving added to the stack room.

**1940** - Marion Hall becomes librarian.

**1943** - Alta Beal is librarian. Lecture Room is open to service men for 3 months.

**1944** - Storm windows installed. Jennie Leighton is the librarian until 1959.

**1945** - Dr. C.W. Milliken wills the York painting to the library

**1953** - Painting done inside and out.

**1955** - The windows are varnished and some interior painting is done.

**1958**- Mrs. B.B. Mansfield wills \$1500 to the library to be used for repairs and the purchase of books.

**1959** - Collected a Note#5 from the town \$1047+\$109.78. The cistern and sills are repaired. Borrowed \$300 from the Mansfield Fund.

**1960** - World Books Encyclopedia are purchased in memory of Mrs. B.B. Mansfield. The roof is repaired, sills oiled and outside grading is

done to prevent water in the basement. The Jonesport Library and Reading Room Association is disbanded. They gave their money to the library. A new furnace is installed.

- 1961** - 5 ft. of land is deeded to The Arnold Memorial Society(1962,63,64)
- 1962** - Josie Sawyer wills \$2000 to the library to be used for the purchase of books.
- 1969** - Some of the interior of the library is painted. Parts of the lighting system are rewired.
- 1970** - Affirmed that the president of the board of directors is the custodian of the building and property and that all use must be cleared by him/her.
- 1971** - Inside flag and stand are donated in memory of Mr. And Mrs. Ross Smith, Leon Smith and Oscar Wyman.
- 1972** - The bentwood chairs are recaned by the Extension Group. The Historical Society is started. The Jonesport Literary Club choses the library as their Community Improvement Project.
- 1973** - Childrens' corner started. Books rearranged. Cataloging of books started. Collection culled. Books removed from damp basement. Outside flag pole donated by K of P.
- 1974** - General cleaning, painting of the interior. Katherine Armstrong settles the Alberta Mansfield estate. Library receives \$4300.

**If you have not already taken a digital tour on Jonesport’s Heritage Trail, try it out by going to these websites:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>vamonde.com/adventure/link/1557</b> | <b>(West Jonesport)</b>                 |
| <b>vamonde.com/adventure/link/1643</b> | <b>(Central Jonesport)</b>              |
| <b>vamonde.com/adventure/link/1558</b> | <b>(Sawyer Square)</b>                  |
| <b>vamonde.com/adventure/link/1566</b> | <b>(Sawyer Cove)</b>                    |
| <b>vamonde.com/adventure/link/1563</b> | <b>(JHS Museum and Heritage Center)</b> |

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**Membership Renewal:**

**Because of the cancellation of events this year, all membership expiration dates have been extended by one year, so there is no need to pay your 2020 dues. Please do not mail in your 2021 dues or donations until you receive the Annual Newsletter package in the Spring. It will include the 2021 brochure and membership/donation form.**