



Jonesport Historical Society Newsletter

“Preserving Our Heritage”

Message from the President

For the past two years of dealing with COVID-19 restrictions, we have cancelled all public events in the JHS meeting room and have opened the museum to visitors by appointment only. To stay on the safe side, there are no indoor public presentations scheduled for 2022, and the museum will be open from May through October by appointment only. To make an appointment is easy: just call 207-497-2395 or 207-747-8228 or send us an email. Last year we opened the museum to visitors 30 times, and many of them were on the same day that the request came in.

If you do visit the museum, please allow yourself at least an hour to look around and ask questions, especially if you are new to the area or have not been to the museum before. Jonesport has a unique history with stories that astonish many first-time visitors. Our staff will gladly introduce you to some of these stories and show you how to search through our huge Archives database for more information.

Here are a few examples of what you can find in the Archives. Searching for the word “Jaffa” will return 700 pages of newspaper articles, documents, and other text, and over 200 photos. Some of those pages connect Jonesport to Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of State William H. Seward. Other pages connect a group of Jonesport residents to Mark Twain’s best-selling book during Twain’s lifetime (see Page 4).

Searching for “Seth Parker” will find 180 pages, 30 photos and 15 minutes of audio clips, some of which explain why four million people listened to a radio program every Sunday about Jonesport, and how Bette Davis got her Hollywood start in a movie about Jonesport.

Do a search for “Lapwing” and discover a link between Jonesport and American author T.S. Eliot, and a link between a Jonesport fisherman and the Library of Congress.

Look up “Barna Norton” and you will find 75 pages, 20 photos, and 40 minutes of video clips about the Jonesport man who claimed ownership to an island that has been in dispute with Canada since the 17th century, and whose story has made it into the *Wall Street Journal* (see Page 5).

Or maybe you just want to digitally thumb through the Archives. It currently has more than 35,000 pages of information, 17,000 photos, and 16 hours of video clips, and is growing every year.

Bill Plaskon, President

Spring 2022

2022 Events

Because of the pandemic, the status of 2022 events is uncertain at this time.

2022 Board of Directors

Officers:

William Plaskon, President
Jean Guptill, Vice President
Charles Alley, V.P. Emeritus
Nancy Sawyer, Treasurer
Ashley Faulkingham, Secretary
Eric Kelley Jr., Historian

Directors:

Byron Carver Jr.
Leland Faulkingham Jr.
Kylie Hinkley
Andrew Hutnik
Betty Kelley
Charlene Nelson

Jonesport America—My Home Town

by Greg Kelley

My birth certificate says I was born in Machias in 1939, but that is because Dr. Hanson's Hospital was there. I moved to Jonesport as soon as Mom and I were released.

I was the third son of Maxwell and Rose (Drisko) Kelley. The Kelleys had settled Kelley's Point in the 1700s. We lived in a house on Main Street on the north side of Sawyer Square. Although young, my older brothers, Lionel and Ralph, and I enjoyed the freedom of playing in the neighborhood without a lot of worry. Because of the war and gas rationing, there was not a lot of vehicular traffic. I think we thought of this as a community within a community. This concept was not uncommon as there was a grocery store nearby throughout town.

Danny and Dottie Hall lived across the street from us and had a grocery store next to their house. Later, Danny built a larger store across the street and next door to our house. On the corner of Main Street and the east side of Sawyer Square was the post office. Behind our house was Bion Mansfield's dairy farm, and beyond that, Sawyer Memorial Congregational Church, where my parents had met when Mom came to Jonesport to teach at the original high school. The Merrill Trust Company bank where Dad was the manager was not far away, across Main Street from what is now Jonesport Pizza. He worked there until 1942 when he left to work for Sun Life Assurance Company.

Besides the house on Main Street, we also had a camp at Sandy River Beach. We spent a lot of time in the summer there. At that time, electricity did not extend that far from downtown Jonesport. So we would buy a block of ice from the ice house by the end of George Beal's Wharf and provision the ice box for refrigeration of milk, eggs, butter, etc. We had kerosene lanterns for light and a hand pump in the kitchen for water. Many happy times there.

We moved to Bangor when I was five. But we continued to come back for family visits and the camp until the camp was sold in 1950. After that we still came from Bangor or Camden to visit my grandmother Pearl (Higgins) Kelley at her home at the end of Beal Street, and my Aunt Ruby (Kelley) Dobbins and Uncle Cecil Kelley and their families until I left for college. Although college, Navy service, and work took me out of Maine, we came back nearly every year. Since I retired, Sue and I spend our summers in Lucerne, a village between Ellsworth and Bangor, but make it to Jonesport two or three times every summer. We especially enjoy taking photos of grave markers at graveyards and cemeteries for the Jonesport Historical Society.

I have lived in many parts of the country and traveled extensively with the Navy, my work, and vacations, but it is always nice to come home to Jonesport America, my home town.



Greg Kelley's childhood home on Main Street, circa 1940. The house is still there, between Jonesport Realty and Moosabec Video and Variety.



The Kelley camp at Sandy River Beach, circa 1938. It has since been greatly expanded.

...it is always nice
to come home to
Jonesport America,
my home town.

—Jonesport Historical Society member
Greg Kelley, who lives in Texas

Board Member Profile

Andrew Hutnik was born in Trenton, NJ, and raised in Hopewell, NJ. He worked at various capacities for the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company, which later became Bell Atlantic, then Verizon, and retired after 34 years of telephone company service. In 1999 Andy and his wife, Arlene, purchased land on the ocean in Jonesport where they built their house and moved to Maine in 2006.

Andy volunteers for several organizations in the Jonesport area. He is a recreational safety instructor for Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, a docent for the Cooper House of Machiasport Historical Society, a lector at Holy Name Catholic Church in Machias, and is on the Board of Directors of the Pleasant River Fish and Game Club. He is also a member of Sunrise Senior College and the American Legion in Machias.

Andy and Arlene joined the Jonesport Historical Society (JHS) in 2008. Andy quickly started to be a JHS volunteer by helping to build a float for the Fourth of July parade, celebrating the fifth anniversary of the Society. A year later Arlene was elected as JHS Secretary, and shortly afterwards Andy was also elected to the Board of Directors.

In 2011 John Vassar Sawyer II donated the old D.J. and E.M. Sawyer Store, erected in 1896, as headquarters for Jonesport Historical Society. The interior of the main floor needed to be renovated to serve as our museum and meeting room. Almost all the construction work was done by Andy, Donnie Woodward, and Bill Plaskon, with Handy Andy taking on the most strenuous and skill-required jobs, such as restoring floors and tin ceilings, building walls, replacing electrical wiring and fixtures, refinishing countertops, and upgrading the bathroom.

When it came time to clean the basement of decades of accumulated rubbish, it was Andy that did most of the dirty work. In preparation for waterproofing the basement, he even operated a jackhammer to remove a concrete foundation that was in the way.

In his own house, Andy has a talent for converting items using recycled, unique materials into works of art, such as a tree trunk end table, a lobster trap table, and many others.

We all have Andy Hutnik to thank for what the Jonesport Historical Society museum and meeting room look like today.

—*Bill Plaskon*



Andy refinishing the original countertop for the museum.



Andy made this end table for his house from an Elm tree.



Andy with many of the Native American items he made for his house.

Excerpts from chapter LVII of *Innocents Abroad* by Mark Twain

But I am forgetting the Jaffa Colonists. At Jaffa we had taken on board some forty members of a very celebrated community. They were male and female; babies, young boys and young girls; young married people, and some who had passed a shade beyond the prime of life. I refer to the "Adams Jaffa Colony." Others had deserted before. We left in Jaffa Mr. Adams, his wife, and fifteen unfortunates who not only had no money but did not know where to turn or whither to go. Such was the statement made to us. Our forty were miserable enough in the first place, and they lay about the decks seasick all the voyage, which about completed their misery, I take it. However, one or two young men remained upright, and by constant persecution we wormed out of them some little information. They gave it reluctantly and in a very fragmentary condition, for, having been shamefully humbugged by their prophet, they felt humiliated and unhappy. In such circumstances people do not like to talk.

The colony was a complete fiasco. I have already said that such as could get away did so, from time to time. The prophet Adams—once an actor, then several other things, afterward a Mormon and a missionary, always an adventurer—remains at Jaffa with his handful of sorrowful subjects. The forty we brought away with us were chiefly destitute, though not all of them. They wished to get to Egypt. What might become of them then they did not know and probably did not care—anything to get away from hated Jaffa. They had little to hope for. Because after many appeals to the sympathies of New England, made by strangers of Boston, through the newspapers, and after the establishment of an office there for the reception of moneyed contributions for the Jaffa colonists, One Dollar was subscribed. The consul-general for Egypt showed me the newspaper paragraph which mentioned the circumstance and mentioned also the discontinuance of the effort and the closing of the office. It was evident that practical New England was not sorry to be rid of such visionaries and was not in the least inclined to hire any body to bring them back to her. Still, to get to Egypt, was something, in the eyes of the unfortunate colonists, hopeless as the prospect seemed of ever getting further.

Thus circumstanced, they landed at Alexandria from our ship. One of our passengers, Mr. Moses S. Beach, of the *New York Sun*, inquired of the consul-general what it would cost to send these people to their home in Maine by the way of Liverpool, and he said fifteen hundred dollars in gold would do it. Mr. Beach gave his check for the money and so the troubles of the Jaffa colonists were at an end.

Project Gutenberg's The Innocents Abroad, by Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens)

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Has Anyone Ever Asked a Puffin What Nationality He Wants to Be

By KIM CLARK

8/13/86

Special to THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

As conflicts go, it's unlikely that the Puffin War, as those in the area know it, will ever win a place between the Peloponnesian and the Punic in military history.

Machias Seal Island, the land under dispute, isn't much of a prize: 15 bleak and treeless acres of granite 10 miles off the coast of Maine, inhabited by some 2,000 rainbow-beaked puffins, an assortment of terns and auks and a pair of Canadian lighthouse keepers. Nor does it much excite the passions of the parties involved. Of the five remaining border areas whose ownership is still contested by Canada and the U.S., it is "absolutely the least important," says the U.S. State Department.

A Slow Invasion

In fact, the status quo seems to be fine with everyone but Barna B. Norton, who takes a dim view of such complacency. "The Canadians are trying to steal it," he maintains. And not just from America but from him personally: "My great-grandfather, Barna Beal, left it to me." As evidence of Canada's expansionist intentions he points to the lighthouse, which was built more than 150 years ago.

Mr. Norton, a 71-year-old charter-boat captain from West Jonesport, Maine, says he has been fighting the Canadian government for jurisdiction over Machias for

more than 40 years. This Saturday, as part of his campaign, he plans to hold the first on-island meeting of the Territorial Council of the Territory of Machias Seal Island and North Rock, Atlantic Ocean, U.S.A. As self-appointed president of the council, he has nominated his son John and a friend from Rhode Island to assist him in overseeing Machias.

Showing Who's Boss

Admittedly, the meeting is meant as another tweak at the regulations—largely environmental—that Canada has imposed on the island. "Once in a while," says Mr. Norton, "I break one of their rules just to show they have no authority."

In decades past, Machias has seen more-serious skirmishes over fishing and landing rights. A State Department official familiar with the case seems unfazed. Machias "is part of the U.S.," he acknowledges. "But (this) is ridiculous." He notes that the department has never seen Mr. Norton's deed to the island.

Canada says it isn't sure how it will respond to Mr. Norton's attempt to assert U.S. sovereignty. "We have considered the island ours since 16-something," explains Denys Tessier, spokesman for the country's Department of External Affairs. But, he adds, "we will keep as low a profile as we can. I am sure we won't sink his ship."

**Membership Form (Q)
2022**

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 2022 Membership	Make check payable to <i>Jonesport Historical Society</i>
\$ _____ 2023 Membership (\$5.00)	
\$ _____ 2024 Membership (\$5.00)	Mail to: Jonesport Historical Society P.O. Box 603 Jonesport, ME 04649
\$ _____ Tax Deductible Donation	
\$ _____ Total Amount	

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.

Jonesport Historical Society
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Located at 21 Sawyer Square
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NOTICE:

Until the COVID-19 restrictions are over, the Jonesport Historical Society Museum and Heritage Center will be open in 2022 only upon request May through October. Please call to make an appointment.