

MAINE SOUND AND STORY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FIRST COAST

AN INTERVIEW WITH LILLIAN HUNTLEY FROM THE JONESPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AS PART OF THE FIRST COAST JONESPORT/BEALS COLLECTION

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY CHARLIE ALLEY AND BILL PLASKON

BEALS ISLAND, MAINE, MARCH 1st, 2006

TRANSCRIPT BY GWENDOLYN ELKIN

Interviewee Name: Lillian Huntley

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Interviewer(s) Name(s) and Affiliation: Charlie Alley and Bill Plaskon (camera)

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Interview Description: This is an interview with Lillian Huntley. She describes the story of herself and her family, from before she was born, to her life growing up on Beals Island.

Key Words: Beals Island, childhood, seining, the reach, school, money, poverty, marriage, property, family

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Transcribed By: Gwendolyn Elkin

CA: Charlie Alley

BP: Bill Plaskon

LH: Lillian Huntley

[00:17:41]

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[00:00:00.0]

BP: Okay.

CA: Today is March the first and we are at Lillian Huntley's place which is number nine in the Gaelic Square Apartments.

BP: And it's 2006.

CA: And 2006, right. [Laughs]

BP: Yes, okay, good.

CA: Okay we're interviewing Lillian Huntley. Lillian, would you tell us what day you were born and who your mother and father is.

LH: I was born February 21st, 1921. My parents were Ewart and Minneola Beale Lenfesty. And she was the granddaughter of Tall Barney Beal.

CA: Okay, now would you tell us Jimmy's birthdate and his mother and father.

LH: Jimmy was born—

[00:01:00]

CA: July the 3rd, is that—

LH: July 31st, 1917.

CA: Okay.

LH: Phillip Huntley was born the 30th, I believe. Anyway, he was born the 31st, Jimmy was. I think, that what I thought it—

CA: Okay, where were you born Lillian?

LH: Well, 'cause I was on [born] Beals, but it was part of Jonesport. Because Beals and Jonesport weren't separated 'til 1925. So, I was born out on Beals.

CA: About where were you born?

LH: Where?

CA: Yeah, 'bout approximately.

LH: I was born in, well, I have to think 'cause it was what we called the [Aunt Deli House?]. My parents ICAed there. That was over by the big white house, as you go across the bridge, that was my grandmothers house. I don't know who owns it now.

CA: As you go across the bridge from Beals to Jonesport?

LH: Mhmm. It's a big white house.

CA: Which side—which way did you turn when you go across the bridge?

[00:01:57]

LH: When you go across the bridge you turn left, to see, there's a big white house [unintelligible]. And we were—Jimmy and I were married in that house, and started keeping house there. And what we had for our first washbasin—there wasn't any bathroom—we had an orange crate that we put a little washbasin on. I had the one bathroom in the house, up there. Anyway.

CA: Now where did you ICAe when you were growing up? Right in that same house or did you ICAe in a different one?

LH: Well, now, growing up, we had—you know where [Mil Beals' boat is now?

CA: Yes.

LH: That was where our home was when I was growing up. Yeah. Because the reach used to freeze over. You probably—do you remember when the reach froze over?

[00:03:00]

CA: No, when I was born, it froze over those years.

LH: Yeah, okay. And—Billy Peck we called him. William Beal his name was, but he was the mailman. And we used to sit there and watch him—the reach would freeze—and then there would be a strip in the middle that would be open—and he'd take his dory, and haul it out onto the ice, and put it into the water—the little strip of water that was open—and then pull it out on the other side of the ice to go get the mail.

CA: Now he ICAed just as you come off of the bridge.

LH: Yeah, he ICAed right next door to us.

CA: If you didn't turn left or right, you'd run into his house.

LH: That's right, and we ICAed right next door to him. [Unintelligible]

CA: Okay. Now, when did your father--did you ICAe up to the school up [unintelligible].

LH: That was the old Lenfesty property.

CA: That was the old Lenfesty. Oh, okay.

LH: George owns that now. George owns that house now. At Beals.

[00:04:01]

CA: Yep.

LH: Somebody owns the property--well--she owns what we called the bungalow. Are you familiar with that?

CA: No.

LH: Well anyway, my father, that is the Lenfesty property, ran from that house, now we're talking about over at Beals by the edge of this church.

CA: Now the house Ralph ICAes in right now is where the--

LH: No.

CA: Oh that's not it.

LH: No, no. George owns it. She bought the house, but she doesn't own--she only owns the white house. But the rest of it is this woman, as I said, that owns the property--just owns just where the house is. Then there's a big field that goes out of there.

CA: A lot of land [is it]?

LH: Yes, I was going to say. to tell you about the land. They owned—the Lenfesty property went from that house, up by—you know the [Adventist church] over there.

[00:05:03]

CA: Yes.

LH: Right out around, right to the ocean, and went straight down around the flying place, and that was every bit the Lenfesty property.

CA: That was quite a chunk of land.

LH: Yes it was, yep.

CA: Now is that lady only one [junk right two?]

LH: Yep, [junk?].

CA: I've heard them say her name but I can't remember.

LH: [Stuttering]

CA: Can't remember.

LH: If I felt well I might remember it but I can't remember—[laughs].

CA: Now was your grandfather born in Guerny or—h

LH: Guernsey.

CA: Guernsey.

LH: In the English channel, he was French.

CA: Okay, and he was born there.

LH: He was born there. Yep, he left there on a sailing ship when he was twelve years old. And never did go back to the island of Guernsey.

CA: Now, he went to Head Harbor. What possessed him to go to Head Harbor?

LH: Well, because that's where my grandma—that's where they ICAed, everybody ICAed on Head Harbor.

CA: Yeah, but he wasn't married then—

LH: No, he was on the sailing ship I told ya.

[00:06:01]

CA: Okay.

LH: And the ship stopped there, because there was a store there—that is a little one—and there was a school, and a church, on Head Harbor, when my grandmother ICAed there. And she was married to Ernest Kelley's grandfather.

CA: Yep, [Leemond? Raymond?] Kelley.

LH: And he was drowned. And she had—they had Uncle Hanson—and a daughter. And she died of nosebleed. Right? She bled to death.

CA: I know she died young.

LH: She bled to death.

CA: And are both buried down to Graveyard Point.

LH: I didn't know where they were buried, but, yeah.

CA: Now, your grandfather married Sylvia.

LH: Yep.

CA: Where did they ICAe?

LH: On Head Harbor.

CA: They ICAed down on Head Harbor for a while.

LH: In the beginning, yep. Yep.

CA: And then they moved up and he bought this piece of land.

LH: Yep.

CA: A big piece of land. Now what did your grandfather do for a ICAing?

LH: Farmer.

CA: He was a farmer?

[00:07:00]

LH: Yep, I have a picture, [Almina] had of him with his horse cart. I should find it—
[Lillian gets up. The tape cuts.]

CA: Now, he had quite a big family over there, didn't he? Your grandfather.

LH: Uh, six.

CA: Six of 'em, yeah.

LH: It was Uncle [Hanson], cause that was the—

CA: Yeah.

LH: —Uncle Hanson and then, who's the oldest in the family? That's awful.

CA: Well, that's okay. I can't remember that stuff either.

LH: My father was the youngest one, I know that. And he went on the Lakes when he was sixteen years old. He went on the Lakes.

CA: Oh, he did? Which one, the Great Lakes?

LH: Yeah.

CA: What did he go on?

LH: I don't know.

CA: Don't know?

LH: No.

CA: Now, he didn't get married until after he came back though? Cause he was single when he was on the Great Lakes.

LH: Yep, that's right.

[00:07:59]

CA: Now, who did he marry? Who did your father marry?

LH: My father?

CA: Yeah. Was it Minneola.

LH: Married Minneola. Beal, she was. She was Tall Barney's granddaughter. See, cause my grandmother was Tall Barney's daughter. So, Grampy Barney was my mother's grandfather.

CA: I've found some cards of my grandmother's down there. And some of them addressed to my grandmother, and Minneola sent 'em. I presume it must been Minneola, but I don't know how she knew my grandmother.

LH: There's the only Minneola that there ever was as far as I know.

CA: I got two, three cards addressed from Minneola.

LH: Your grandmother, what's her name?

CA: She was Lizzie Reynolds at that time.

LH: Sure.

CA: Yeah, she ICAed on Head Harbor.

LH: Yep. That's the only Minneola there was around here, so. That I ever knew.

CA: Now what did your father do for work after he came back from the Great Lakes?

LH: My father—no that was before he was married that he was on the Great Lakes. But he went seining with a crew. I don't know they're familiar with the word seining or not but they used to go—

BP: Yep. Mhmm.

LH: And he also—he and [MI P?] had a two-masted schooner that they used to go from here to Portland with potatoes.

CA: Potatoes?

LH: Yep. And sardines.

CA: Yeah. Where would he pick the potatoes up here, you suppose?

LH: I don't know. Whether somebody raised them up.

CA: I don't know.

LH: But then they would bring back cookies. These big cartwheel cookies.

CA: Oh, they come in barrels!

LH: Yes, they came in barrels. And there'd be some broken in the stores, where they would have—and we loved to get those cartwheel cookies.

CA: I remember them! When I was a kid, used to buy them in the store.

LH: Yep. We didn't have that much because my father—there were eight of us in the family. I haven't told you that yet, have I?

[00:10:04]

CA: Nope.

LH: I was the oldest of eight. And there are seven of us still alCAe. My sister [Lavonne?] is the only one who's dead. Not my brother, my oldest brother, he's had the stroke, Chester. So he's [INAUDIBLE].

CA: Oh, he is? I didn't realize that.

LH: And at my birthday party, the six of us sang. So that was a special birthday party.

BP: You said that was on the—

LH: The nineteenth.

BP: The 19th of this month, February.

CA: That was before your birthday.

LH: Yeah. They had it early. My granddaughter-in-law, Gordon's wife, very thoughtful, she planned it.

CA: Okay. Who did your father go seining with don't you remember?

LH: Who did he go seining with?

CA: If you don't remember, it's okay.

LH: No, I don't, but I know he didn't earn much money. If he had enough to pay—we used to get our groceries charged down at Perio's Point. That was a grocery store.

CA: Who owned the grocery store at that time?

LH: Uncle Fred Beal. Now, he was my grandmother's brother. And Erwin Ailey used to clerk there, before he was married. Erwin Ailey married my cousin. He knows him—you know him.

CA: Yep. Oh, I know who you mean.

LH: But, I gotta tell you this little story, it's part of my life.

CA: Oh, that's part of the interviews.

LH: Yeah, great! But, because we didn't have any money, if he got enough money to pay his store bill, she charged the groceries. And if he got enough money to pay the store bill, that was it, at the end of the year, at the end of the season. So, my mother—now I was little, can't tell you how old but you'll know I was quite little, and I'll tell you the story. She told me to go up store and get some groceries. She had the list. And I said, "I want a penny." And she said, "I don't have the penny." And she wasn't lying, she didn't have the penny. But I held off, didn't want to go. And she kept telling me to go. After a while, I said, "If there's any pennies back, can I have one?" She said, "Yes sa, if there's any pennies back you can have one." I can hear her right now, because I wasn't thinking. [Chuckles.] So I went down and gave Erwin the grocery list, and kind of waited a little while, and it kind of dawned on me. I said, "Erwin, if you don't bring any money with you, there ain't no pennies back, is there?" He said, "No sa." So he gave me a piece of candy, and he called me "pennies back" for the longest while. [Laughter]

[00:12:39]

CA: [Laughter] Now, in your father's later life, did he go on sardine boats?

LH: Yes, he did.

CA: Quite a lot?

LH: Yes, that's what I'm saying, he ran that town.

CA: Yeah he was on the schooner. But then he went from there, he went on sardine boats, didn't he? Who'd he go with?

LH: Yes. Was that with MI? Was that when he, MIP was there?

CA: Did he go with Marshall Kelley on some one time?

LH: Marshall, yep, he did. Yes he did. And that was Chester that went on the Cassabago. I was thinking the Cassabago. But that was Chester and [Villhelm?] on the Cassabago.

CA: Yeah I was thinking he was Marshall. Sometime Marshall. Marshall had quite a few different sardine boats.

LH: Yep, you're right. I'm not remembering, especially now that I've got this problem.

CA: Oh, you're fine. Okay now, where did you go to school?

LH: I went to Beals. Beals Elementary School. It was down where the town office is now. And there were, lets see, there was one junior when we graduated and there were four seniors. And I was valedictorian. We used to take an eighth grade entrance test. Now I'm bragging! It's part of my life.

[00:14:08]

CA: I can remember. I took it too.

LH: Yeah. And when I took that eighth grade entrance test, my grade was either four or six months. I've got the record somewhere, cause I found it just a little while ago and showed it to Matthew, one of my great grandsons. I tested either four or six months in the tenth grade, and I was an eighth grader. I'm bragging!

CA: [Laughter] Well you've got to brag because there's no one else around from then to brag for you!

LH: That's right!

CA: They're all gone from then.

LH: Harry Crowley Junior's alCAe. Two of them are dead. Two of us are dead. But Harry Jr. And I've got a picture of our fiftieth alumni that the two of us are—yeah, and he was a professor at Bates college, that's what he did.

CA: Yeah. Mhm.

LH: Yeah.

CA: Now, how was it like growing up on Beals? Was there much going on?

LH: There was an ice skating pond. And again, that's up where the town office is. You remember where the big—there was a big pond—

CA: No I don't remember the ponds. I remember the town office. I remember the schoolhouse.

LH: Yeah. Course there were no refrigerators. And Uncle Charles Henry Beals, again he was my grandmothers brother, a Tall Barney son. And, he used to cut that ice in the big pond. And he would cut these great big blocks of ice, almost big as that stand, and take them up—that building is still there, up by where—I don't know who ICAes there now, Esther Junior used to ICAe there still—on the Ralph Alley property, on Ralph's wharf, on the other side there's a big old building?

CA: Yeah.

[00:15:55]

LH: And that was an ice house, where he would keep these great big blocks of ice as long as he could. Because he got fish—codfish, or haddock or whatever. You could eat anything then. They wont let you eat it now. Wont let you catch it even. But that's what he used to—they used to—well, use some of them as they were. And then, they would split them, and dry them, and weren't they good. Who was—Newell Pendleton.

CA: I remember the name.

LH: Newell Pendleton used to dry them on the wharf that Ralph Alley owns now, on that big wharf. And he would have those big flakes of fish out there drying. Those codfish.

CA: Who owned that wharf that Ralph's got—

LH: Gerome Alley.

CA: Gerome Alley.

LH: Mhmm.

CA: And Gerome Crowley had it, I remember.

LH: Yeah. Gerome Alley was his grandson, so.

CA: Okay.

LH: Yep. Weren't they good.

CA: Yeah.

LH: But this big ice pond, I was talking about when we were children.

CA: Yes!

LH: We used to go skating on that in the wintertime. Cause we were poorer than—talk about poorer than Job's turkey—we were poorer than Job's turkey. But my grandmother, bless her heart, she was very thoughtful. And after my grandfather died I used to ICAe with her, anyway. Stay with her nights and during the day and whatever. And I wanted a pair of skates for Christmas. They were four dollars. And cause mama couldn't buy them. So grammy brought me those skates, for four dollars.

[00:17:41]

END OF Lillian Huntley 01