

TRAIL DAY 2019
Photos by Peter Davis

Trail Day on Eagle Island was held this year on Saturday July 13, 2019. One of the annual jobs is recreating the trail through south beach. Each year the trail is destroyed by winter storms that can move huge boulders as much as 200 feet. Thanks to all who participated and to Peter Davis for these before and after photos.



Can you pick out the heart rock in the “after” photo below?

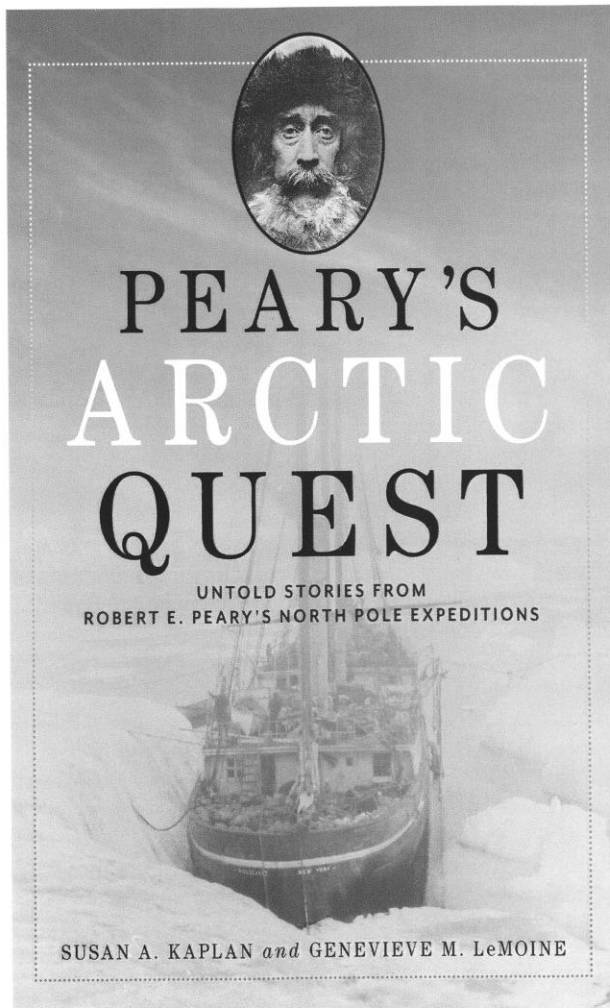


PEARY'S ARCTIC QUEST

Our friends at Bowdoin's Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum have released a new book about Admiral Peary. Copies may be obtained through Down East books, the Peary MacMillan Arctic Museum located on the campus of Bowdoin College Brunswick, Maine or at your local bookstores.

Dr. Susan A. Kaplan is a professor of anthropology and director of the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center at Bowdoin College.

Dr. Genevieve LeMoine is an archaeologist and curator/registrar of the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center, Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine.



This richly illustrated book takes a different angle on Robert E. Peary's North Pole expedition.

By shifting the focus away from the unanswerable question of whether he truly reached 90° North Latitude, the authors shed light on equally important stories and discoveries that arose as a result of the infamous expedition. Peary's Arctic Quest ventures beyond the well-cited story of Peary's expedition and uncovers the truth about race relations, womens' scientific contributions, and climate change that are still relevant today.

Readers will gain a greater appreciation for Peary's methodical and creative mind, the Inughuit's significant contributions to Arctic exploration, and the impact of Western expedition activity on the Inughuit community. The volume also features artifacts, drawings, and historic photographs with informative captions to tell little-known stories about Peary's 1908-1909 North Pole expedition.

Eagle Island 2019

As the park manager of Eagle Island, I have the unique opportunity to experience the island's transformation each season. I see the crocuses bloom in the spring and the leaves change in the fall. Each day, I go to work with delight in anticipation of the adventures that await, but above all, I look forward to being there to support the people who make Eagle Island special. Every park ranger, tour boat crew member, volunteer, docent, donor, returning patron, and first time visitor plays a vital role in the stewardship of Eagle Island. Without people who care, it would just be another rock in Casco Bay. Our collaboration and contributions make Eagle Island a destination that attracts thousands of people every season. On behalf of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, I thank you for supporting the success of Eagle Island in 2019.

This year, an impressive amount of projects were accomplished. Friends of Peary's Eagle Island (FOPEI) President Steve Ingram, Vice President Nick Knight, and other volunteers, performed general maintenance and painted trim on the Peary house. Eagle Island's dedicated volunteer gardening team improved soil quality and continued historic restoration efforts to recreate garden conditions that existed between 1904, and 1950. Trial Day volunteers rebuilt the south beach path and dispersed twenty-eight bags of mulch to level uneven sections of trail. On top of many other responsibilities including the operational maintenance of the island, Assistant Park Rangers, Chloe and Jenna, completed renovations to the caretaker's cottage, and gathered approximately one thousand-pounds of washed up trash from the shores of the island. Lastly, federal Shore and Harbor Program funds were used to add a new five-thousand pound mooring to the island in June.

Thanks to Nick Knight, Steve Ingram, Wayne Miller, and other volunteers, several new technologies were successfully implemented this season. For the first time this year, Admiral Peary's original pianola music collection was made available to visitors through the FOPEI website, audio tour wands, and a bluetooth speaker in the Peary house. In the Welcome Center, a new Square credit card terminal was established which enables visitors to pay for trading post items and set up memberships using a credit card.

This season, FOPEI volunteers, Diane Friese and Karen Dyer, worked tirelessly behind the scenes to facilitate the production of a new Welcome Center video. They spent months planning, researching, and developing content for the video. In August, all audiovisual content for the film was collected by a professional film production team from Portland, Maine. The new film will be complete for the 2020 season.

Advancements for the 2020 season are in the works but we need your help to make them happen. Eagle Island is in need of significant repairs that require specialized skills and equipment. The repairs include, repointing of stone walls, replacement of retaining walls, and complex structural improvements to the Peary home. By becoming a member, or making a tax deductible donation to the FOPEI, you are directly contributing to solutions that address Eagle Island's needs.

The Eagle Island Volunteer Docent Program is seeking docents for the 2020 season. Docents serve as guides to Eagle Island's many visitors. As a volunteer you get to enjoy a scenic boat ride from Harpswell to Eagle Island and spend the day absorbing the best views in Casco Bay. No prior experience is necessary, and who knows--you may even get a lobster dinner at the end of the season.

For more information on how to make donations, become a member, docent, or volunteer, please email: friendsofpearyseagleisland@gmail.com. Once again, thank you very much for your contributions to the island this season, and I hope that you continue to support Eagle Island in 2020.

Best regards,
Owen Blease Eagle Island Park Manager Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands



Winding Down the Gardening Season on Eagle Island

During the summer, an enthusiastic group of volunteer gardeners tended to the flower boxes adorning the Peary Family Summer Home and the historic gardens of Josephine, Marie, and Inez, found along the trail not far from the house. The flower boxes were planted with the traditional patriotic theme of red, white, and blue flowers. These included salvia, Bacopa, lobelia, geranium, and heliotrop to name a few. Additional foundation plantings included daisies, petunias, chenille plants, and alyssum. In the historic gardens, we continued to amend the soil with new top soil, compost, seaweed, and mulch. We weeded and thinned, and trimmed and rebuilt the stone borders. By summer's end each bed was looking even better than last year when they all showed great promise and happy to have had lots of TLC. Over the fall and winter, we will meet to further develop our plans for the coming season and look forward to (re)planting some of the Peary Ladies' favorites such as foxglove, hollyhock, delphiniums and Sweet William.

The closing garden day at the Island was another glorious one with abundant sunshine, beautiful blue skies. We also enjoyed the extra gifts of Josephine's hydrangea still in full bloom and a "kaleidoscope" (swarm) of monarch butterflies converging and feasting on the nectar of the seaside goldenrod on South Beach before heading out on their long journey. We wish each of them safe travels and a happy end to the summer.

Our thank you to all the docents and volunteers who helped make this another very successful and rewarding gardening year on the Island.

We also thank Tom Atwell for his nice article in the September 1 Portland Pre-Herald about the gardens on the Island.

maybe of Basin Point and Upper Flag. Something has imposed an irrevocable striped pattern on Casco Bay. That "something" was the power of thousands of feet of ice flowing, scouring, and scraping its way southeastward from Canada and northern Maine.

Flowing ice is like a frigid bulldozer. It pushes any unconsolidated rock and soil ahead of itself, often overriding it and using the entrained boulders and cobbles and sand grains as an abrasive to polish, scratch, and scour the bedrock over which it flows. Left behind is barren, often polished rock surface with scattered boulders and cobbles of rocks the glacier had entrained and then dropped as the last vestiges of ice melted.

On Eagle Island, this glacial story is reflected in the near absence of any significant soils atop the bedrock and the abundance along the beach of odd, rounded cobbles - odd in that their composition does not match that of the local bedrock. They are strangers here, carried and dumped willy-nilly by the melting ice. They are now rolled about in the surf and smoothed further. Admiral Peary used the black, rounded cobbles, a volcanic rock called basalt, for one side of his fireplace. A sign along the garden path says to look for glacial scratches made in the nearby bedrock, but I confess that I have walked the path and not seen them. Sometimes, you need just the right angle of the sunlight for these so-called glacial striae to appear.

I encourage any Eagle Islander who finds this tale intriguing to seek out the late Arthur Hussey's *A Guide to the Geology of Southwestern Maine* published by the Maine Mineral & Gem Museum in 2015. This is a clear, well-written, and beautifully illustrated summary of the regional geology. It is available at the Cundys Harbor and Bowdoin Geology libraries, but not at Curtis.



A Brief Overview of Eagle Island Geology:

by Geoff Feiss

When geologists gather over beer, something they are prone to do, to discuss what that they saw that day, they make a distinction that is second nature to them but important for other naturalists to note. The distinction is between the geology of the bedrock and that of the surface. Sometimes this distinction is not so important, but in Maine, it is all important. Why?

The answer lies in time. The bedrock geology of Maine (and Eagle Island) is the product of events that occurred 200 to 500 million years ago. The surface geology in Maine is mostly the record of the last glaciation — which reached its maximum extent about 20,000 years ago and, by 14,000 years ago, had retreated northward exposing the bedrock of coastal Maine. Using a different timescale, the glaciers left Eagle Island about 500 to 600 human generations ago; the events recorded in the bedrock began to taper off about 8,000,000 generations ago. First the bedrock geology: For those of us who treasure Eagle Island, this story is told in the ledges, cliffs, and periodic outcroppings of rock that rim the island or appear along its paths. To a certain extent, the story also appears in Admiral Peary's fireplace as he gathered pieces of the local rock for his masonry folly. If the bedrock of Eagle Island is a book to be read, Peary's fireplace is a series of random pages torn from that book.

The bedrock story begins with the closing of an ancestral Atlantic Ocean that we call the Iapetus Ocean (Iapetus, in Greek mythology, was a titan and the father of Atlas after whom the Atlantic Ocean is named). This was not just a simple collision of two large continental plates, the North American and the Ganderian plates. Rather, beginning about 450 million years ago, there occurred multiple episodes of volcanic activity, deposition of debris eroded from these volcanoes, crunching together of volcanic island arcs resembling the modern day Indonesian Archipelago, and the arrival and suturing to North America of slivers of micro-plates. While this was going on, massive tectonic forces resulted in subsidence, burial, faulting, folding, and even remelting of some of these rocks during multiple events that geologists call orogenies. And later, the modern Atlantic Ocean basin opened with the break occurring east of coastal Maine, about where the continental shelf transitions to the steeper continental slope and descends to the abyssal depths of the ocean.

Oh yes, and then this was all uplifted again and kilometers of rocks that once lay atop the present surface were stripped off and washed out to sea to expose the current surface. This is a complicated and hard-to-decipher story. On Eagle Island, there are a few observations that reveal pieces of the tale. First the bedrock itself. It is the Cape Elizabeth formation — remnants of a 450-million-year-old volcanic island arc. Originally, layers of volcanic ash and fetid muds accumulating in a shallow ocean basin over many tens of millions of years. Then, all was buried and heated forming a metamorphic rock called mica schist. Things to look for in this mica schist: 1) mica flakes a few millimeters across and oriented parallel to one another giving the rock the "sheety" texture we call schistosity, 2) tiny garnets (they look like reddish-black or even pink soccer balls), and 3) iron-staining (the bane of all Harpswell home-owners with wells). This rust is a byproduct of iron sulfides deposited in the fetid muds now oxidizing in contact with ground waters.

A couple of other observations you might make. The Cape Elizabeth formation has different colored layers as the composition of the original ash and mud lain down as horizontal beds varies. Look at the ledges along the shore north and west of Peary's home. These layers are near vertical. This alone is evidence of the massive forces that deformed the bedrock as Ganderia collided with North America so long ago — standing the Cape Elizabeth formation on end. Secondly, look at the massive quartz rock that Peary placed in his fireplace and that you can see in various places as you stroll the island and its shore. These coarse-grained veins and lenses cut across the layers of the Cape Elizabeth formation — recording the near-melting of these rocks as they were buried long ago.

Now, what about the surface geology? I expect everyone one of us has stared at the NOAA nautical chart of Casco Bay. Next time you do so, stand back about ten feet and blur your eyes. The northwest/southeast grain of the peninsulas and islands stands out. Eagle Island is just a seaward extension of Ash Point and Haskells Island or

1946-47 diagram of the vegetable garden near the caretaker's cottage – complete with dates of planting, emergence and harvest, Payne said. They plan to expand on that research this coming winter. They're looking for photos of the gardens, which so far have eluded them. Though no plans of the gardens have yet been found, the volunteers have spent time digging to discover where their edges were.

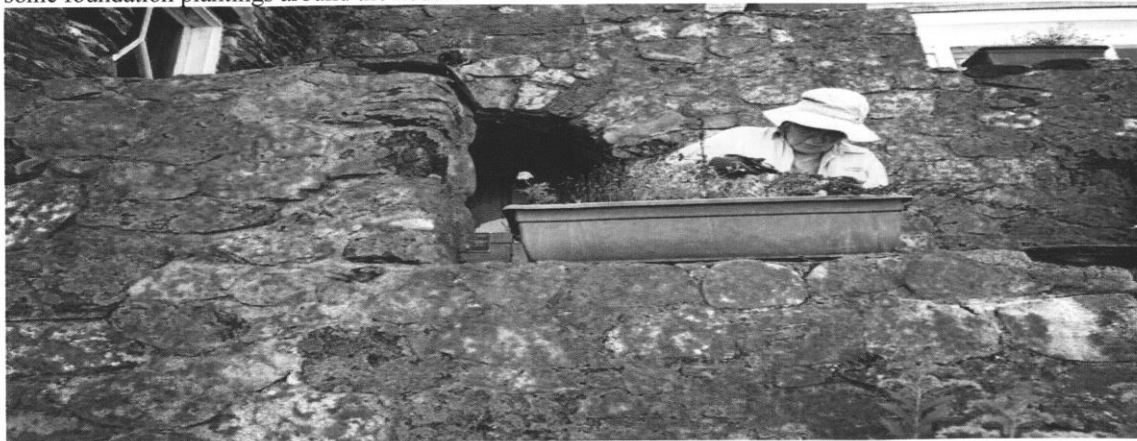
No one is sure if any of the original plants, other than the hydrangea, are still growing in the current gardens or if they have been replanted over the years. In some cases, the current plants could be seedlings descended from the original plants. As an example, one of Josephine's favorite flowers was foxglove, a biennial – meaning it will survive two years, producing flowers and seeds in the second year of its life.

Among other plants in the original gardens were roses, poppies, hollyhocks, sweet William, lupine, irises, bleeding heart and similar Victorian –era flowers. The gardeners can not add plants to the Peary gardens unless that are either native to the region or historic to the period of the gardens. Payne said that growing exact replicas of the individual gardens could be difficult because the island topography has changed. While there were trees on the island many of them were cut down to provide wood to build the house. So when the gardens were created, they would have been in full sun.

But about the same time the house was being built, the family brought more than 1,000 trees to Eagle Island by boat to create a forest. The seedlings included oak, maples, birches and firs and they have grown huge over the past century. Now the trees shade the original garden plots. The trees aren't the only problem plants for the gardens. Some of the gardens and nearby woods have been invaded by ramps, a wild onion. Because ramps are considered a plant species of special concern in Maine, and even though Mainers forage for ramps, the garden weeders aren't allowed to just pull them out to give the restored plants room to grow.

Volunteers work on the gardens only one day every two or three weeks, and only from late May to mid-September. That time frame is when the docks are in place so that boats transporting the volunteers can land. The docks are removed each fall to prevent damage from winter storms. In addition to weeding, deadheading and doing similar chores, the volunteer gardeners are also working to improve the soil – hauling in compost or carrying seaweed from the shores up to the garden plots.

Although the historic gardens are now high on their agenda, the Friends work on other projects too. They create and maintain container gardens that are placed on the steps and porches of the Peary home as well as some foundation plantings around the house.



Volunteer Barb Tucker of Brunswick works on a window box at the historic Peary home.

RESTORING THE PEARY HISTORIC GARDENS

This article by Tom Atwell was first printed in the September 1, 2019 Maine Sunday Telegram.

Several volunteers are working to re-create the original gardens planted on Eagle Island, Admiral Robert E. Peary's summer home in Casco Bay, off the coast of Harpswell, Maine. The gardens were created between 1912 and 1946 by three women in the famed Arctic explorer's life. But because the island is a state historic site, restoring the gardens isn't as simple as weed, till and plant.

The restoration effort is a joint effort of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island, a volunteer group that provides support for the historic site, along with a group of Master Gardeners, who are coordinated by the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension.

The three historic gardens that are the focus of restoration efforts were planted after the house was completed and Peary had retired, spending summers on the island with his family. The earliest garden on the island was created by Josephine Diebitsch Peary, the admiral's wife in 1912. It includes a huge PeeGee hydrangea that survives today – I saw it, in gorgeous bloom, when I visited the gardens. It is about 15 feet tall and just as wide.



Brunswick resident Karon Salch weeds the 1912 garden that was originally created and planted by Josephine Peary. The hydrangea is over 100 years old.

The second garden was planted in 1915 by Marie Ahnighito Peary, the admiral's daughter. The third historic garden was planted in 1946 by Inez Kelly Peary, wife of Robert E. Peary Jr.

While the idea to restore these gardens as close as possible to their original state was conceived last year, gardeners with the Friends group have been tending the plantings on Eagle Island for far longer than that. Barb Tucker and Nadia Harris of Brunswick, for example, have volunteered as gardeners on the island for 19 years. But last year, the effort was made to undertake historic restoration.

"We did some research (including at Bowdoin College) and found a whole list of what was planted," said Kim Payne, another volunteer. Among their findings? Detailed plant orders from Harmons in Portland, and a



Eagle Island Journal

A Publication of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

Volume XXIV, Number 2

Fall 2019

"Inveniam viam aut faciam."
Find a way or make one

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall 2019

The summer of 2019 was another eventful summer on Eagle Island. It began even before the island was open to visitors when State of Maine engineers and historic preservation specialists made an inspection tour of the island. They made a detailed inspection of the structures, retaining stone walls, and landscaping, and developed a detailed list of deferred maintenance, immediate needs, and future renovation recommendations to guide the State Bureau of Parks and Lands in its planning for the future. The State hopes to leverage the Friends' financial support for Eagle Island with significant grant and bond funding to meet its obligations to the Peary family and to the citizens of Maine to continue Eagle Island as a State historic park and National Historic Site.

Visitors to Eagle Island come to appreciate the life-style of the early 20th century, but they come accustomed to the advantages of the 21st century. The mission of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island is to assure visitors that they can have both. Hence the Friends updated the audio tour wands that guide visitors through the museum and grounds. In addition, the Welcome Center and Trading Post were provided with credit card capability so visitors could donate and purchase using the convenience of credit card payment. Thanks to the docent corps for adding this technology expertise to their welcoming skills.

A companion video to the 11-minute video on Adm. Peary's life that has been shown in the Welcome Center was planned, filmed, and recorded, and is now under production. This new video will focus on Peary family life on Eagle Island in the early 1900's. Board members Diane Friese and Karen Dyer took ownership of this project and have our thanks for developing the concept and guiding the production. This video will add a visual history to the Friends' publication of Eagle Island-Admiral Peary's Harpswell Summer Home in 2017. Both will be available for purchase in 2020 on the island and via the Friends' website.

Eagle Island attracted, and then benefitted from, the commitment of a group of professional gardeners who researched the composition of the family gardens, reconditioned the soil in the gardens, opened the canopy above the gardens, and eliminated invasive species to return the gardens to their original state as much as possible. Special thanks go to Board member Lisa Payne for leading this effort.

Friends' President, Noel Yacobian, had to resign as president this summer due to family commitments. At the annual Board meeting in August a new slate of officers was elected. Steve Ingram was elected President, Nick Knight-Vice President and Acting Treasurer, and Diane Friese-Secretary. Marnee Small, who served as Secretary for many years and kept the Friends' Board informed, recorded, and on-task, resigned as Secretary to assume the coordination of the Trading Post program. The Board is still looking for someone to take on the responsibility as Treasurer.

The Friends' support for Eagle Island is made possible only through your membership donations. Let us know how we can continue to earn your support. Summer 2020 will be here before we know it!