



Eagle Island Journal

A Publication of the Friends of Peary's Eagle Island

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the memory of last summer's designation of Eagle Island as a National Historic Landmark still fresh, the summer of 2016 began with another notable preservation landmark. The polar bear pelt, which for many summers hung behind the Admiral's desk in the library, underwent a major preservation over the winter and was returned to the library in a newly constructed display setting. Park Manager Zane Wallace built a horizontal display table to display the pelt in an impressive eye-level setting to help protect the delicate pelt. There is nothing delicate, however, the way the head and eyes look back at you!

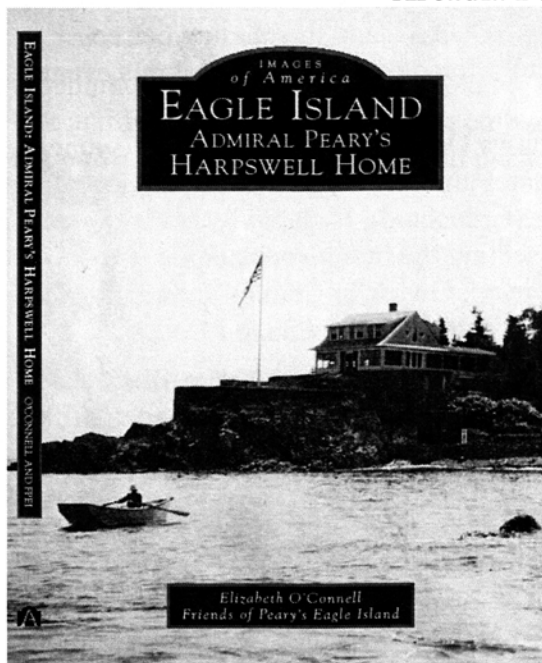
The Ned Dewey Volunteer Award was introduced at an Eagle Island ceremony this summer with Bob Johnson being awarded the honor as first recipient. Members of Bob's family, many friends, and his colleagues on the Friends recalled great memories that made Bob a friend to so many. A plaque commemorating awardees will hang in the Welcome Center, together with a plaque recognizing the many contributions Ned made to the Friends and to Eagle Island.

The Bureau of Parks and Lands invited a preservationist to the island to recommend treatment for the many books that remain on the island as part of the Peary family library.

The Friends contributed well over 1000 person-hours of volunteer time this summer. The docent program, gardeners, work crews and Trail Day volunteers made sure that all visitors received an Eagle Island a welcome when they stepped from the pier onto the front lawn. A trip to Eagle Island continues to be a memorable experience.

Thanks to all of you who contributed your time, energy, commitment and memberships to the Friends as we look forward to our 25th year of support to the Bureau of Parks and Lands for the preservation and protection of Eagle Island.

Eagle Island: Admiral Peary's Harpswell Home Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* Series



In the Spring of 2014, Arcadia Publishing contacted The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island and asked if we would be interested in putting together a book for their *Images of America* series. We jumped at the chance, anxious to share the history of Admiral Robert E. Peary and his home on Eagle Island, and to show off Eagle Island! The book is a historical, pictorial account of Eagle Island as the summer home of the Peary family. With very supportive cooperation from the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum and the staff at the George J. Mitchell Special Collections Department both at Bowdoin College (Peary's alma mater), along with the staff at the University of New England's Women Writers collection, the bureau of Parks and Lands for the State of Maine, and many other individuals, we're happy to report the final draft of book is with the publisher. The cover is featured here and 2017 publication date is yet to be determined. We are very excited about this project and the chance to share more about the Admiral, his wife, Josephine, his children, Marie and Robert, Jr., as well as their house, the caretaker's cottage and life on Eagle Island through three generations of the Peary family. Look for it for sale next year on our website, on the island next year or from your local bookstore.

This season the Friends were asked to coordinate volunteers to treat the nearly 1,000 volumes to clean any mold and mildew from the book covers and protect them from further deterioration. Every room in the house has a bookcase with journals, magazines, pamphlets and bound books (the library is shown below). The books were all removed from their cases, taken outside and sprayed with an anti-mold solution. Teams of 3 or 4 Friends volunteers took 4 days to complete the task, but now all the books and their bookcases are better protected against the salt air environment they live in. After being allowed to dry the publications were placed back in their original cases after the book cases had also been cleaned with the same solution. Over 800 bound books remain on Eagle Island. Topics range from general fiction to proper ways to mix concrete. Most are in generally good condition and should survive for many more years to come.



THE ARCTIC COUNCIL MEETS IN MAINE OCT 4-6, 2016

Celebrating 20 years of cooperation, the Arctic Council met from October 4-6 2016 in Portland, Maine. The Council discussed issues of import ranging from pollution and climate resilience to scientific cooperation by and among the members and all other interested nations. According to the Council, Maine has seated itself behind Alaska as this country's second "Arctic state." This designation is hardly surprising considering the importance of Maine's coastline, its sources of revenue and its natural resources. This year was the first time the Council, when meeting in the United States, has met outside of Alaska. With the importance of the impact of global climate change meeting Mainers at our front door – the Atlantic Ocean – and threatening our coast, our traditions and our natural resources, it was an honor for Maine, and Portland especially, to host this event.

The Arctic Council itself was formally organized in 1996 under the Ottawa Declaration of 1996. The Council is a forum promoting cooperation and interaction between the Arctic states and the indigenous population of that region. The Council has eight member States -- Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Russia and United States – and six permanent members representing the indigenous people who live in this region -- Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and Saami Council.

Historically, their work includes an enormous number of scientific research projects on biodiversity, adaptation, ocean acidification, bird migration; and includes development of oil spill prevention practices and work with the maritime industry regarding shipping management in the Arctic.

(For more information on this year's event, please visit the Arctic Council's website: <http://www.arctic-council.org>)

PRISCILLA'S FLORA STUDY – EAGLE ISLAND

Priscilla, one of the Friends' docents, has started her Flora study of Eagle Island. Below is a sample of what will be available to visitors of Eagle Island. We hope to have a small booklet for visitors to carry on the trails to help identify all of the plants and vegetation. Good work Priscilla.

Sea Coast Angelica

GENERAL AND CULTURAL INFORMATION:

Sea Coast Angelica is a native plant of coastal beaches and adjacent areas.

It may easily be confused with Scotch lovage (*Ligusticum scoticum*).

This plant was a food source and considered to have important medicinal properties by the Aleut, Eskimo and Kwakiutl.

HABITAT:

Coastal beaches, salt marshes forest edges, meadows and fields near beaches.

Eagle Island find this plant on the shoreline between the lawn and the beach.

Plant can be between 18 to 40" tall.

LEAVES:

Leaves are compound (made up of two or more leaflets).

Leaves are alternate (not opposite each other on the stem).

Leaf blade edges toothed (not smooth).

FLOWERS:

Flowers are about .25" in diameter, white or greenish-white, and clustered in flattish, long-stalked umbels (a flattish or rounded grouping of flowers whose stalks all start from the same point, like an umbrella).

Angelica flowers between June and August.

FRUITS:

Fruits are schizocarps (when dry it splits into sections, each of which holds one or more seeds).

Fruit has corky ribs, easily visible without hand lens.

About the Genus, Angelica:

Angelica's name comes from a legend of the Middle Ages, which told of an angel appearing to a monk in a dream and revealing to him that the plant would cure plague.

According to ourherbgarden.com Angelica was once considered a very powerful herb. It was given the nickname 'Root of the Holy Ghost'.

Many sources list medicinal and food uses for the different species of Angelica.

Sources:

1. New England Wildflower Society (NEWS), gobotany.com.
2. Wildflowers of New England, by Ted Elliman and NEWS
3. Connecticut Botanical Society
4. Burke Museum, University of Washington
5. ourherbgarden.com



Notes from Josephine Diebitsch Peary

On June 6, 1891, Josephine Peary joined her husband, Robert "Bert" Peary, Mathew Henson, Dr. Frederick A. Cook (surgeon), Langdon Gibson (bird expert and marksman), Eivind Astrup (ethnologist and Norwegian skier), John Verhoeff (weatherman and mineralogist), Captain Richard Pike and a small crew of other men on board the *Kite* (a steam whaler vessel) in New York Harbor. Their destination was Whale Sound on the northwest coast of Greenland where the expedition intended to pass the winter before trekking the entire northern expanse of Greenland from coast to coast. Newspaper articles at the time criticized Robert for bringing Josephine on the expedition.¹

Josephine kept a diary during this journey, *My Arctic Journal*, which she published in 1893. The following are excerpts from her diary that describe how Robert Peary broke his leg about 7 weeks into their 16 month expedition, which was his second trip to Greenland.

"The accident happened in this way on Tuesday July 14 after our 5:30 pm supper. The *Kite* had been for some time pounding or, as the whalers say, "butting", a passage through the ice, slowly but steadily forging a way through the spongy sheets which had already for upward of a week imprisoned her. To gain strength for every assault it was necessary constantly to reverse, and it was during one of these evolutions, when going astern, that a detached cake of ice struck the rudder, crowding the iron tiller against the wheel-house where Mr. Peary was standing, and against his leg, which it held pinned long enough for him to hear it snap."

"Bert was carried down into the cabin and laid out on a table. He was ice-cold and while I covered him with blankets, our physicians gave him whisky, cut off his boot and cut open his trousers. They found that both bones of the right leg had been fractured between the knee and the ankle. The leg was put into a box and padded with cotton. It was pronounced that the fractures were "good ones" and didn't need to have the bones pulled into place."

"Friday July 17. Last night was the worst night my poor husband has had, his leg pained him more than it had done so far, and he begged me to give him a sedative, which, with the doctor's consent, I did; but even then his sleep was disturbed to such an extent that it amounted to delirium. He would plead with me to do something for his leg. After doing everything I could think of, I said: "Can't you tell me where it hurts you most, and what you think might help you?" His answer was: "Oh, my dear, pack it in ice until someone can shoot it!" Dr. Cook carved by hand a pair of crutches for Robert who wasn't able to use them until over a month after his accident. For those of you have visited the Eagle Island house, you may recall a pair of crutches that lean in the corner of the upstairs master bedroom. Their provenance is unknown to me but they are a reminder of what Robert Peary endured on this early expedition.

Josephine nursed Bert back to health for many months; first in the cabin on the "Kite", then in a 7'X10' canvas tent and finally, in a small wooden cottage they built to wait out the winter. It was not a life of gentile comfort but one of partnership, courage and perseverance that Josephine shared with her husband on this 1891 expedition.

Diane Friese, Eagle Island Docent

¹Mick Confrey, *How to Climb Mt. Blanc in a Skirt: A Handbook for the Lady Adventurer*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011), 103.

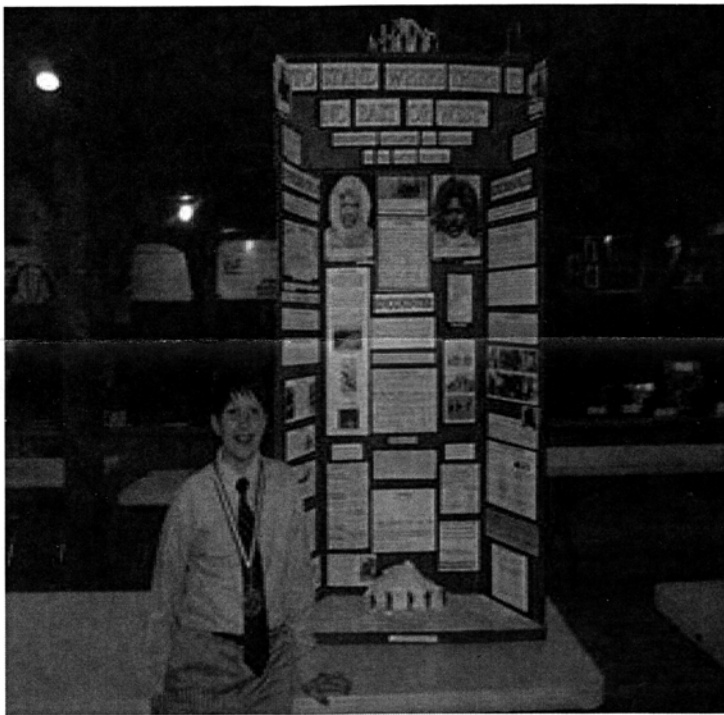
MATTHEW GILBERT

Honorary Docent for the Friends

Back in mid-May 2016, The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island were contacted by Matthew Gilbert from Cumberland, Maine.

Dear Friends of Peary's Eagle Island,

My name is Matthew Gilbert and I am a 12 year old at Greely Middle School in Cumberland, Maine. I am participating in National History Day, a competitive history contest for middle and high school students. I am preparing to compete in the national level of the contest. My project is about Robert Peary and Matthew Henson, their work in the Arctic, their return home to America, and their Inuit descendants. I am wondering if you would accept it as a temporary or permanent exhibit, or it could just be something I bring one or more days during the summer and explain about my research and about Peary in general.



Matthew with his National History Day project.



Zane Wallace, Park Manager, welcoming Matthew to Eagle Island as honorary docent.

National History Day is a year-long academic program focused on historical research, interpretation and creative expression for 6th- to 12th-grade students. The subject for 2016 was: Exploration, Encounter & Exchange in History; and Matthew's project was entitled: "Where there is no east or west: Exploration, Encounter & Exchange on the Arctic Frontier."

As we soon discovered Matthew is more than just a little interested in Admiral Peary, the North Pole, and Eagle Island. His knowledge of all of these topics is very impressive. We're happy to report Matthew was allowed to bring his project to Eagle Island during the summer of 2016 and display it in the Admiral's library and Matthew was made an honorary Eagle Island docent during one of his visits to the island. We hope to see him and his family many more times next year and in the future.

Congratulations Matthew!

The Friends of Peary's Eagle Island
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Friends of Peary's Eagle Island Update.

Tom Ring who owned and operated The Atlantic Seal out of South Freeport has retired. However there's a rumor that The Atlantic Seal could once again be making trips to Eagle Island. A new operator may soon take over operations. We hope excursions from South Freeport and possibly Portland will bring many more visitors to Eagle Island in the near future. Congratulations on your retirement Tom!

Although the summer 2016 season saw the loss of The Atlantic Seal, The Dolphin Marina in South Harpswell kept attendance to Eagle Island at an impressive level. Thanks go out to Captain Micah and The Marie L. Also many more private boats visited in 2016 sometimes waiting patiently for their turn on a mooring.

The Eagle Island treasure hunt developed by docents Ruth and Sue is getting more popular each year. Many of the comments left this year in the comment box in the house on Eagle Island stated how much the kids enjoyed hunting for and finding the items all while learning as they searched. More rewards will be available next year.

Many people sent generous donations in memory of Bob Johnson and Captain Bill Frappier Jr. The donations have been set aside for our outreach program. Some of the donations will help school groups afford a field trip to Eagle Island. Thanks to all who donated in their memories.

The Trading Post/gift shop on Eagle Island had a profitable year. Cold bottled water and small stuffed animals were the top sellers. This year we found a stuffed narwhal to add to the assortment. Some visitors still have never heard of a narwhal or don't think they really exist. "Sort of like a unicorn?" one person said.

Many of the items sold in the Trading Post will soon be available online as well. Check out the Friends' website for more information, ordering, etc. friendsofpearyseagleisland.org