

Genevieve LeMoine and Susan Kaplan, of The Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum at Bowdoin college, in Brunswick, Maine, are applying for permission to do two weeks of archaeological survey and recording at Cape Sheridan, Ellesmere Island. Both researchers have long track-records of over 20 years of fieldwork in the Canadian Arctic and Greenland. They will be accompanied in the field by one Bowdoin College undergraduate student and one community member (both to be identified).

Project Description

The project will take place at Cape Sheridan, Ellesmere Island in early August, 2011. Over the winters of 1905-06 and 1908-09, American explorer Robert E. Peary used Cape Sheridan as a base for his attempts to reach the North Pole. He and his team of American and Canadian men lived on board his ship, frozen in the ice off Cape Sheridan. Peary depended heavily on the support of many Inughuit men and women, who he brought with him from Greenland each year. During these winters about 50 Inughuit men, women, and children established a village on Floeberg Beach, near the ship, where they lived for about 10 months. When the ice released this ship each they were able to return home.

Aims: Our primary goal is to document the sites in detail, through mapping and photography and possibly limited test excavation. We will collect information about the lives of the Inughuit families who lived there, and evaluate the condition of the sites to determine whether more extensive research is warranted.

Benefits: This small scale, low impact project will help us learn about the poorly documented experiences of the Inughuit men and women who uprooted themselves to live for many months under stressful and unfamiliar conditions in an remote, isolated location. It will also allow us to evaluate the condition of the sites, and their potential for more intensive study.

Methods

The fieldwork will take place over two weeks in late July/early August, 2011. Kaplan and LeMoine, along with one student and a local guide will establish camp at Cape Sheridan. Our first priority will be to locate and map in detail the two over-wintering sites. Previous archaeological survey in the area by Parks Canada archaeologists in the 1970s and early 1980s confirmed that the remains of these camps are visible on the surface, but they did not have time to map them in detail. They also commented that there was some evidence of looting/souvenir collecting. Since then, no professional archaeologists have visited the sites, so their condition is unknown. In addition to mapping these two camp sites we will survey as much of the area as we can on foot, to document the condition of know sites, such as those associated with George Nares' *Alert* expedition of 1875-76, and to identify any previously undocumented historic and prehistoric sites.

The sites will be mapped using standard surface mapping techniques. Architectural features will be described, drawn, and photographed. Surface objects will be described and photographed in place. Site and individual feature locations will be

recorded using GPS. If conditions warrant it, we will also excavate two to three 1x1m test units, to evaluate subsurface preservation and potential for a larger scale project in the future. Excavations (if any) will be conducted with trowels, and soil, if there is any on this primarily gravel beach, will be screened through 1/8" mesh. Test units will be restored by backfilling and replacing vegetation (if any). All collected material will be returned to The Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, Bowdoin College for conservation and study before being returned to Canada for permanent deposit.

Funding: An application for funding has been submitted to the National Science Foundation Office of Polar Programs. The total grant request is US\$76,417. A request for logistical support (to be paid for with NSF funding) has been submitted to PCSP. Conservation of objects will be funded by an existing grant from Kane Lodge Foundation, Inc.