

ISLE AU HAUT HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS MEETING
Saturday, August 14, 2010
Revere Memorial Hall

Harold Van Doren called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Members present were Harold Van Doren, Pat Cole, Libby and Fred Eustis, Margaret Snell, Belvia MacDonald, Marie Hamly, Dick Marks, Charlie Bowen, Bill Stevens and Tom Guglielmo. Harold then deferred any other business and introduced Dr. Chuck Smythe, Northeast Regional Anthropologist for the National Park Service.

Dr. Smythe proceeded to hand out copies of a work plan compiled by Dr. Douglas Deur, principal investigator for a research plan proposed by the National Park Service to produce documentation and inventory of historically significant places, properties and resources on park service lands at Isle au Haut, particularly from oral history interviews with residents. He showed samples of other studies done by the park service.

The material produced will be stored in the archives of the park, and transcripts of the interviews will be accompanied by the proper release forms from subjects. When asked why Isle au Haut was picked for a study, Dr. Smythe replied that it has never been studied by the NPS. Marie Hamly asked if the project was already a finished deal, and was told that within broad limits it was. Harold Van Doren asked if we will have any say in the finished product, and was told that there will be a final version that can be viewed. Belvia MacDonald repeated the question of why does the park service want to do this study, and to what uses will it be put when finished.

Fred Eustis stated that the town definitely needs to be an equal partner in this project. He cited past history of problem resolution between the park and the island. This study seems to be a shift in the park's focus, and does it signal a change in park management practices? The past problems were successfully resolved only when the NPS came down here and listened to the concerns of the islanders. Harold pointed out that this project doesn't seem to be dealing just with oral history but is going way beyond that and will affect the community in ways we can't foresee. He wished we could meet Dr. Deur before the study begins.

Dr. Smythe reiterated that the study was designed to pull together various histories and resources about our island, as well as portraying present community dynamics. Harold assured him that we all are seriously concerned about the very fragile future of the island community and we just don't want to participate in anything that would jeopardize it.

In conclusion, the Historical Collections Society supports the park service effort, but feels strongly that the entire community should have some input as to whether they want to participate in such a study. Dr. Smythe agreed that these concerns should be answered and proposed coming down again, perhaps in October.

Marie Hamly, Secretary