

To the Top of the World

The beginnings of an historic journey to the North Pole took place across the bay at the McKay and Dix Shipyard on Verona Island when the keel for a 185-foot, 650 ton wooden sail-steamer named the *Roosevelt* was laid in 1904.

The ship was launched on March 23, 1905, and in 1909 Rear Admiral Robert E. Peary and his crew, including Bucksport native George Wardwell, navigated the ship to within 174 miles of the Pole where it was stopped by ice. That was the farthest north any vessel had ever sailed at the time. From there the Peary expedition traveled over ice to reach their destination, the North Pole, on April 6, 1909, becoming the first ever to do so.

“The Roosevelt fought like a gladiator, turning, twisting, straining with all her force, smashing her full weight against the heavy floes whenever we could get room for a rush, and rearing upon them like a steeplechaser taking a fence”
(Robert E. Peary 1907)

Artifacts and records of Admiral Peary's historic expedition are on display at the Bucksport Historical Society Museum and the Buck Memorial Library, both located nearby on Main Street.

Top photo: Peary prepared for an Arctic chill
Middle photo: Admiral Peary in dress uniform
Bottom photo: The *Roosevelt* underway



OF SHIPS AND MEN

Notable ships built in Bucksport:

Hannah, a sloop built in 1770. The first vessel built in Bucksport, built by Jonathan Buck. Burned by British sloop of war *Nautilus* in the destruction of the town in 1779.

Rattlesnake, a schooner built in 1842. A very fast topsail schooner, the queen of the old Bucksport coasting fleet. She and the schooner *Mexican* of Searsport reputed to be the fastest vessels on the Penobscot Bay.

N.T. Hill, a clipper ship built in 1876. Said to be the finest vessel ever built in Bucksport. Lost at sea with all hands in 1878, on its maiden voyage.

Estelle, a schooner built in 1891. The last vessel built in Bucksport proper.

The photo at the right shows a wooden ship under construction in Bucksport Harbor. The painting below is Bucksport Harbor bustling with maritime activity in the early Twentieth Century.

The village of Bucksport is shown in the background. Many of the buildings seen are still in existence today.

Visit the Buck Memorial Library to learn more about the maritime history of Bucksport



With Winds to our Back

Bucksport Harbor has seen a tremendous amount of maritime traffic through the years. During the town's early days when travel by sea was common, many wooden ships were built and launched from these shores.



Shipyards that operated along the Bucksport waterfront included:
The Ginn Yard at the foot of Hinks Street
The Swazey Yard between the Ginn Yard and the Verona Island Bridge
The William Beazley Yard at the foot of McDonald Street
The Beazley Yard at the foot of Third Street
The Parker Yard just east of the foot of Nicholson Avenue
All these shipyards are now gone, but not forgotten.