



Under the Isles of Shoals: Archaeology and Discovery on Smuttynose Island (Publication of the Portsmouth Marine Society)

J. Dennis Robinson

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The serene sloping lawn of Smuttynose Island is, in fact, a time machine. Only two buildings survive on this flat primitive spot, ten miles out to sea from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. But look deeper. The thin layers of soil that cling to the rocky island are thick with treasure. No, this is not the imaginary pirate gold of romantic lore. This is rich new data about our shared American past.

Native Americans hunted here 6,000 years ago. Hundreds of European fishermen salted and dried their prized Atlantic cod on these rocks in the dawning days of the American colonies. There was an ancient tavern here back when the Isles of Shoals were an important staging point for New England trade. The hardy fishing families who lived here were eventually displaced by Boston tourists visiting the Mid-Ocean House. But the first Shoals hotel has also disappeared, leaving only buried clues.

In just four years of an ongoing "dig" at the Isles of Shoals, Nathan Hamilton and his archaeology students have unearthed 250,000 artifacts. Those bones, stones, and fragments of human occupation tell volumes about life on a rock. And tiny buried shells may reveal secrets of climate change.

For those familiar with the romantic island legends of poet Celia Thaxter, this book offers a fresh and surprising perspective. For those unfamiliar with the nine tiny islands, the adventure is just beginning as we join the young archaeologists UNDER THE ISLES OF SHOALS.

This book includes over 180 images plus five original illustrations by Bill Paarlberg.

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