

THE LABRADOR INSTITUTE OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY  
& THE LABRADOR FILM FOUNDATION

present

## LABRADOR/ANS ON FILM

2012-13 SEASON

### SCREENING #3: *THE FAR NORTH*

*The Far North* (1hr 38min, Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, Bowdoin College. 195-, 2010). Researched and restored by Audrey Amidon.

This month we break from our traditional format in order to present one key historical film: Donald MacMillan's *The Far North*. The Commander, of course, is most famously remembered as Admiral Robert Peary's companion upon the now contested journey to the North Pole. Our purpose today, however, is to remember MacMillan as one of the pioneers of the moving image in Labrador, both as a producer and exhibitor of the medium. Though such scenes never played out in front of his camera, we do know that MacMillan is one of the first people to screen films throughout the Labrador coast on his schooner the Bowdoin. In fact, the late Uncle Jim Andersen has suggested it was none other than MacMillan himself that showed him his very first motion picture, giving him the bug that would stay with him until the end of his life. It is likely that some of the footage we are screening today has not been publicly in Labrador since MacMillan conducted his screenings, the last of which occurred some time around 1957.

What we offer you today is a painstaking recreation of one of MacMillan's so-called "lecture films," a popular manner of public address that seems entirely foreign to us today. Meticulously pieced together by Audrey Amindon, a Curatorial Assistant at the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum at Bowdoin College, *The Far North* provides us with a glimpse of how Labrador and her northern neighbours were represented throughout the south. If Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North* had established a fabricated idea of an Inuit experience, MacMillan's work, in its way, would attempt to restore complexity to that experience. Though his rhetoric may prove to be problematic to some of our ears, what comes through in this piece is MacMillan's commitment to *learning* about the North, a commitment that by his own admission, never ceased throughout his life. And though Labrador subjects make up only half of this film, we offer it here in the same spirit that we believe MacMillan intended it for there is as much to learn about Labrador's relationship with its neighbours to the south and west as there is to those in the north and east.

Coordinated by Morgon Mills

Curated by Mark Turner

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