

## Highlights Self-Guide

created by Isabelle DeGaynor, intern

Welcome to La Rochelle! The house, commissioned by the Bowdoin family and designed by Jacques, Andrews, and Rantoul of Boston, was finished in 1903. It was built in the Greek Revival style and named 'La Rochelle' to emphasize the French heritage of the Bowdoin family. In French, 'la rochelle' means 'little rock'.

First, enter **the foyer**. On the right is a picture of how the room looked when the Bowdoins lived here. At the far end is a display of Wabanaki baskets, which were sold to tourists. The Wabanaki were the first inhabitants of Maine and continue to have a presence in Bar Harbor today.



Next, move to **the dining room**, where objects from Bar Harbor's "Era of the Grand Hotels" are on display.

The era was begun by paintings of the island reproduced in fashionable magazines that brought the first tourists, 'rusticators', who stayed in private homes until boarding houses, and finally hotels were built. Be sure to **peek into the sunroom!**

**The living room**, featuring objects from the Cottage Era of Bar Harbor, is the next stop. On the left is the story of the SS Kronprinzessin Cecilie, a German ocean liner carrying gold that took refuge in Bar Harbor during the outbreak of WW1.



Across the hall is the Pastimes and Play exhibition, formerly used as a **reception room** where guests would play cards and chat before dinner.

Find toys, games, and music from the period along with original childrens' clothing and rare adult swimsuits dating back to the early 1900s!



Before you reach the foyer once more, stop and look in the **"flower room"**. Originally used daily by the Bowdoin's servants to bring in the fresh-flower bouquets, it now features the personal possessions of Beatrix Far- rand, a Bar Harbor resident and the first female landscape architect—though she would have preferred the term 'landscape designer' —who masterfully created this house's sunken garden as well as those of the National Cathedral, the White House, and the Dumbarton Oaks estate, among others.



Move through the foyer to **the library**, featuring the objects and archives of George Dorr, the father of Acadia National Park.



Enter the servants wing- notice the door that would have physically separated these rooms from the main part of the house. On your right is the former **butler's pantry**, where the family's china would have been stored and food staged before it was brought out to be served. Now it is an exhibition of working life in Bar Harbor. Note the milk bottles from the many dairies that used to populate the island and the toy car found in the ashes of the Great Fire of 1947, which burned many of the cottages in Bar Harbor.

Exiting the butler's pantry, move to **the kitchen**. In front of you is a 1950s table and chair set from Marshall's, a Bar Harbor ice cream store. Various kitchen items are displayed on the bookcases on your right.

Last- but not least!- stop in the gift shop before you move upstairs. Formerly the servants' dining room, you can now find unique gifts for you and those you love. \*Public bathroom in the gift shop\*



Coming up the grand staircase, move to the right to find **Mr. Bowdoin's bedroom**. It is now an exhibition on the

schools of Bar Harbor. Schools were held in private homes before buildings were constructed beginning in 1808. Find an early 20<sup>th</sup> century graduation dress and prom dress in the closet and a rare school slate in the drawer of the principal's desk. \*Public restroom in schoolroom\*

From the schoolroom, move to **the boudoir of Mrs. Bowdoin**, a private



sitting room for her personal use. Notice the painting of the woman over the mantel. Mabel was a performer in the amateur theater in New York.



The next room is **Mrs. Bowdoin's bedroom**. Her daughter, Edith Bowdoin, was an avid horsewoman and set troughs around Mount Desert Islands to make water available for horses. Exhibited is her scrapbook, a SPCA water bucket, and ribbons from horse shows where the Bowdoins sponsored prizes.

Exit the bedroom and move to the room in the center of the hall. Formerly **Edith Bowdoin's bedroom**,



it now features our extensive map collection. Note the dates on the path maps, town maps, and more as you walk around.

Adjacent to the map room is our photography exhibit. Note the stereoview cards—common entertainment in the 1900s— and the photo of the eagle—which they captured in a way that would certainly be illegal today!



Move through the closet now to the **first guest room**. You'll find some of the famous people who stayed in Bar Harbor. From the Vanderbilts to President Taft, the list is quite extensive!



The hallway is now the **servants' wing of the second floor**. Quartered here was the head housekeeper, the only servant to be housed on this

floor! Her sitting room is now an exhibition on interesting stories of Bar Harbor. From nurses to canes used to hold liquor during prohibition, there is lots to explore!

Move across the hall to the servants' staircase and climb to **the third floor**, where the majority of servants were quartered. In the **'chauffeur's room'**, you'll find photos of cars—which were not allowed on the island until 1913! Don't forget to stop and look at the **servant callbox** before you head back downstairs!

Across from the grand staircase is another set of stairs, up to the third floor guest rooms. Now used as the bride's room and bathroom for the weddings held here, look for the pictures of weddings held in Bar Harbor and the exquisite 1910 wedding dress in the hall.

Thank you for visiting and come again!