



We Were an Island: The Maine Life of Art and Nan Kellam

Peter P. Blanchard III

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Anyone visiting the innumerable islands that hug the coast of Maine has wondered what it would be like to live year round on a “rock” bounded by the sea, essentially cut off from the world, with life’s priorities whittled down to the most basic necessities. In 1949 Art and Nan Kellam set off to find their own isolated piece of paradise and eventually settled on a 550-acre island known as Placentia, near Mount Desert Island. They would live there year round for nearly forty years.

In this beautifully illustrated volume—based on Nan’s personal journal and the “Big Book,” to which both Art and Nan contributed private correspondence and archival materials—Peter P. Blanchard III re-creates the story of their island years. He shows their singular devotion to each other, finds tantalizing clues to their reasons for seeking isolation from the rest of the world, and considers the mental and physical toll of such an unusual lifestyle on the individual and joined psyches of the couple. The narrative is beautifully enhanced by historic photographs and by David Graham’s recent color photography. While evoking the alluring beauty of Maine’s rugged coast, the book celebrates the Kellams’ courage and determination to follow a distinctive life path. *We Were an Island* paints a sensitive and sympathetic portrait of a relationship that endured, even prospered, in isolation.

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