

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission Announces Hiring Of Flagship Niagara Captain

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Harrisburg, PA – Executive Director Andrea Lowery of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC) today announced the appointment of Gregory Bailey as Captain of the U.S. Brig *Niagara*, Pennsylvania's flagship. An Erie native with a distinguished maritime career, Captain Bailey will oversee the restoration of the historic vessel and its return to active service.

"Captain Bailey's deep-rooted connection to Erie as well as his extensive maritime and educational expertise make him the ideal leader for this critical endeavor," said Executive Director Lowery. "We are confident in his ability to provide leadership in all aspects of *Niagara's* operations, and we are excited to welcome Captain Bailey to the command of Pennsylvania's flagship."

A seasoned mariner with over two decades of experience, Bailey developed his love for sailing during the many hours he spent volunteering aboard the *Niagara* as a youth. His progression to the rank of captain began with his service as a deckhand aboard the *Niagara*, before taking him outside Erie to sail aboard tall ships across the globe. Despite his absence from Erie, Bailey has remained steadfast in his commitment to the U.S. Brig *Niagara* and the Erie community. His passion for the vessel and his proven leadership abilities will be instrumental in rallying support and resources for the restoration project.

"I am honored and humbled to be entrusted with the stewardship of the Brig *Niagara*," said Captain Bailey. "This vessel is more than just a ship; it is a cornerstone of our region's identity. I am eager to work with the PHMC, the community, and our partners to restore the *Niagara* to her full potential and re-establish her vital role in Erie's resurgence."

Under Captain Bailey's guidance, the *Niagara* will undergo a comprehensive restoration. The initial phase, commencing in fall 2024, will focus on replacing the propellers, initiating engine improvements, and performing a below-the-waterline survey. Subsequent shipyard work, scheduled for 2024–25, will address critical structural issues, including stabilization of the bow, hull repair, and deck restoration. Additionally, the vessel's electrical, plumbing, and pump systems will be upgraded to meet modern standards.

PHMC is collaborating closely with the U.S. Coast Guard to ensure that all restoration work complies with the highest safety and regulatory requirements. PHMC plans to have the U.S. Brig *Niagara* fully restored and sailing in Erie in time for the Commonwealth's Semiquincentennial celebration.