Abstract

The story of POLAR, the *Titanic* bear, is one that has resulted from a careful blending of history, folklore, legend, and children's literature with an appropriate sprinkling of oral narrative and verifiable testimony and documentation. It is a tale that evolved from a "real life" event that was later set down in writing by Daisy Spedden, the mother of the child whose experience this account recalls. Had it not been for the accidental discovery of an old trunk in the barn of L. H. Coleman, Esq. by his grandson in August of 1982, the life of Polar never would have been told and, subsequently, become known. The purpose of this article is to present the background, evolution, chronology, and afterward of the story of POLAR, the *Titanic* bear.
Polar bears can weigh more than 1300 pounds and span more than 8 feet, 6 inches from nose to tail, making them the largest carnivores to currently walk the Earth. (Though other bears can grow larger, like Alaska's 10-foot-long Kodiak bear, they're omnivorous, while polar bears prefer an all-meat diet.) The males far outweigh their female counterparts, who may only weigh between 330 and 650 pounds. The cute cub became an instant tourist attraction—the most famous bear in the world, even—and the zoo's attendance rates skyrocketed, netting an extra $1.35 million in tickets when the bear began making twice-a-day public appearances. But not everyone was psyched about "Knutmania." The polar bear (Ursus maritimus) is the largest bear species. A male polar bear can measure up to 10 feet long and weigh 1,500 lbs., which is about the weight of eight human adults. Female polar bears are up to 50% smaller than the males.[5]. Polar bears are also the most carnivorous of the bear species. The ability of bears to stand up on their hind feet makes it possible for them to shuffle in a way that looks somewhat like dancing.[4]. People in Asian cultures have traditionally used bear organs and secretions for medicinal purposes. All bears are good swimmers, but the polar bear is the most efficient swimmer. It can swim up to 4-6 mph (6-10 km/hr) for 100 miles (161 km). One polar bear swam 200 miles without stopping.