

Contact: Michelle Moon, (603) 422-7507

Strawbery Banke to Host Oral History Workshop

Community invited to learn how to capture and preserve history as we remember it

Portsmouth, NH-March 5, 2008 – Strawbery Banke will host an **Oral History Workshop** on Wednesday, April 23rd at the Tyco Visitors' Center from 9:30AM – 4:30 PM. This free, interactive workshop will teach participants how to conduct and use oral history interviews for community, educational, and cultural projects.

Jo Radner, Ph.D., a distinguished scholar, writer, performer, and past president of the American Folklore Society, will conduct the workshop, guiding participants in the interview techniques, technology, and legalities of oral history. Additionally, she will help groups design projects that reach wide audiences. Dr. Radner has conducted similar workshops throughout Maine and New England, as well as presenting and performing nationwide at conferences and storytelling festivals.

Oral history is the oldest and most widespread method for passing personal and family stories from generation to generation, and is practiced by almost every living human being. Oral histories are records of an interview conducted between an oral historian and a person who has memories of places and times past. Oral history projects are a way of getting to know a community from the perspective of its members. Newcomers who take part in interviewing long-term residents are drawn into a network of friendships they might not have accessed otherwise. Community exhibits and performances based on oral histories can bond together diverse residents. School oral history projects bring students vivid understanding of how ordinary citizens connect to larger historical events. Barriers can fall and new understanding rise between immigrant groups and the communities into which they move. Local collections of oral history-- in print, audio, video, or on the Web-- become enduring historical resources available to an entire community.

The workshop will explore a number of topics, including:

- Developing visions and practical plans for oral history projects
- The interpersonal dynamics of interviewing
- Strategies for asking effective questions, following promising leads, triggering memories
- Using recording equipment to preserve the best possible record of the interview
- The legal side: release forms that allow you to use the material--now and in the future without violating the law or the interviewees trust
- The crucial steps after interviewing: notes, indexing, transcribing, preserving
- Finding volunteer interviewers: potential community and intergenerational collaborations

Interested community groups or individuals are welcome to attend. To register for the workshop, contact Michelle Moon, Director of Education at Strawbery Banke Museum, at (603) 422-7507 or mmoon@strawberyanke.org. This oral history workshop is offered as part of a statewide series sponsored by the University of New Hampshire Center for the Humanities and the New Hampshire Humanities Council.

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About Strawbery Banke Museum

Connect with the Past! Step into 400 years of living in our neighborhood. Strawbery Banke provides the opportunity to see how people lived for four centuries of New England history.

Through restored furnished houses, exhibits, historic landscapes and gardens, and costumed role players, Strawberry Banke interprets the living history of generations who settled in Portsmouth, NH, from the late 17th century to the mid-20th century.

Strawbery Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH, is open May 1 through October 31, 10 to 5 daily; and November through December for guided walking tours and special events. Call 603-433-1100 for more information or visit www.strawberybanke.org.