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CURRICULUM VITAE
of
Michael E. Bell

Education

Ph.D., Folklore (Anthropology minor), Indiana University, Bloomington, 1980. Dissertation topic: African American voodoo practices.

M.A., Folklore and Mythology, University of California at Los Angeles, 1972.

B.A., Anthropology/Archaeology, University of Arizona, Tucson, 1966. M.A. level course work completed in Archaeology, 1968.

Professional Employment

1980-present Consulting Folklorist, Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

Develop and implement programs--and collect, maintain and make accessible to the public, materials--that express and interpret Rhode Island folklife and oral history. Funded by a Legislative Grant to the Folklife Program from the State of Rhode Island; subgranted to Heritage Harbor Museum.

Recent Public Programs/Projects

2004-present Principal Scholar, *Pawtuxet Village: One Space, Many Places*

A collaboration of scholars, artists, and educators is guiding 4th through 6th grade children and adults in using and creating maps to explore selected sites in Pawtuxet Village. Beginning with the participants' connections to sites that exist today, the team has lead children and adults back in time via historical walking tours, site visits and oral histories. Participants imagine and document these places and the different groups who lived there through drawing, photography, gathering oral histories, and writing. Drawing upon these resources, they are creating an artistically conceived history atlas of the village featuring three visual story maps--Present Day, 1750-1950, 1600-1750—that interpret the European-American, African-American and Native-American communities during those three time periods. Sponsored by the Cranston Public Library and funded by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts.

2004-present **Principal Scholar, *Vanishing Orchards***

We are documenting and interpreting the occupational folklife and oral history of Rhode Island's apple growing culture through direct interviews, still photography (color slides and black-and-white), and videotape. Occupational folklife, in this case, includes the year-round, everyday activities of those involved in the cultivation of apples as well as the groups they interact with while conducting their business. Apple growing families, hired orchard workers, fruit-stand owners and employees, wholesalers, retailers and direct customers (such as pick-your-own consumers) are included in the wider scope of this folklife. The history and oral history of this culture provides the background for our interpretation. Sponsored by the Rhode Island Historical Society and funded by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities.

2003-04 **Principal Scholar, *Pawtuxet Village Freedom Project***

My responsibilities included the following: identify research topics that speak to the various conceptions of freedom as a folk idea evident in the history of Pawtuxet Village, Rhode Island, from the early seventeenth century to the present; coordinate participating scholars in bringing research materials into the public discourse through Saturday library programs for children and their parents; link the scholarship to the work of participating artists and community historians; deliver the keynote public lecture entitled, "Freedom as a Folk Idea in Pawtuxet Village." Sponsored by the Cranston Public Library and funded by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, Verizon, and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts.

2000-04 **Co-Director, Folklorist & Writer, *From Bullrakes to Clambakes***

Compiled a permanent and accessible record of the occupational folklife of the Narragansett Bay shellfishery, through direct observation of pertinent activities in their natural context and interviews with "key informants." The research team assembled a documentary record through still photography, videography, audio recording and field notes that was used to produce a travelling exhibit, book and videotape. The exhibit was shown at the Newport Historical Society Museum, the Museum of Work and Culture of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Warwick Public Library, Cranston Public Library, University of Rhode Island, the Bristol Art Museum, the Museum of Natural History at Roger Williams Park, Providence, and the Northwest Folklife Festival in Seattle, Washington. Sponsored by Heritage Harbor Museum and funded by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities.

2001-2003 **Advisory Panelist, *Rhode Island E-Encyclopedia Project***

Panelists investigated the feasibility, methodology, scope, content and design of an online, electronic encyclopedia for Rhode Island. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities.

1994-99 **Folklorist and Senior Writer, *A Living Museum***

Conducted interviews, researched history, wrote interpretive text panels and essay, delivered illustrated lectures and produced teachers' guide to community based projects for a traveling photographic exhibition interpreting the history, oral history and folklife of the Loeff Carousal at Crescent Park, Rhode Island. Funded by the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities. A related educational component was funded by the Rhode Island Foundation. The exhibit has been shown at four public libraries, the Newport Art Museum, the Rhode Island School of Design, and Heritage Plantation, Cape Cod.

1997 **Oral Historian, *The United Shoe Machinery Corporation***

Conducted an oral history of the United Shoe Machinery Corporation, Beverly, Massachusetts for the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Deliverables included oral history interviews (with transcriptions) and photographs of former USMC employees and an interpretive summary of results.

1996-97 **Writer, *Rhode Island Communities: A Photographic Study***

Wrote brief history for five Rhode Island communities to accompany photographs by senior photography students at the Rhode Island School of Design for a book and traveling exhibition. Funded by RISD and Hospital Trust, Bank of Boston.

1993-94 **Folklorist, *Devil's Foot Rock***

“Devil’s Foot Rock: Phase II - Determination of Eligibility [for inclusion in the National Register as a traditional cultural property] Study, Devil’s Foot Rock, North Kingstown, Rhode Island,” for Rhode Island Department of Transportation under subcontract to Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc. Researched, conducted interviews, photographed and interpreted significance of this legendary site as promulgated in National Register Bulletin 38.

Recent Publications

Book

2001, *Food for the Dead: On the Trail of New England's Vampires* (New York: Carroll & Graf), 337 pp. A BookSense 76 Pick and winner of the Lord Ruthven Assembly Award for Best Nonfiction Book on Vampires 2002 (paperback edition 2002).

Book Chapters

1993, “From Bullrakes to Clamcakes: Occupational Folklife of Narragansett Bay,” pp. 85-89; “Fishing: Narragansett Bay's Oldest Profession,” pp. 90-93; “Narragansett Bay's Narrative Tradition,” pp. 140-145 in *What A Difference A Bay Makes*, edited by Deborah Brennan and Margaret Shea (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society and Rhode Island Department of State Library Services).

Refereed Articles

Accepted for publication (2005), “Belief,” entry in *Encyclopedia of American Folklife*, edited by Simon D. Bronner (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe).

Accepted for publication (2005), “Black Cat Bone,” entry in *Encyclopedia of African American Folklore*, edited by Anand Prahlad (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press).

Accepted for publication (2004), “Vampires,” entry in *Encyclopedia of New England Culture*, edited by Burt Feintuch and David H. Watters (New Haven: Yale University Press).

2003, “Book, Bones and Beliefs: Rethinking Resources for Historical Interpretation,” *New England Archivists Newsletter* 30:4, pp. 4-7.

1994, “The Occupational Folklife of Quahogging on Narragansett Bay,” *Fishers Forum 1993 Proceedings*, Publications of the Maritime Heritage Subcommittee, No. 2, edited by Michael E. Bell (Providence: Rhode Island Heritage Commission), pp. 47-50.

Monographs

2002, *From Bullrakes to Clambakes: The Occupational Folklife of the Narragansett Bay Shellfishery* (Providence, Heritage Harbor Museum), 14 pp.

1997, Writer, *Rhode Island Communities: A Photographic Study* (Providence: Hospital Trust National Bank).

1995, *A Living Museum: The Loeff Carousel, A Teacher's Guide to Community Based Projects* (Providence: The Rhode Island Foundation).

Editorships

- 2002, Text Creation and Photo Research, *Daughters of the Dark 2002* Calendar (New York: Hudson Park Press).
- 2001, Text Creation and Photo Research, *Daughters of the Dark 2001* Calendar (New York: Hudson Park Press).
- 1998, Editor, *Fishers Forum 1997 Proceedings*, Publications of the Maritime Heritage Subcommittee, No. 3, (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission), 50 pp.
- 1994, Editor, *Fishers Forum 1993 Proceedings*, Publications of the Maritime Heritage Subcommittee, No. 2, (Providence: Rhode Island Heritage Commission), 61 pp.
- 1993, Editor, *Fishers Forum 1992: Proceedings*, Publications of the Maritime Heritage Subcommittee, No. 1, (Providence: Rhode Island Heritage Commission), 57 pp.

Lecturing and Teaching

I have delivered hundreds of papers, lectures, and workshops before professional, academic and general audiences on such topics as folklore theory and methodology, research and fieldwork, public programming, folk song and ballad, relationships among folklore, history and popular culture, local legend, supernatural belief legends, modern legends, African-American belief systems, folk art and craft, Native American traditions, family folklore, children's folklore, folklife in Rhode Island and New England, and oral history. I also have served as adjunct professor in Departments of Folklore, English, American Studies, and Anthropology at colleges and universities.

Professional Activities and Service

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| 1986-present | Cranston Historic District Commission: Chair, 1994-2004; Vice Chair, 1993. |
| 1984-present | National Endowment for the Humanities: Panelist for Museums and Historical Organizations, Youth Projects; Outside Evaluator for Library Programs |
| 1982-present | Rhode Island State Council on the Arts: Panelist for Grants, Apprenticeship, and Fellowship Programs |