



The Precious Places Community History Project
an opportunity to document our neighborhoods

GUIDELINES

What Is Scribe Video Center?

Scribe Video Center is a Philadelphia-based non-profit media arts center that provides instruction in video, film, audio, and digital media production. Since 1982, Scribe has assisted individuals and members of community groups who wish to use video as a creative tool to explore personal and community issues. Scribe sponsors programs for youth and community residents in Philadelphia, Camden and Chester. Programs such as the Community Visions Project provide instruction to neighborhood groups who wish to use the medium to address issues of social and cultural concern. Our Documentary History Project for Youth gives young people the opportunity to examine a facet of Philadelphia that speaks of its history, economics, politics, and culture. Such projects make it possible for the citizens of the area to become more conscious of the persons, places and events that have shaped local history.

The Precious Places Community History Project

Precious Places is a community oral history project documenting those buildings, public spaces, parks, landmarks and other neighborhood sites that hold the memory of a community and define where we live. This is a critical time for neighborhoods, as many are undergoing significant change. Previous Precious Places participants chose subjects as diverse as a beloved jazz club, a hundred-year-old tree, a forgotten cemetery, and the Underground Railroad. We encourage neighborhood groups in Camden and Philadelphia to apply.

This year 10 neighborhood groups will collaborate with a humanities consultant and an experienced filmmaker in documenting their neighborhood. The humanities consultant will help guide the research process, discuss the process of creating oral histories, provide academic resources, and assist in locating archive materials that document the neighborhood. The filmmaker will train community residents in production techniques (camera, sound, lighting, interview) in preparation for October 11, 2008, a day of video documentation of each selected neighborhood. We encourage neighborhood groups from across Philadelphia to apply, but are looking for projects from areas of the city that have not previously taken part in this regional community history - in particular Olney, Logan, Feltonville, Southwest Philadelphia, Northeast Philadelphia and Camden.

The steps involved in the Precious Places project are the following:

1. Neighborhood Selection: Community Groups are invited to apply. We will use some of the following criteria in selecting groups. Scribe is looking for:
 - Neighborhoods that have buildings or other public places which 1) hold an important community memory; 2) are in danger of being lost; and/or 3) help define the neighborhood;
 - Groups that can identify residents who know the neighborhood's history and are good storytellers;
 - Neighborhoods experiencing a transition in housing prices, population or landscape;
 - Neighborhoods with stories that will have an impact and be of interest to the public at large.

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www.scribe.org

- All areas of the city are welcome to apply, but we are also looking for projects from areas of the Philadelphia region who have not taken part in the Precious Places Community History Project. We are making a specific outreach to neighborhood groups in Olney, Logan, Feltonville, Southwest Philadelphia, Northeast Philadelphia and Camden.
2. Creating Teams: Each selected community group will be teamed with a filmmaker and humanities scholar to assist in the planning, research, production and editing of their project.
 3. Training: Filmmakers and humanities scholars will provide training for community group members on video production and the process of documenting a community oral history.
 4. Production: On October 11, 2008 each group will spend a day shooting footage in the neighborhood, including taping interviews and documenting selected sites.
 5. Editing: Each group will work with an experienced editor on their video, adding archival materials when appropriate. Teams are expected to contribute significant time during the editing period. The result will be an 8 to 10 minute documentary.
 6. Screening: Scribe will organize a gala premiere of all the completed works. We will also assist in organizing screenings in each of the selected Precious Places neighborhoods.

Scribe Video Center will provide training, production and editing equipment free-of-charge, at no cost to the community group members.

Why is the Precious Places project important?

Precious Places is an important opportunity for Philadelphia and Camden neighborhoods to honor their unique identity in the area's history. Many neighborhoods and communities are experiencing changes. While some are thriving, others face uncertain futures. Producing a documentary video is a chance to honor the local experience, and to become the author, not just the subject of your neighborhood's history. In addition, community groups can learn the skill of producing oral history to uncover the rich stories that make up our past. Finally, the project is a valuable opportunity to make us aware of our diverse neighborhoods and the development policies that often render certain 'precious places' out of existence.

How can my neighborhood or organization get involved?

Please complete and send the attached questionnaire along with a cover letter to Scribe by May 23, 2008. The questionnaire is also posted on our website, www.scribe.org. Please feel free to spread the word and invite additional community-based organizations to participate. If you have questions please contact us at 215-222-4201, or email boone@scribe.org.

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