

Getting into Memoir-Writing: Beyond Faded Photos and Torn Letters

With Jon Peirce

January 7, 2012

9:30-4:30

National Library of Canada, Room 154

Many would-be memoir writers spend so much time examining old photos and crumpled heaps of paper that they never really get to the heart of the matter—deciding what kind of life they have led and what effect that life has had on those close to them and on the world at large. What's most important, after all, isn't where one starts out in life, but where one ends up.

While documentary evidence certainly has its place, it isn't central to most memoirs, and should not be used as a substitute for serious introspection and analysis.

This one-day workshop will offer several practical exercises to help prospective memoir writers free themselves from the shackles of documentary evidence and get on with the business of reconstructing their lives for posterity. In one such exercise, participants will be asked to identify “defining moments” or turning points in their lives, and to consider what lessons they learned from those moments. The workshop should be of benefit both to those well advanced in their memoirs, and to those just starting out.

Jon Peirce has been writing for most of his adult life, and mentoring and counselling other writers for more than two decades. He is the author of a widely-used university textbook, *Canadian Industrial Relations*, and has had over 200 articles and reviews published in periodicals such as *The Globe & Mail*, *Toronto Star*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Kingston Whig-Standard*, *Canadian Forum*, *Books in Canada*, *Christian Science Monitor*, and *Canadian Aquaculture*. Having reached the memoir-writing time of life himself, he is happy to share his insights with fellow writers.

A former journalist, social worker, bartender, university English and industrial relations professor, and industrial relations researcher, Jon is in the process of retiring after ten years as a labour relations officer for a federal public service union. He is a long-time member and past president of OIW, and has given several OIW workshops over the years.

If you have any questions about this workshop, please feel free to call Jon at (902) 404-1639, or to e-mail him at jonpeirce@hotmail.com.