

A CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The Oakes Smith/Maine Women Writers Fellowship

December 2021 or May 2022



Portrait of EOS attributed to Jared Flagg
Brown Library, MHS, Portland, ME

Scholars are invited to apply for a minimum four-day study, with access to and support from staff at Portland, Maine area archives, with \$1500 support for travel and accommodations.

Essays on Elizabeth Oakes Smith's work in the 1840s and 50s have appeared at regular intervals over the past two decades, but apart from the details supplied in her manuscript autobiography written largely in the 1880s, we still know very little about Oakes Smith's formative years, the contexts of her earliest writing and editing work, or even those family and friends supporting her in her later career from her original home in Yarmouth and Portland Maine.

We invite applicants to construct their own research agendas that help readers of Oakes Smith's work understand her life in Maine. The questions below suggest a wide range of possible topics for faculty, graduate students, and independent scholars to pursue:

- What constituted Oakes Smith's role as a writer and editorial contributor to Seba Smith's early journals, *The Eastern Argus*, *The Portland Courier*, and *The Family Reader*? What political positions did these journals take on issues of the day—for example, the debate over the Abyssinian Church property in the late 1820s?
- What might Oakes Smith have learned from Maine acquaintances, family and friends she kept from childhood into later life—for example, the (judge) Wares, Thomas A. Deblois, Nancy Mosman, or John Neal? What lines can we draw, socially, educationally or otherwise, between her early career and that of other Maine women writers like Fanny Fern or Ann Stephens?
- What evidence might city directories, census records, contemporary maps, business or church records and other materials offer studies of Oakes Smith's early life and work, or those of her parents and grandparents, who lived in some cases well into the 1850s?
- Caroline Woidat has traced some of Oakes Smith's inspiration for her several novels featuring Native Americans to her relation with Jane and Henry Schoolcraft, but she also reminds us that Oakes Smith's interest in the Indian may stem from her "upbringing in the state of Maine." What Native American presences in the antebellum period may have had a material influence on Oakes Smith's work?

A VARIETY OF ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Successful applicants will have a wide variety of paper and digital resources at hand at several institutions in and around Portland, as well as access to material remains in the area still documenting the lived geography of Oakes Smith's early life and career.

*The Maine Women Writers Collection
at the University of New England*



The Yarmouth History Center



*The Brown Research Library
at the Maine Historical Society*



*The Portland Room and other
at the Portland Public Library*



archives

To apply, send a current c.v. and abstract of your research plan by Oct 1, 2021. Please indicate whether December or May travel is preferred.

Queries about the fellowship opportunity are welcome before September 15.

Fellowship Contact: Rebecca Jaroff, Secretary of the EOS Society at rjaroff@ursinus.edu.

Interested applicants should also consider the Maine Women Writers Collection Research Support Grants at <https://library.une.edu/mwwc/home/research-support/research-support-grants/>