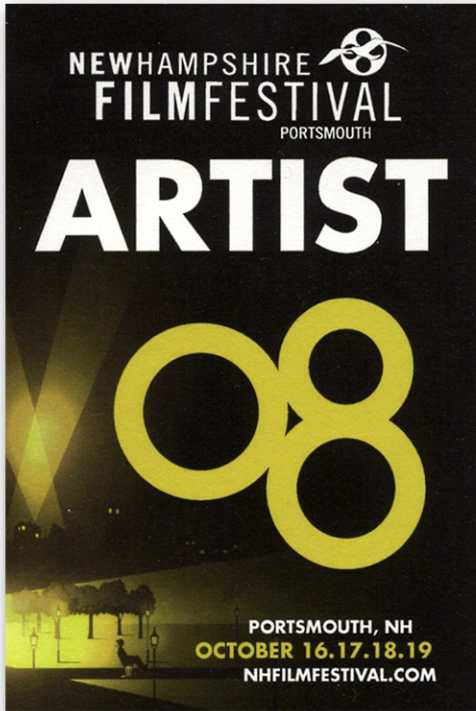


# TMO@The Castle

A Neil D. Novello Production

38 Minute/Historical Documentary 2008 New Hampshire Film Festival



Now, fresh from the 2007 New Hampshire Film Festival showing of his documentary, “The Castle,” about the Portsmouth Naval Prison (Gina Carbone of the Seacoast Media Group called it “alternately amusing and insightful”), this year video producer Neil Novello resurrects the Naval Prison again with his documentary on a former commander of the prison, Thomas Mott Osborne, a noted prison reformer in the early years of the 20th century.

“TMO@The Castle” tells the story of Osborne, the only civilian commander of the prison, and his impact not only on the Naval Prison and the Navy brass, but also on prison reform in Auburn and Sing Sing state prisons in New York. Controversy and scandalous allegations dogged Osborne’s career. He was known to disguise himself as a prisoner and/or a sailor to gain insight in the men who came to the various prisons. His opponents tired to discredit him by accusing him of homosexual abuse of prisoners, including the Naval Prison. What caught Novello’s attention was what prompted David Connelly to describe Thomas Mott Osborne as “either a nut or a visionary”, a description not particularly associated with prison wardens.

Searching university and historical archives, Novello, working with historian David Connelly who is writing a biography of Thomas Mott Osborne and was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, discovered film footage not seen in nearly 90 years. “The accumulation of images filmed over the last century is like a new layer of the archeological record of our visual history,” Novello said. “I’ll search through government footage, corporate footage, family footage, newsreels, education films, and kinescopes, along with photographs, paintings and slides.”

Not unlike “The Castle” from last year’s New Hampshire film festival where Mr. Novello took a long forgotten Navy produced film bringing to life the prison of the Vietnam War years, with “TMO@The Castle”, Novello takes long-forgotten film footage of Osborne along with other classic footage of the day and matches them with Connelly’s narration based on his historical research. This gives the viewer an unusual look at the Portsmouth Naval Prison (100 years old this year) and the distinctive warden who ran it between 1917 - 1921.