



# TOWN OF GROTON

173 Main Street  
Groton, Massachusetts 01450  
Tel: (978) 448-1105  
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[Planning@townofgroton.org](mailto:Planning@townofgroton.org)

Office of the  
PLANNING BOARD

March 15, 2018

Bruce Easom, Chairman  
Community Preservation Committee  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

RE: Support for Groton History Center application

Dear Chairman Easom and CPC members,

On February 22, 2018, the Planning Board voted to provide a letter of support for the Groton History Center's proposed project to preserve murals painted by J.D. Poor in the Oliver Prescott House on Old Ayer Road. The Planning Board recognizes that these murals are unique to New England and are an important part of Groton's historic legacy.

One of the core elements of the 2011 Master Plan is preservation of Groton's historic and cultural resources. The Groton History Center's goal of preserving and displaying these murals is directly in line with the 2011 Master Plan vision and the proposed project would be a very worthy and appropriate use of Community Preservation Act funds.

The Planning Board applauds the Groton History Center's efforts and is pleased to offer this letter of support for their application to the CPC.

Sincerely,

Takashi Tada  
Land Use Director/Town Planner

Groton History Center  
2019-04 JD Poor Mural Preservation Project  
Index to Application Files

- Index
- A. GHC Application
  - B. GHC History & Mission
  - C. Indian Hill Music Letter
  - D. Mural Photos
  - E. Ottinger Proposal
  - F. Ottinger Resume
  - G. Thomson Conservation Estimate
  - H. Roth-Wells Conservation Estimate
  - I. Carmichael Conservation Estimate
  - J. Groton Inn Materials
  - K. Letters of Support
  - L. CPC Criteria Adherence
  - M. Feedback & Responses

Groton Community Preservation Plan 2017-18

## 11. CPA PROJECT APPLICATION FORM

[CPC Use Only: Date Received \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Assigned CPC #2019 - \_\_\_\_\_ ]

If possible, use word processor to fill out form. Please answer all questions, use "N/A" if not applicable.

1. a.) Applicant Name and Organization: Spiegelman, Bobbie  
Organization(s) (if appropriate) Groton History Center
- b.) Regional Project: Yes\_\_? or No?\_X\_ If Yes, Town/Organization:
2. Submission Date: January 18, 2018
3. Applicant Address: PO Box 202, 172 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450
4. Ph. # 978-448-0092 Email: info@grotonhistoricalsociety.org
5. CPA Purpose. Check all that apply:  
Community Housing (Affordable Housing: ) Historic Preservation: X Open Space: Recreation:
6. Town Committee or boards participating:
7. Project Location/Address: Oliver Prescott House/Groton Inn, Groton, MA
8. Project Name: J.D. Poor Mural Preservation
9. Additional Responsible Parties (If applicable):

Role	Name	Address	Phone	Email
Property/Site Owner	1) Groton History Center (mural owners)	172 Main Street, POB 202 Groton, MA 01450	978-448-0092	info@grotonhistoricalsociety.org
	2) Indian Hill Music (property owners)	36 King Street POB 1484 Littleton, MA 01460	978-486-9524	
	3) Groton Inn (Inn owners)	128 Main Street, Groton, MA 01450	978-448-0060	
Project Manager	Al Collins	POB 533, Groton, MA 01450	978-502-4789	acollins@habitatadvisory.com
Project Consultants	1) David Ottinger	24 Mount Delight Rd Deerfield, NH 03037		<a href="mailto:davidottinger@hotmail.com">davidottinger@hotmail.com</a>
	2) Christine Thomson	81 Essex Street Salem, MA 01970		

10. As appropriate, indicate if proposal requires P&S agreement \_\_\_ Deed\_\_\_

Option agreement \_\_\_ Other-describe:

11. a.) Assessor info. (map/ block/ lot id.(s)): b.) Tax classification type:
12. Permits required: Zoning: Historic Preservation: Other :
13. Historic Commission Approval signoff (when required): Date: January 18, 2018
14. Funding: a.) Requested from CPC: \$18,000 b.) Committed from other sources: see line 21
- c.) Annual anticipated total income :\$0 d.) Annual anticipated total expense: see budget
- d.) Anticipated net income (loss): \$0 e.) Estimator name/company: See Project Consultants
15. CCP Objectives - use codes from **Section 5** to indicate all that apply: 5.1.2 & 5.1.3
16. Project Timelines: Proposed Start Date: July 2018 Projected Complete Date: By the end of 2018
17. Estimated Delivery Date of Completion Report to CPC: Within 2 months of completion
18. Project description and explanation (attach additional sheets as needed):

The Oliver Prescott House on Old Ayer Road was recently purchased by Indian Hill Music. Several walls in the house are decorated with colorful landscape murals signed by J. D. Poor that were painted circa 1835. Jonathan D. Poor was the nephew of well-known itinerant painter Rufus Porter, whose murals decorate the walls of many old buildings in New England. Recently it has been suggested that Poor was actually more prolific than his better-known uncle and mentor.

Indian Hill Music recognized that these murals would likely be lost as the fate of the building remains unknown. The organization decided, then, to donate two of the painted walls to the Groton History Center to ensure that this element of local folk art would remain in town.

The Groton Inn, which will soon again be a focal point in the center of town, has graciously offered to display the murals in their lobby space where they will be more easily viewable and accessible to town residents and visitors. As owners of the murals, the Groton History Center will remain stewards of these important works of art and will loan them to the Inn on a long-term basis. Town history says that the Groton Inn once boasted similar murals in one of its rooms. By installing the murals in the Groton Inn, not only will they be saved, preserved and more accessible, but also keep the character of Groton in place. These Poor murals will have the distinction of being the only ones in Groton available for the general public to view.

We are requesting \$18,000 which will include hiring experienced professionals for stabilization of the walls, removal of the murals from the Oliver Prescott House, transportation of the murals, conservation and restoration work needed on the murals, and installation and display of the murals in the Groton Inn.

There is a sense of urgency with this project that necessitates its completion as soon as possible. With the Oliver Prescott House unoccupied, the murals are completely vulnerable to many potential threats of damage and destruction such as temperature fluctuation, water, and fire. These murals are unique to Groton and they are a New England treasure that we must look at as irreplaceable.

#### Budget

Stabilization, transportation, installation	\$12,500
Conservation	\$8,360
Consultant Travel	\$1,253
Contingency	\$2,887
Total Cost	\$25,000
<b>Donations Received</b>	<b>-\$7,000</b>
<b>Total Requested</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>

19. Feasibility: We are working with professionals who are knowledgeable and eager about this project and have much experience working in these specialized fields.

20. List of attachments:

- A. GHC Application
- B. GHC History & Mission
- C. Indian Hill Music Letter
- D. Mural Photos
- E. Ottinger Proposal
- F. Ottinger Resume
- G. Thomson Conservation Estimate
- H. Roth-Wells Conservation Estimate
- I. Carmichael Conservation Estimate
- J. Groton Inn Materials
- K. Letters of Support
  - a. Rufus Porter Museum
  - b. Friends of Prescott
  - c. Groton Historical Commission
  - d. Groton Citizen (Michelle Emerle)
  - e. Groton Historic Districts Commission (on file with CPC)
  - f. Groton Planning Board (on file with CPC)
- L. CPC Criteria Adherence
- M. Feedback & Responses

21. Additional Information:

We have successfully secured additional funding which has allowed us to decrease our asking amount by 25%, to \$18,000. Community members have committed \$7,000 and we are waiting to hear if we will be awarded additional funds for conservation from the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation.

22. Management Plan:

Al Collins as project manager, will maintain regular contact with CPC liaison, will coordinate vendors, ensure deadlines are met, products and services delivered as required, invoices are properly verified and signed before delivery to CPC for final approval and subsequent payment. Additionally, Al Collins, and History Center President, Bobbie Spiegelman, will provide oversight to the vendors working to ensure the murals are properly protected and preserved during execution of the project.

23. Applicant Signature:

*Bobbie Spiegelman*

Date: 3/12/2018

# History of the Groton History Center

The Groton History Center is a tradename of the Groton Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

## Yesterday

The Groton Historical Society was incorporated in 1894 and since then has acquired artifacts, documents and historical memorabilia that are significant to the history and lives of the residents of Groton. In 1933 the Society received the generous gift of Governor George S. Boutwell's home from the estate of his daughter and founding member of the Historical Society, Georgianna A. Boutwell. This gift has allowed the Groton Historical Society to display and house the collections that it has acquired

## Today

In addition to serving the community as a museum, the Groton Historical Society actively publishes books and pamphlets and works with other organizations in town to promote Groton's history. It also publishes a quarterly newsletter for members, holds historical programs which are open to the public and cover a wide range of topics relating to Groton's history. The society provides assistance to genealogical researchers and offers educational tours of the Boutwell House. The Groton Historical Society adopted the name Groton History Center in 2016 to better reflect our role as an open welcoming historical and cultural organization.

## Mission

The Mission of the Groton History Center is to acquire, preserve, and share Groton's historical artifacts, documents, ephemera, and photographs.



GROTON HISTORY CENTER  
*Framing our story*

January 12, 2018

Bobbie Spiegelman, President  
Groton Historical Society  
172 Main Street  
PO Box 202  
Groton, MA 01450

Dear Bobbie,

Indian Hill Music, Inc., a 501 c3 nonprofit, is pleased to gift two murals, "The Tree Mural" and "The Water Mural," by Jonathan "J.D." Poor, painted circa 1835 currently located in the Oliver Prescott house, 170 Old Ayer Road, Groton MA to the Groton Historical Society, a 501 c3 nonprofit, contingent on the Historical Society receiving funding for the project.

We are delighted that these historically significant murals will be preserved and made more accessible to residents of Groton and people from near and far.

Sincerely,



Susan Randazzo  
Executive Director



© Greg Premru - Proof



**David Ottinger**  
**Antique Buildings & Materials**  
**24 Mount Delight Road**  
**Deerfield, N.H. 03037**  
[davidottinger@hotmail.com](mailto:davidottinger@hotmail.com)

**January 14, 2018**

**Paint Decorated walls: the Oliver Prescott, Jr. House, 170 Ayer Road, Groton, Mass.**

Thank you for contacting us concerning the removal of the Jonathan Poor murals located on 170 Ayer Road in Groton, Mass. The signed “J. D. Poor” walls in the first floor, northeast room are wonderful survivals that have been described and discussed in several standard reference books of Early American Decorative painting.(1) Though unusually far south, they are one of the many signed examples of Jonathan Poor’s work. Jonathan Poor usually signed and decorated walls in Maine. The walls are part of the “Rufus Porter School” and are typical of a group of walls using similar motifs by a group of artists who probably worked together and influenced each other. The paintings on plaster are, despite some surface weakness, exceptional examples and worthy of preservation.

Based on a discussion of the walls in *Folk Art Murals Of The Rufus Porter School* by Linda Lefko and Jane Radcliffe, the paint, especially on the two exterior walls, “show(s) the deterioration caused by a bonding incompatibility”(2). Apparently the Jonathan Poor decoration was applied over an earlier yellow paint and some flaking has occurred. From descriptions of the condition it seems this is an ongoing issue and the interior wall has also begun to minimally deteriorate. Accordingly, I recommend an initial stabilization of the paint on site by a conservator before the decorated walls are moved as well as some more extensive crating than we typically construct... (Please see attached conservation Proposal)... I have many years of experience removing, transporting and installing paint decorated plaster walls and can provide references.

In 1979 we bought and still own a house in Deerfield, N.H. with 4 rooms of early nineteenth century scenic murals, 2 rooms of stenciling and a variety of paint decorated floors and woodwork. My interest in architectural paint and learning about our house led me to start preserving other walls and woodwork. I have based my wall moving method primarily on a conservation report from Winterthur describing the William Price stairway that was moved as intact walls from the Ezra Carroll house in East Springfield, N.Y. in 1957 and installed in Delaware. Recently, as a founding Board members of the Center for the Preservation of Painted Walls (CPWP), we had an in depth tour of the Price walls and got to discuss the project with curators and conservators at Winterthur.

During the past 36 years I have been involved in moving more than 100 paint decorated plaster walls in a variety of contexts- frequently in large groups from one building, or as complete rooms. In some cases I have transported and reinstalled walls that were “extricated” by others, some removed many years ago. Mostly I have been hired for the complete process: removal, transportation and installation of plaster walls.

As far as the usual method, typically I start by photographing the wall and making a drawing, including plan view. I also do a brief survey of the building's structural condition to understand the framing the wall is part of. Usually we end up supporting the surrounding building structure as part of the wall removal process. However, since we are transferring the support within the building of the intact wall to our support, typically we do not extensively jack, or lift, within the building but merely stabilize the structure as found. Once the decorated wall is documented and supported as necessary, we carefully remove the material adjacent and behind the painting to assess the lath and supporting studs. We only use hand tools and carefully minimize vibration when working on plaster walls.

Generally, the distemper paint decoration is on traditional lime putty plaster that has been reinforced with pig, goat or horse hair. The hand-troweled plaster is usually keyed into horizontal "accordion" split lath which is supported by vertical studs and often diagonal braces that are tenoned into the post and beam building frame. If this is the case, once the back of the lath is accessible, we can carefully HEPA vacuum off the back of the painting.

Typically we apply 2 coats of rabbit skin glue to the back of the wall painting to better bond the plaster to the lath. Rabbit skin glue is easily reversible and removable. It is a hygroscopic, "breathable", somewhat flexible material that has been used for centuries. As with all hide glues, it is heated to apply. The strength is adjusted to the plaster strength; as it dries it seems to tighten. We carefully work the glue in with small brushes and syringes.

Once the plaster is glued, we begin to transfer the support of the wall. Typically we shim and attach horizontal bracing to the vertical studs. In the case of the Oliver Prescott, Jr. house walls, we'll probably use aluminum braces across the back of the walls. Aluminum is light for its strength and rigidity as well as being available in a low profile for re-hanging the decorated plaster walls on brackets attached to the studs in the walls at the Groton Inn.

The walls as built in the Oliver Prescott, Jr. house are full height. However, the decorated plaster is above the wainscot. We are planning to cut the walls at the chair rail level above the wainscot for installation as panels at the Groton Inn. We will probably support horizontally across the back of the painted plaster with 3 aluminum braces and additionally support the walls twice below with 2" x 8" s, one at the floor level as a "kick-board". Once the wall is newly supported and the house frame support is verified, we'll carefully cut the studs and angles way from the house frame and lower the walls, as built, to horizontal. We'll place the detached walls on horses within the room. At that point, the lower wainscot and supporting studs can be supported and cut away with minimal vibration. After the walls are moved, all studs, trim including wainscot, and the exterior sheathing with hand-feathered clapboards will be restored. Similar hand troweled plaster on blue board will replace the painted plaster murals.

We are anticipating simple crating to transport the walls which will be taken in a rental truck to the Groton Inn and re-hung. Based on our discussions, and an on-site visit, it seems there are vertical metal studs that brackets can be attached to in the walls at the Inn. The horizontal aluminum wall supports on the back of the wall paintings can be lowered onto the wall brackets.

Also, we can add complementary trim to match the adjacent molding profiles, if desired at the Groton Inn.

It is important to consider, as part of the cost of the move, the walls will need to be conserved. This is independent of the physical wall removal, transportation, and installation process. The paint surface seems unusually fragile and there may be some “in-painting” desired to enhance the final appearance when installed. We will coordinate our work with the conservator and look forward to learning more about the physical properties of the paint and its appropriate conservation. I have discussed the surface paint and its analysis with Jennifer Mass, scienceforfineart.com, and will provide the results, at no cost, of some preliminary tests to determine the paint composition and underlying paint.

### **Price:**

**Removal of two walls with repairs- 12,500.00:** Although I do not recommend retaining ONLY two walls as fragments unrelated to the room or other decorated walls, the price to brace the house frame and walls where necessary, stabilize, remove, crate, transport and hang at the Groton Inn in the discussed areas is 12,500. Additional trim at the new location to match the adjacent molding profiles can be added at additional cost. This price is for removing the approx. 4’-6” by 18’-4” signed “water wall” and 4’-6” by 6’ house scene in the exterior corner. As discussed above, the walls will be trimmed to shorter painted panels. This price also includes restoration of the exterior and interior of the house, as found, on 170 Ayer Rd. On the interior, matching wall studs and hand troweled plaster on blue board will be installed. Reinstallation of the wainscot and replacement of interior woodwork painted to match as found, is also included after the walls are removed. The Oliver Prescott, Jr. house will be left secure and the structure will be stable after the removal of the painted walls.

### **Footnotes:**

(1) Lefko, Linda Carter & Radcliffe, Jane E. *FOLK ART MURALS OF THE RUFUS PORTER SCHOOL, New England Landscapes 1825-184*. Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2011. See pages 7, 62-66, 88,89,162, 186-187, 238

Lipman, Jean. *RUFUS PORTER REDISCOVERD*, Clarkson N. Potter, Inc. (1980)-- Revised Edition. See p. 145-146, 174

Little, Nina Fletcher. *AMERICAN DECORATIVE WALL PAINTING 1700-1850* (new enlarged edition). E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1972. See pages 127-28, 153. A fascinating discussion about attribution.

(2) p. 62. Lefko & Radcliffe

**David Ottinger**  
*David Ottinger Antique Buildings & Materials*  
83A Appleton Street, Arlington, MA 02476  
(617) 721-1728 cell/text davidottinger@hotmail.com

**Objective: Moving of the Jonathan Poor murals, 170 Ayer Road to  
The Groton Inn, Groton, Mass.**

**Education**

**Boston Architectural College**, Boston, Mass.  
Candidate for Master of Architecture

Dec. 2003 to present

**University of New Hampshire**, Durham, NH  
Received Bachelor of Arts Degree in English  
Major in English Teaching, Minor in History

Graduated Dec. 1980

**Skills**

- 1 Forty years experience documenting structures for reassembly with photographs, sketches, templates, hard-line and AutoCAD drawings including creating complete construction drawings. Working knowledge of SketchUp for design and presentation.
- 2 Acted as a general contractor and sub-contractor working throughout New England.
  - Worked on projects with homeowners, architects, structural engineers, building inspectors, museums, and historic district commissions.
  - Hired and supervised up to eight employees.
- 3 Specialize in dismantling, repair, and re-assembly of antique structures that often require unusual solutions to complex design and structural problems.
- 4 Extensive experience in the conservation of antique buildings and materials, especially “in kind” repair of historic woodwork, lime plaster and masonry.

**Licensure**

Massachusetts Construction Supervisor, Massachusetts Home Improvement Contractor, Bonded

**Experience**

**David Ottinger Antique Buildings & Materials**

1982 to present

**Interests**

- 1 Research and writing on historic architecture- *Three Houses*.
- 2 Early American folk art and decorative wall painting- A founding Board Member of the Center for Painted Wall Preservation, recently obtained non-profit status:  
[www.pwpcenter.org](http://www.pwpcenter.org)
- 3 Digitized architectural design and development of structure and enclosure systems for curved naturalistic timber frames.

*Portfolio of projects and references available upon request*



Christine Thomson  
Decorative Arts Conservation and Historic Paint Treatments  
81 Essex Street  
Salem, MA 01970

Client: Groton Historical Society  
Project: Conservation of Painted Walls in a room in a house in Groton, MA  
Date: October 30, 2017

This proposal for conservation is based on examination of photographs only and not based on a site visit, so may require adjustment once the walls are examined and testing of materials carried out.

Scope of work

1. Identify the type of paint and the condition of the plaster substrate in order to make appropriate decisions about materials for stabilization, cleaning and inpainting.
2. Stabilize all paint that is flaking and detaching, using an adhesive to be determined after testing. Utilize Japanese tissue and low heat to flatten areas of lifting and curled paint and readhere it to the plaster substrate.
3. Clean the surface using dry methods to remove surface dirt. This proposal does not include time for wet cleaning, which is a more laborious process, but based on the images, the surface did not appear to be very grimy and therefore not in need of a more involved cleaning process.
4. Fill substrate if necessary and inpaint all areas of missing decoration to blend the losses with the surrounding surfaces.
5. Provide a conservation report with photos of before and after treatment, along with a description of the materials and process used.

Please note: This proposal does NOT include application of any type of coating onto the surface.

Estimate of Costs:

Labor: two conservators, total 9 days x \$800/day	\$7200
Materials and supplies: 5% of labor costs	360
Administrative Overhead	<u>800</u>
	\$8360
Travel expenses:	
Five round trips to Groton MA from Salem, MA, @92 miles each trip	
\$.55/mile = \$253 plus \$200/day for travel time	\$1253

As an option to traveling from Salem MA every day, it would be more efficient to stay in Groton for 4 nights in AirBnB or similar accommodations, which would save up to 5 hours a day in travel time. Estimated costs per day are \$60 - \$100 for accommodations for two people, which is half the cost of traveling back and forth from Salem, MA.

*All work performed in accordance with the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice*

Submitted by Christine Thomson, AIC Professional Associate



**NINA A ROTH-WELLS LLC**  
*PAINTING CONSERVATION*

**Proposal for Treatment of Murals at: the Oliver Prescott, Jr. House, 170 Ayer Road, Groton, Mass.**

This is a rough proposal prepared without the benefit of visiting the site and testing the murals. In order to achieve an accurate estimate and viable treatment plan examination and testing of the murals will be necessary. Furthermore analysis of paint media may be beneficial to devising the best treatment plan.

From examination of digital photographs of the walls including details of flaking paint I observed that the larger wall with the scene of a body of water and boats appears to be stable at this time. The smaller wall with a trees and a house appears to be have suffered rather extensive flaking. In the photos it appears that the flakes reveal a yellow painted surface under the image. Anecdotal reports indicate that it is believed that the paint maybe casein paint rather than the more traditional distemper paint used in this type of mural. Prior to treatment close examination and possible testing and analysis will be performed to determine the nature and composition of the paint layer structure.

**Phase 1 Examination and Documentation Collection of Samples for Analysis**

Travel Georgetown ME to Groton, MA	\$350.00
Testing and Examination onsite	\$500.00
Samples as necessary	<u>\$200-\$500</u>
Meals and lodging are not included one overnight possible	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1050-1350</b>

**Phase 2 Structural Treatment Prior to removal**

Travel Georgetown ME to Groton, MA	\$350.00
Consolidation and Facing of flaking paint	<u>\$2000.00</u>
Meals and lodging are not included 2 overnights possible	
This is a very rough figure subject to change on findings in Phase 1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2350.00</b>

81 Williams Rd  
Georgetown, ME 04548  
207 371 2427  
ninarothwells@me.com



**NINA A ROTH-WELLS LLC**  
*PAINTING CONSERVATION*

**Phase 3 Compensation for Loss/Cosmetic Treatment After Removal**

Travel Georgetown ME to Groton, MA	\$350.00
Compensation for Loss	\$5000.00
Varnishing	<u>\$500.00</u>
Meals and lodging are not included 4overnights possible	
This is a very rough figure subject to change on findings in Phase 1 &2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5850.00</b>

All treatment will be done in accordance with AIC Code Ethics using reversible and stable materials.

All estimates are subject to revision.

Nina Roth-Wells  
January 4,2018



81 Williams Rd  
Georgetown, ME 04548  
207 371 2427  
ninarothwells@me.com

*Carmichael Art Conservation*  
372 Concord Road  
Bedford MA, 01730



**EXAMINATION REPORT**

November 2017

*Murals*, by J.D. Poor

Inside wall "Water Scene": 114 ¼" x 57 ½", outside wall "Landscape with House": 62" x 57 ½"

**Condition:** The murals are executed on a plaster and lathe wall with a yellow ground. There is extensive cracking of the plaster throughout the larger "Water Scene" mural. There is a 1' x 1' area along the top on the right side where the plaster is failing and pulling away from the lathe. The paint is moderately thin with no impasto. It appears to be milk paint and is water-soluble. There is EXTENSIVE flaking throughout the "Landscape with House" and in scattered areas of the larger "Water Scene". There are numerous areas of overpaint throughout both murals, particularly in the "Landscape with House" mural, which also has numerous large areas of paint loss. The overpaint is more vibrant in these areas and is severely flaking. Numerous long stress cracks are visible throughout the surface of the larger mural. There is a big square nail in the center of the "Water Scene".

**Treatment: Stage 1, (prior to removal of wall):** Consolidate the flaking paint; surface clean; apply facing tissue to wall to prepare the mural for removal and transit.

**Stage 2, (after reinstallation of mural to new location):** Remove facing tissue; surface clean residual adhesive; fill losses and cracks; inpaint losses and readjust old discolored overpaint as necessary.

Estimated Cost of Treatment:

**1) Landscape with House:**

**Stage 1:** \$ 4,600.- \$ 5,800.

**Stage 2:** \$ 16,000.- \$ 17,500.

**2) Water Scene:**

**Stage 1:** \$ 2,400.- \$ 3,500.

**Stage 2:** \$ 12,400.- \$ 14,200.

**Note:** These prices are based on the condition viewed during the examination of the murals in November 2017.

Prices include all time and materials.



THE GROTON INN

Groton Historical Society  
172 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

January 11, 2018

RE: "The Tree Mural" and "The Water Mural," by Jonathan "J.D." Poor, painted circa 1835

Our Groton Inn Team has been privileged to be a part of the collaboration with the Groton Historical Society and Indian Hill Music, in our efforts to preserve these two J.D. Poor murals located in the Prescott House, 170 Ayer Road, Groton, MA.

These are our thoughts as we go forward with this preservation project:

1. Collaboration: This is a unique team effort of the Groton Historical Society, Indian Hill Music, and The Groton Inn. All three of us have come together in a unique time in history that is destined to save Groton's valuable artwork; "The Tree Mural" and "The Water Mural," by Jonathan "J.D." Poor, painted circa 1835.
2. Ownership: The murals will become the property of the Groton Historical Society, in perpetuity.
3. New Location: The relocation of the murals from the Prescott House to the new Groton Inn, 128 Main Street, Groton, will become the permanent home for the murals. Enclosed please find the floorplan showing the future mural locations. The Groton Inn, going forward, will provide a climate-controlled modern HVAC environment with fire protection.
4. Public Access: Our Team goal for The Groton Inn is to provide a vibrant public space in our Lobby and main Common Hallway. These spaces will feature the two murals, Delaney antique clocks, and artwork from local artists.
5. Innkeeper and History: The Migis Hotel Group has in-depth experience with the integration of boutique hospitality with communities. Their inclusive personal management style is focused on blending hotel activities with all of Groton. Migis originated in 1916, on the shores of Sebago Lake, Maine. J.D. Poor, the artist of the murals, was born in Sebago, Maine in 1807. Our Team believes this to be serendipitous!

We are energized to be part of this presentation effort.

The Groton Inn

George A. Robb

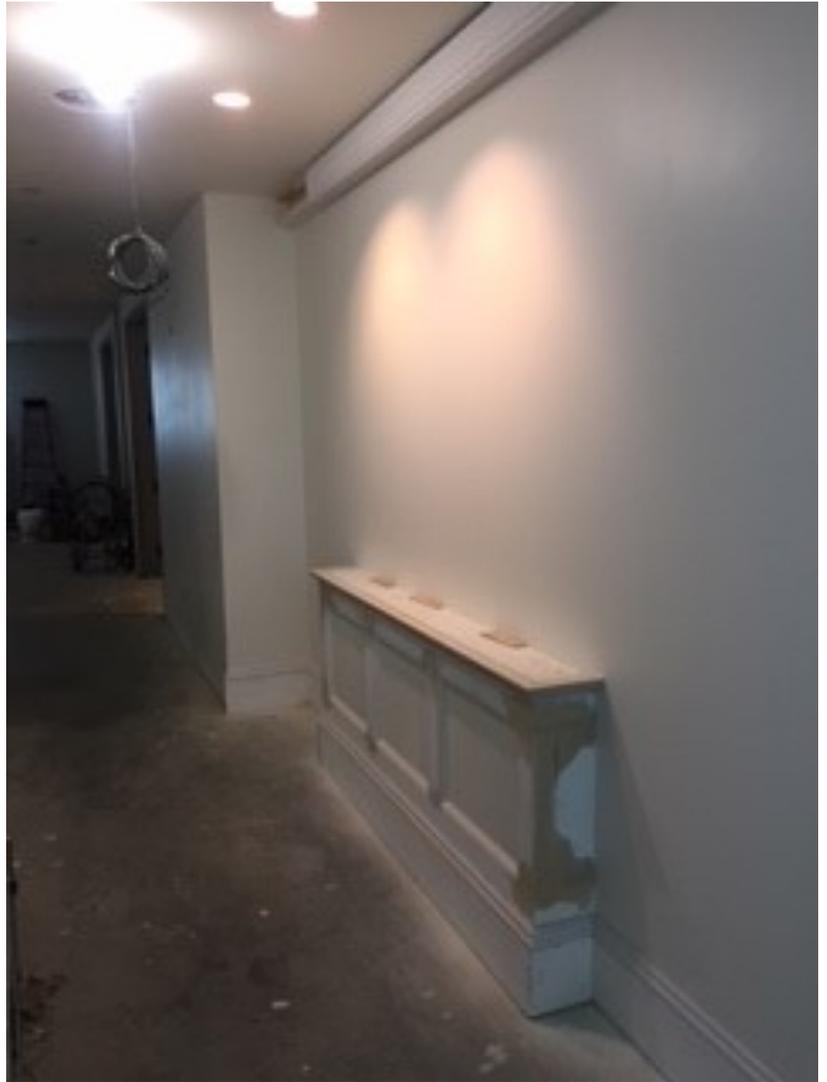
## Updated Summary Points from Groton Inn, March 2018

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1. The Groton Historical Society will be the owner of the Murals in perpetuity.
2. The Migis Hotel Group will be managing the Groton Inn 24/7 with an excellent track record of professional management.
3. The collaboration of Indian Hill Music, The Groton Inn, and the Groton Historical Society (GHS) will preserve the Murals in the center of the Groton community.
4. Management of The Groton Inn is committed to providing public display space in the lobby of the Inn and central common-area corridor in support of local and regional artisans. The Migis Hotel Group will manage the selection and display of the art. The two Murals and Delaney Clocks will be the centerpiece and foundation of this effort. The Migis Hotel Group has extensive experience supporting local artists in other Inns they own and manage.
5. The two Murals will be displayed and identified with plaques naming GHS as the owner and explaining the Murals are "on loan" for the benefit of and viewing by the local Groton community. The Groton Inn will collaborate with non-profit organizations such as the GHS, and other local businesses, to encourage the Inn guests to support these organizations/businesses.
6. Inland Underwriters insurance Agency Inc., will be the insurer for the Groton Inn. Both GHS and The Groton Inn will provide appropriate insurance for the Murals.
7. Restoration of the antique Murals will occur in The Groton Inn. Modern HVAC and 24/7 property management are ideal for the preservation process.
8. The Groton Inn investment to date is an estimated \$10,000.00. Enclosed are photos of the two (2) locations for the Murals. This investment includes:
  - a. Structural display walls built to hold the weight of the Murals, estimated at 600 to 1,000 lbs. each.
  - b. Five electrical fixtures specifically to light the Murals
  - c. Technical services, architecture, and structural engineering to design the structural walls and appropriate lighting.
  - d. Finish trim and wainscoting detail
  - e. Walnut tops
9. GHS to become integrated with the Rufus Porter Museum, Bridgeton, Maine. This museum celebrates the "Folk Art Murals" of the Rufus Porter School, New England Landscapes 1825-1845. The Groton Murals in the Oliver Prescott House were painted by J.D. Poor, nephew of Rufus Porter. The large Mural has the signature of J.D. Poor painted on the paddlewheel "housing of the steamboat". The smaller Mural features a Federal style house, enhanced by an elaborately defined doorway and ropes or chains connecting exterior fence posts.



# Mural Locations at Groton Inn, March 2018





# The Rufus Porter Museum

The Rufus Porter Museum celebrates the life and times of a remarkably creative American genius who worked throughout Maine, New England and beyond.

## Staff

Martha J. Cummings  
Museum Director-  
Curator

Board of Trustees  
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Barbara Yates

February 15, 2018

Bobbie Spiegelman  
Groton Historical Society  
172 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

Re: Support for J. D. Poor mural preservation

Dear Bobbie,

The Rufus Porter Museum supports of the efforts that the Groton Historical Society is taking to preserve the Jonathan D. Poor murals from the Prescott House in Groton. Though the ideal situation is to leave mural walls in situ, this is not always possible. In the case of the Prescott House, the opportunity to save the walls by removal and put them on public exhibit in the Groton Inn will have a positive impact for the future preservation of murals found in historic homes. It also gives the opportunity for patrons to see wonderful pieces of art.

Poor's murals are usual quite exceptional due to his direct apprenticeship with his uncle famed landscape muralist and founder of *Scientific American* magazine Rufus Porter (1792-1884). In Poor's work, one can see the influence of Porter's style and technique.

We wish the Groton Historical Society the best with its preservation efforts of these fine walls.

Sincerely,

Martha J. Cummings  
Museum Director - Curator



Friends of Prescott, Inc.  
Box 1213, Groton, MA 01450  
[grotonfop@gmail.com](mailto:grotonfop@gmail.com)

February 20, 2018

Bobbie Spiegelman,, President  
Groton History Center  
Groton MA 01450

Dear Bobbie,

Friends of Prescott, Inc. sends its support for your application for CPA funding for the preservation and installation of the Jonathan D. Poor murals from the Oliver Prescott House to the Groton Inn.

We applaud your efforts as stewards of these murals to locate them in a public place that will be accessible to all. These beautiful murals will become part of a vital historic downtown area that will include not only the Groton Inn, but the Groton History Center, the Town Hall and the Prescott School. These iconic buildings are the core of Groton's civic character. They deserve CPA funding.

The art that you seek to preserve will live on thanks to your efforts. Thank you so much for applying for a CPA grant. We support your work and your application.

Regards,

Mary Athey Jennings  
President, Friends of Prescott, Inc.



**TOWN OF GROTON**

173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

**Historical Commission**

Robert DeGroot, Chair  
Paul Keen  
Michael LaTerz  
Michael Danti  
George Wheatley  
Allen King

February 19, 2018

Al Collins  
Groton History Center  
172 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

Dear Al-

The Groton Historical Commission voted to approve this letter of support for the preservation of the JD Poor Murals currently located in the Oliver Prescott House on Old Ayer Road in Groton, MA.

During its meeting on 11 January, 2018, the Groton Historical Commission voted 4-0-1 in favor of writing this letter. The approved text reads as follows:

*Furthermore, the Groton Historical Commission approves the plan to preserve and protect the JD Poor murals currently located in the Oliver Prescott House on Old Ayer Road in Groton, MA. The murals will remain within the Town of Groton in a place of cultural significance under the stewardship of the Groton History Center. The Groton Historical Commission supports the preliminary plan for the relocation of these murals.*

Sincerely,

Bob DeGroot  
Chair  
Groton Historical Commission

From: **Emerle Family** emerle.family@gmail.com  
Subject: **Murals**  
Date: **January 30, 2018 at 12:18 PM**  
To: bspiegelman@grotonhistoricalsociety.org



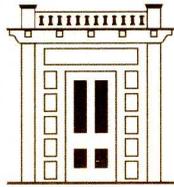
Bobbie,

I went to the Steve Kornacki lecture and thoroughly enjoyed it. As a communications major long ago at UCLA, I felt like I was back in class but with a very current, high profile professor. It was fantastic.

At that event, I learned that the Groton History Center is involved with the removal, preservation and display of the murals from Old Ayer Road. That warms my heart in that I remember Edie Tompkins being worried about those murals some time ago. Anyway, the announcement made me think of my neighbor, Sue Marion, here in Groton who is doing both the Rufus Porter style of murals as well as more contemporary ones such as Fenway Park. If you have any lectures or special events for the historic murals, it might be nice to tie in a current Groton mural artist. Her website is:  
<http://www.muralsnmore.net/Murals.html>

On another note, when I first moved to Groton in 2003, I was thinking that the Groton Historical Society seemed like a quiet, but important organization doing good work. Over the years, I wished that GHS would sponsor events that might engage adults and children a little more i.e. be out front and center. With the most recent lecture and other planned events, it seems like that it is coming true. No doubt it is through the hard work and vision of many people like yourself. Congratulations!

Michelle Emerle



GROTON HISTORY CENTER  
*Framing our story*

In addition to these attached letters of support, two other letters are already on file with the CPC:

1. Groton Historic Districts Commission
2. Groton Planning Board

**Groton History Center  
Jonathan D. Poor Mural Preservation  
Adherence to CPC Criteria**

**7.5.1 Basic Criteria**

- The Groton History Center submitted its two-page project summary and project application form to the CPC on time.
- The project is eligible for CPA funding according to the requirements in the CPA legislation.
- This is consistent with the 2011 Groton Master Plan.
  - 5.1.2: The Jonathan D. Poor murals are historically significant artifacts and need to be protected as a cultural and historic resource
  - 5.1.3: By making the murals available and accessible to the public we are educating the public on an important and unique New England art form. Furthermore, the murals will draw visitors to Groton to enjoy all the town has to offer.
- The project application includes a detailed Management Plan and budget. Additionally, Project Manager, Al Collins, and History Center President, Bobbie Spiegelman, will provide oversight to the vendors working to ensure the murals are properly protected and preserved during execution of the project. See budget in application form.
- The Groton History Center has pursued several other funding sources. Money has been raised through public support and private donors. The Groton History Center has successfully raised \$7,000 towards this project which will reduce our funding request to \$18,000. We have applied for a Bruce J. Anderson Grant to assist with final paint conservation costs once the murals have been moved and will continue to seek private funding.
- The Groton History Center has received endorsements from the Planning Board, Historic Districts Commission, Historic Commission, and additionally has received other letters of support.
- Indian Hill Music has gifted the murals to the Groton History Center, contingent upon successful fundraising. See letter from Indian Hill Music.

**7.5.2 Added Value Criteria**

- The Groton History Center has a history of managing successful projects at this level. CPC Project 2012-08 (Rehabilitation for Governor Boutwell House) was managed by Al Collins and successfully completed on time and on budget.
- The Jonathan D. Poor Mural Preservation Project serves multiple goals of the Groton Master Plan. While a relatively small project, this has historical and educational benefit. The murals are currently in the unoccupied Oliver Prescott House, and are therefore completely vulnerable to many potential threats of damage and destruction such as temperature fluctuation, water, fire and vandalism. By removing and stabilizing the murals, the Groton History Center is protecting them from further degradation and providing Groton citizens, now and into the future, the opportunity to enjoy a unique New England art form.
- By relocating these murals to a publicly accessible space, we are exposing the community to a little-known, but important art form unique to New England. This entire project will bring

awareness to the significance of the murals and the culture of itinerant artists in early America. These murals have always been in private hands with this project being a unique opportunity for the public to learn more about the artist and murals as they relate to the history of Groton.

- The majority of early American wall murals are located in private homes and not available for public viewing. This project provides Groton citizens and history enthusiasts the opportunity to view and enjoy these murals which were painted over 180 years ago circa 1835. As part of this preservation effort we will be providing interpretive materials so viewers will understand the historical context of this art form.
- These particular murals are unique to the Town of Groton and by preserving them within the town on public display, we are preserving an essential piece of the character of our community
- The primary mission of the Groton History Center is to house, preserve and share Groton's historical treasures. The value of this project to the town is: it's making a unique treasure that is now in private hands available for the public to enjoy. These murals will bring people to Groton who are interested in American History, American Folk Art, and the unique culture of 19<sup>th</sup> century New England.



**TOWN OF GROTON**  
173 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450  
978.448.1140

**Community Preservation Committee**  
Robert DeGroot, Chair  
Timothy Siok – Parks Comm.  
Carolyn Perkins - Planning Board  
Bruce Easom - Conservation Comm.  
Daniel Emerson - Housing Auth.  
Michael Roberts - at large  
Richard Hewitt - at large

March 2, 2018

Bobbie Spiegelman  
Groton History Center  
Po Box 202  
172 Main Street  
Groton, MA 01450

**Subject: 2019-04 JD POOR MURAL PRESERVATION**

Dear Ms. Spiegelman:

At the Community Preservation Committee Public Hearing held on Monday, February 12, 2018, the Committee offered the following feedback regarding the above mentioned proposed CPA project:

- Include a task to create an interpretive component for each of the murals.
- Describe who will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the paintings.
- Describe who the owner of the paintings will be, how this will be memorialized and how the public interest in having these privately-owned works of art will be protected over time.
- Include a definitive letter from the current owner of the historic work of art describing the intention of the owner. The letter should include the anticipated process dealing with the Historic Commission in the Town of Groton. The building and artwork should be described both together and as separate historic artifacts.
- Include a letter from the house owner re-iterating that the removal of the murals will not compromise the structural integrity of the building.
- Spell out the actions by the Groton Inn to facilitate the project.
- Financial and/or other contributions would improve the application.
- Additional letters of support, if any.
- The CPC prefers that applications be submitted in PDF format, however, it is not required.

Please remember that the deadline to submit final proposals is 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 15, 2018.

Warm Regards,

Robin G. Eibye  
Executive Assistant  
Groton Community Preservation Committee

cc: File

**Groton History Center  
Jonathan D. Poor Mural Preservation  
Responses to Feedback**

1: As stated in our application, the Groton Inn and the Groton History Center will be providing an interpretive panel describing the historical context of the murals in general and in Groton. We will include information specific to the historical significance of the house in which they resided. There will also be materials available about Rufus Porter, J.D. Poor, and their murals.

2: Once the murals are moved, the Groton History Center will work to ensure their continued preservation and stability. We have applied for a grant from the B.J. Anderson Foundation and will continue to seek private funding to further conserve and restore the murals after they are relocated.

3: As stated, the owner of the murals will be the Groton History Center. The murals will be displayed at the Groton Inn on a long-term loan. A plaque will be installed noting that the relocation and preservation of the murals has been funded by the Groton History Center, CPA money, and private donations. These murals will be on display in a publicly accessible location for all Groton citizens and visitors to enjoy.

4: The current owner of the murals, Indian Hill Music, is gifting the murals to the Groton History Center. The Groton Historic Commission endorses our plan to move and preserve the JD Poor murals. (see attached letter). No matter the future of the house, the murals must be moved in order to preserve them as they are not safe in an empty, unmaintained building.

5: Please read the attached letter from David Ottinger who has agreed to stabilize the walls which will preserve integrity of the building. This is in accordance with our agreement with Indian Hill Music.

6: The Groton Inn has estimated that they have invested \$10,000 into this project. This includes: structural walls for the murals, appropriate finish detail, and custom lighting. Please see file 'J. Groton Inn Materials' for more information.

7: We have collected \$7,000 through private donors. This amount is over 25% of the original request. We are, now, able to reduce our request to \$18,000.

8: See attached letters of support.