

The Preservation, Microfilming and Digitalization of Five Social Welfare Documents from the City of Portsmouth for years dated 1812-1868

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New Hampshire State Library
 New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources
 City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire
 FY2018-2019
 Conservation License Plate Grant Application
 John Boardman



Application Contents

• Project Narrative	1
• Combined Budget Sheet (All Five Documents)	13
• Non Binding Vendor Quote	14
• Letter of Ownership	21
• Supporting Documents	
• Payments to Military Dependents - Civil War (1861-1864)....	22
• Overseers of the Poor 1850-1868.....	29
• Overseers of the Poor 1856-1860.....	38
• Overseers of the Poor 1812-1836.....	46
• Day Book: Portsmouth AlmsHouse (Overseers of the Poor) 1831—1841	54
• Vendor Information	
• Vendor Lead Conservator and Facility Manager.....	64
• Vendor Information.....	65
• Vendor Key Differentiators.....	66
• Vendor Qualifications	67
• Vendor Scope of Work	106
• Letters of Support	
• Kelli Barnaby – Portsmouth City Clerk	110
• Becky Benvenuti – Revenue Administrator.....	111
• Steven Butzel – Library Director.....	112
• Abby Mills – Project Manager	113

Applicant: City of Portsmouth, NH

Project: The Preservation, Microfilming and Digitalization of Five Social Welfare Documents from the City of Portsmouth for years dated 1812-1868.

Project Manager: Abby Mills



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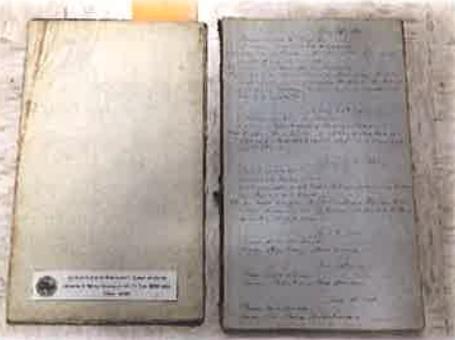
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Project: The Preservation, Microfilming and Digitization of Five Social Welfare Documents from the City of Portsmouth for years dated 1812-1868.

A. Grant Abstract

The historic City of Portsmouth, in an effort of preserving many of the City's historical and legally required documents, is requesting a grant of up to \$10,000 for the purposes of restoring five (5) specific historic documents retained by the City's Finance Department. This project will consist of cleaning, preserving and re-binding each individual document along with scanning these documents onto microfilm and to digital media (PDF and tiff) for preservation as well as improved accessibility by the public.



Due to the age of the books and years of storage in the City Hall Basement, the documents are quickly degrading. In Fiscal Year 2018 the City of Portsmouth completed construction on a new archival room in which to store its permanent records. Within this room is a quarantine facility in which contaminated documents such as these reside, until they are cleaned and free of both mold and pests. This archive room will serve as permanent quarters for these documents upon completion of the preservation work.

The City has placed a larger initiative on preserving documents of this historic and legal significance within its Capital Improvement Plan. Due to the volume of books and budget constraints, the current City timeline for these items is well over 20 years and will cost over 1 million dollars. It is our intention to utilize grant funds to hasten the timeline of some of the more damaged books within this project, to ensure preservation of our historic City's oldest treasures. We were blessed and grateful enough to have received \$9,966 from the New Hampshire State Library, New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources in the last fiscal cycle which have preserved and digitized seven (7) historic tax and shipping documents. With the fast approach of the 400th anniversary of our great City, in 2023, it is our intent to feature the City's history through these documents and promote the programs involved in their safeguarding.



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B. Historic Portsmouth



Settled in 1623, the City of Portsmouth was named in honor of the colony's founder, John Mason, who had been captain of the port of Portsmouth, England in the county of Hampshire. Portsmouth was not only New Hampshire's first settlement but is also the state's "second oldest city, first capital and only seaport"¹. The City has been present for many of America's most historic moments including Paul Revere's Portsmouth Alarm Ride, warning of an impending British invasion. The City historically featured

one of the nation's busiest ports and shipbuilding sites. The City's history is still apparent within its architecture and the well preserved Strawbery Banke Museum.

As many of our proposed documents were created/utilized during one of our Nation's darkest hours, the Civil War, it is important also, to highlight the City's involvement with the conflict. Of New Hampshire's contribution of 34,000 soldiers to the battle, 3,000 of those men hailed from Portsmouth² (Portsmouth itself only having a population of 10,000 in 1861). Of these men, 10% did not return, leaving mothers, widows, children and other dependents in their wake. The City erected the "Soldiers and Sailors Monument" in Goodwin Park in 1888 as a memorial its fallen Portsmouth soldiers. The City's well known Goodwin Mansion served as the residence of New Hampshire's Governor during the early years of the conflict. The City was also home to Fitz John Porter, a brigadier general in command of the Army of the Potomac's 5th Corps under General McClellan and General John Pope, whose likeness is portrayed mounted on his horse in the City's Haven Park, close to the Strawbery Banke Museum.



Today, Portsmouth is one of New Hampshire's thirteen (13) cities and is called the "hub of the New Hampshire Seacoast"³ as well as the "USA's Top Small Town."⁴ Portsmouth remains a working seaport as well as a vibrant livable City and sensational tourist destination. The City's history is one

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Portsmouth-New-Hampshire>

² "Remembering Civil War-era Portsmouth" by Larry Yerdon, Portsmouth Herald, Posted Feb 27, 2011
<http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20110227/NEWS/102270330>

³ <http://portsmouthhistory.org/about-portsmouth/>

⁴ <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/digital-nomad/new-hampshire/portsmouth-united-states-greatest-small-town/>



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of its most impressive and palpable attributes with its brick laid streets and well-preserved historic homes immersing visitors in New England's rich history, heritage and culture.

Portsmouth is a proud city and its elected officials and City Government constantly strive to improve upon current conditions for the residents and its annual guests. The City staff is acutely aware that in order to create an auspicious future for Portsmouth, we must preserve our past for its residents. The City features a Historic District (which is regulated by a Historic District Commission) and has committed funds to historic document and artifact preservation. The City, like most cities in New Hampshire, is grappling to balance this preservation effort with keeping the citizen's tax impact at a tolerable level. It is the hope that with these grant funds, we can act on preserving these historic manuscripts in a timelier manner.

In 2023, the City will be celebrating its 400th Anniversary and as part of that celebration it is our goal to highlight the importance of our restoration and preservation initiatives. We hope to emphasize the increased public access to these documents due to programs such as this as well as investments made by the citizens themselves through the City's 6-year Capital Plan.

C. Prior Year Funding/ Project Summary

Last year the City was grateful to be awarded a grant of \$9,966. With this funding Portsmouth was able to send seven (7) historic financial documents for preservation, rebinding and scanning (to both microfilm and digital media).

The books that were selected to preserve were:

- Final Tax List 1825
- Final Tax List 1826
- Final Tax List 1827
- Final Tax List 1828
- Shipping Log 1842-1860
- Shipping Log 1861-1871
- Record of Proceedings of the Overseers of the Poor (1877-1888)



This project has been completed and the city is in the process of filing out final paperwork to send into the proper grant authorities to prove completion.



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D. Proposed Project Summary

In Fiscal Year 2017 the City of Portsmouth's Finance Department began to inventory its damaged historic books in order to have them quoted for preservation. The project is an immense undertaking of nearly 500 documents and counting. The overall cost of the project is estimated to cost over 1 Million Dollars and will likely grow as the documents continue to age.

For the purposes of this grant, the City of Portsmouth is seeking the funds to preserve, rebind and scan five (5) of Portsmouth's Historic Social Welfare Financial Documents. This project will cost approximately \$9,535 and will cover the preservation, binding, scanning (to both microfilm and digital media) and shipping for all five (5) of these volumes.

The books being selected to preserve are:

- Payments to Military Dependents – Civil War (Overseers of the Poor) 1861-1864
- Overseers of the Poor 1812-1836
- Overseers of the Poor 1850-1868
- Overseers of the Poor 1856-1860
- Day Book: Portsmouth Alms House (Overseers of the Poor) 1839-1841

All documents that the City is seeking to restore were created, maintained, stored and owned by the City of Portsmouth. We have included, in this packet, a letter signed by the City Manager stating ownership of the aforementioned documents.

The documents, once preserved, will be stored on site within the City's new archival room and be made available through the manuscripts' digital scans (PDF and TIFF). The microfilm will be held off site for the long term security of these irreplaceable documents, although available upon request to the public at any time. It is a long range initiative of the City's Finance Department, working in conjunction with the City Clerk's office and the City's Public Library to make all preserved documents available to the public in a searchable database.





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E. Description of the Documents

The following five (5) documents all fall under the auspices of the Finance Department.

1. *Payments to Military Dependents – Civil War (Overseers of Poor) 1861-1864*

- **Title:** Payments to Military Dependents (Overseers of Poor) 1861-1864
- **Inclusive Dates:** January 1, 1861- December 31, 1864
- **Condition:** Fair – Some breakdown in integrity of the cover and a greater degree of breakdown in the strength of the binding. Aging of the paper as well as signs of water damage and mold are visible.
- **Content and Historical Significance:** This document reports on monies payed to military dependents (families of those who served in the Civil War Conflict). Throughout the Civil War, three-thousand Portsmouth men, nearly one-third of the City's Population in 1861, fought for our nation. Of these three-thousand men, 1 in 10 of them did not return, leaving mothers, widows, children and other dependents in their wake, and the burden to care for these dependents on the City. Information included in these documents are the names and ages of the primary dependent (wife or mother) as well as birth dates of children. Other items listed within these pages are the service person's regiment/group as well as years served. Payments to the dependents as well as some basic information on services/items provided are listed. This document is also protected under RSA 33:A as a financial and historical document for permanent retention.
- **Importance of the document to the cultural and historical heritage of the State of NH:** This document is significant to the City of Portsmouth as well as the nation. Given the importance of the Civil War on our nation's heritage and the reverence given to those who served during this conflict, this document serves as a stark reminder of the debt our nation owes those who have served. We are fortunate to have the ability to preserve these records for the service men of Portsmouth, NH who served during the Civil War. The monies allocated to family members were done so during times of need, when Cities like Portsmouth rise to the occasion. Portsmouth put forward nearly 8% of the 34,000 men who served from the state of New Hampshire, the largest contribution from any New Hampshire Community and thus any record of the conflict, its decedents and a record of their ultimate contribution, is significant to the state's memory of the Civil War. It's a great honor to our residents to have the ability to research family members and fellow Portsmouth residents who served and gave their lives for their country.





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2. *Overseers of Poor 1850-1868*

- **Title:** Overseers of Poor 1850-1868
- **Inclusive Dates:** May 13, 1850 – Jan 29, 1868
- **Condition:** Poor – Visible breakdown in integrity of the cover with failure imminent/in process with much of the binding. Mold and water damage are visible within the binding and throughout the book as well as signs of simple aging of the paper.
- **Content and Historical Significance:** This document includes notes, minutes and attendance information for the Overseers of the Poor for the City of Portsmouth for the dates May 13, 1850 until January 29, 1868. Other information included are names of persons to be paid, amount per need/supply, and supplies needed. This document is also protected under RSA 33:A as a financial and historical document for permanent retention.
- **Importance of the document to the cultural and historical heritage of the State of NH :** The Overseers of the Poor were tasked with administering aid to the poor of Portsmouth. The Committee members included the current Mayor, a Superintendent and a group of overseers. The care of all residents, despite their economic status, has always been a longstanding value for the City. These minutes show the City's assistance to the poor during 1850-1868, demonstrating the City's historic dedication of aid to those less fortunate. There has always been a prominence within the state of New Hampshire for caring for the residents of our state. These minutes are an exemplification of this caring spirit held by both our City and our State.



3. *Overseers of Poor 1856-1860*

- a. **Title:** Overseers of Poor 1856-1860
- b. **Inclusive Dates:** March 26, 1856 – December 17, 1860
- c. **Condition:** Fair/ Poor – Water damage, mold and breakdown in the integrity of the cover and moderate failure within the binding are easily visible. The book has water stains and other water damage throughout, including signs of mold. Aging of the paper and ink are also visible.
- d. **Content and Historical Significance:** This document includes notes, minutes and attendance information for the Overseers of the Poor for the City of Portsmouth for the dates March 26, 1856 until December 17, 1860. Other information included are names of persons to be paid, their address,





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amount per need/supply, and supplies needed. This document is also protected under RSA 33:A as a financial and historical document for permanent retention.

- e. Importance of the document to the cultural and historical heritage of the State of NH :
The Overseers of the Poor were tasked with administering aid to the poor of Portsmouth. The Committee members included the current Mayor, a Superintendent and a group of overseers. The care of all residence, despite their economic status, has always been a longstanding value for the City. These minutes show the City's assistance to the poor during 1856-1860, demonstrating the City's historic dedication of aid to those less fortunate. There has always been a prominence within the state of New Hampshire for caring for the residents of our state. These minutes are an exemplification of this caring spirit held by both our City and our State.

4. *Overseers of Poor 1812-1836*

- a. Title: Overseers of Poor 1812-1836
- b. Inclusive Dates: January 1, 1812 – December 31, 1836
- c. Condition: Fair/ Poor – Moderate to severe breakdown in the integrity of the cover and binding as well as some pages. Aging of the paper as well as signs of water damage and mold are visible.
- d. Content and Historical Significance: This document includes notes, minutes and attendance information for the Overseers of the Poor for the City of Portsmouth for the dates January 1, 1812 until December 31, 1836. Other information included are names of the persons to be paid, their address, amount per need/supply, and supplies needed. This document is also protected under RSA 33:A as a financial and historical document for permanent retention.
- e. Importance of the document to the cultural and historical heritage of the State of NH :
The Overseers of the Poor were tasked with administering aid to the poor of Portsmouth. The Committee members included the current Mayor, a Superintendent and a group of overseers. The care of all residence, despite their economic status, has always been a longstanding value for the City. These minutes show the City's assistance to the poor during 1812-1836, demonstrating the City's historic dedication of aid to those less fortunate. There has always been a prominence within the state of New Hampshire for caring for the residents of our state. These minutes are an exemplification of this caring spirit held by both our City and our State.





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5. Day Book: Portsmouth Alms House (Overseers of Poor) 1839-1841

- a. **Title:** Day Book: Portsmouth Alms House (Overseers of Poor) 1839-1841
- b. **Inclusive Dates:** January 1, 1839 – December 31, 1841
- c. **Condition:** Fair/ Poor – Breakdown in integrity of cover and binding. Aging of the paper as well as signs of water damage and mold are visible.
- d. **Content and Historical Significance:** An almshouse (otherwise known as a poorhouse) provided shelter to those unable to work or earn enough to afford their own housing/food. The almshouses also served as housing for free blacks who were unable to get out of poverty. Many almshouses started under a secular reign and were maintained by a trust until later adopted by local authorities. This document includes notes, minutes and attendance information for the Overseers of the Poor for the City of Portsmouth with regards to persons located within or utilizing services within the city almshouse for the dates January 1, 1839 until December 31, 1841. Other information included are names of persons to be paid, their address, amount per need/supply, and supplies needed. This document is also protected under RSA 33:A as a financial and historical document for permanent retention.
- e. **Importance of the document to the cultural and historical heritage of the State of NH**
The Overseers of the Poor were tasked with administering aid to the poor of Portsmouth. The Committee members included the current Mayor, a Superintendent and a group of overseers. The care of all residence, despite their economic status, has always been a longstanding value for the City. These minutes show the City's assistance to the poor during 1839-1841, demonstrating the City's historic dedication of aid to those less fortunate. There has always been a prominence within the state of New Hampshire for caring for the residents of our state. These minutes are an exemplification of this caring spirit held by both our City and our State.



F. Prior Care and Current Conditions of the Materials

Due to numerous years in an insufficient storage environment, the documents listed in this proposal are in an advanced state of degradation. Until recent years, these documents were held in a secure, but non-climate controlled room in the basement of City Hall which had subjected the documents to moisture, extreme heat and cold, humidity, dust and wildlife. Due to the exposure of these elements, the book covers are suffering from red rot while the interiors are beginning to show the

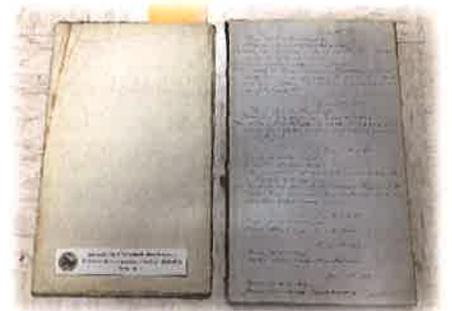


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damages associated with moisture infiltration including water staining, damaged ink/paper and mold within their pages. Many of the books are also losing integrity within the bindings, some covers and pages are beginning to separate. The manuscripts also show signs of fading of ink that need immediate restoration if the information is to be preserved.

In Fiscal Year 2017, the documents were removed from the basement storage facility and placed in a temporary, more environmentally controlled space until the City's archival room was completed. Funding was passed in Fiscal Year 2018's Capital Improvement Plan for the City's archive room which was completed in the fall of 2018. The historic document collection to which these items listed in this proposal belong, have since been placed in a quarantine archive room within the larger archival location until such time that they can be cleaned and afterward moved permanently into the City's archive. With the help of this grant, these documents can be preserved and moved into the archival space in FY2019.



The books we are looking to preserve are public documents that are required to be made available upon demand of any member of the public (per RSA 33:A and RSA 91:A). It is the City's opinion that these documents are no longer in a condition where we can provide these documents upon request. The documents contain mold which is a health concern for the public viewing the documents. The documents are also in a delicate condition and it is no longer feasible for a viewer to handle them without the assistance of a staff member. There are only a couple of staff members allowed to handle the documents, further limiting public access.

G. Future Care of the Materials

Portsmouth takes its distinguished history very seriously and has begun to invest in the preservation of its historical artifacts and documents. In order to accommodate the vast volume of historical manuscripts and artifacts the City retains, an archival room was built within City Hall in fiscal year 2018. The new archival space features a climate controlled room with a waterless fire suppression system, temperature control and monitoring, humidity monitoring, UV film on the windows and UV filtered lights, archival quality shelving and specialized storage for both microfilm and digital storage. This new archival space also features, within these controlled boundaries, a quarantine space for the City to store its documents contaminated with mold, red rot or pests, in





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order to protect the City's other permanent records. This new archival room works in conjunction with the City Clerk's Vault which currently houses many valued City manuscripts. This new facility will not only provide the environmental protection that these documents require but it is a more hospitable environment to review the preserved documents for the City Staff and interested citizens.

The City has placed the restoration of its historic documents within its Capital Improvement Plan under the auspices of the City Clerk and City Finance Department. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2018, through the City's Capital Improvement Plan the City plans to invest a minimum of \$50,000 annually for the next six fiscal years, towards the monumental task of cleaning and preserving, microfilming and digitizing our historic treasures. With the City's current budget constraints it will take well over 20 years to complete preserving and scanning the current city historic document inventory.



H. Digitization and Public Access

It is of the utmost importance that a portion of the funds for this project focus on the scanning of these historic documents. Scanning these items to multiple sources ensures their long term survival as well as their access to the public. Microfilm is a tried-and-true method of preserving documents for long-term security, but public accessibility to microfilm machines is limited. Making the documents available in digital format ensures their easy accessibility in today's technology. The PDF and TIFF documents will be stored on an external hard drive. All external hard drives will be kept off site in a secure location along with the City's other microfilmed documents and computer backups.

The documents cited for restoration belong to the citizens of Portsmouth and should be fully and easily accessible by the public. The majority of these documents are required to be kept permanently under RSA 33:A as permanent financial records. Due to their age, these documents also qualify as historical records and are required to be kept as City Public Records by RSA 33:A. Currently access is restricted to a by-request basis and handling is done by City Staff due to the delicate nature of the documents. Per RSA 91:A these documents are public records and are to be available to the public upon request within an expedient amount of time. By converting these documents to a digital format, the City has the capability to create a database that is accessible to the public for research (on site at City Hall or through our Public Library). Having these items in digital format also increases ease and decreases staff time required for right to know requests. The benefit to the citizens is immeasurable upon being granted new access to the wealth of knowledge



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about their City's rich and lengthy history. The City Staff within the City Clerk, Public Library and City Finance department are currently working on method plan to make these digital documents searchable and available to the public in the very near future.

I. Budget

The budget for this proposed project would be \$9,535.00. These books were reviewed and quoted for preservation and scanning by Kofile Technologies of Essex, Vermont. Kofile Technologies would be retained to complete the aforementioned work as proposed, and upon completion and return of the books, would expect full payment for services rendered. The budget breakdown would be as follows:

Record	Preservation Cost	Microfilm	Scan to CD (PDF)	Shipping	Total
Records: Payments to Military Dependents in the Civil War	\$650	\$110	\$100	\$20	\$880
Overseers of the Poor 1850-1868	\$1,750	\$235	\$190	\$20	\$2,195
Overseers of the Poor 1856-1860 (Overseers of the Poor 1850-1868 and 1856-1860 will be combined into 1 volume during the preservation process)					
Overseers of the Poor 1812-1836	\$2,900	\$520	\$390	\$40	\$3,850
Day Book: Portsmouth Alms House (Overseers of the Poor 1839-1841)	\$1,890	\$400	\$300	\$20	\$2,610

Total Preservation Costs: \$ 7,190.00

Total Microfilming Costs: \$ 1,265.00

Total Scanning to Digital Medium Costs: \$ 980.00

Total Shipping (\$20 per item): \$ 100.00

Restoration Total: \$9,535.00

The grant application guidelines requested multiple vendor quotes. I spoke with numerous institutions, but without a budget to apply to quotations, no additional institutions (other than Kofile) that I had contacted were able to follow up with the City at this time. The City's Capital Improvement Plan allots monies to the preservation of other City books, which may also allow for



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further institutions to review and quote the documents for subsequent fiscal year grand submissions. The City Clerk has employed the services of Kofile Technologies for prior document restoration projects and the City has been pleased with the quality of work they performed on very delicate texts. We have included the requested information on Kofile's qualifications and processes within the "Supporting Documents" section of this application.

Thank you for your time and attention to our application for this grant. Please let us know if there are any further questions regarding this project and application.

Respectfully yours,

Abby Mills, Project Manager