

Town of Stoddard, Stoddard Town Records Preservation and Digitization

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE LIBRARY  
CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

FY2010/2011 MOOSE LICENSE PLATE PROGRAM  
APPLICATION COVER SHEET

**Deadline for submission: March 31, 2010**

Project Title for this Grant Stoddard Town Records Preservation and Digitization

Total Grant Amount Requested \$ 8,505. (up to \$10,000)

Grant Abstract (100 words or less)

**The Town of Stoddard is applying for \$ 8,505 for the preservation and digitization of town-owned records and vital statistics dating from 1761 to 1960. The project involves processing and conserving these records, and providing archival storage containers for them. The project will also allow for the digitization of these records and their placement on the Town of Stoddard's recently created website where they may be easily accessed. The goal of the project is to preserve and to make available, for historical and genealogical research, records that until now have not been accessible due to their fragile nature.**

Applicant Information: Town of Stoddard  
(Legal Name of Applicant's Organization)

1450 Route 123N Cheshire  
(Mailing Address) (County)

Stoddard NH 03464  
(City / Town) (State) (Zip Code)

Project Director's Information Richard L. Betz Member, Stoddard Archives Committee  
(Name - TYPED) (Title)

603-446-7181 betz@betzmaps.com  
(Phone) (E-mail Address)

28 Anderson Road Stoddard, NH 03464  
(Mailing Address) (City / State) (Zip Code)

Name of Person who Completed this Application: Richard L. Betz  
(Name - TYPED) (Title)

Signature of Preparer of Application: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Name of Authorizing Official of Organization: John Halter Chairman, Stoddard Board of Selectmen  
(Name - TYPED) (Title)

Signature of Authorizing Official: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) (Date)

Has your organization or institution previously received funding from the New Hampshire State Library Conservation Grant Program? Yes  No

If YES - Year of Grant Award \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of Grant Award \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Grant \_\_\_\_\_

## **NARRATIVE**

- 1. Write a grant abstract (in 100 words or less, write a concise description of the grant activities that includes the cost, the need, and the outcome).**
- 2. Summarize the proposed project. (*Use no more than two “typed” pages.*)**
  - Succinctly state the grant support you are seeking and the activities you will undertake**
  - What is the content of the materials to be preserved?**
  - Describe the historic and cultural significance of the materials to the state of New Hampshire**
  - State the provenance of the materials**
  - If the applicant does not own the material(s), attach a letter explaining the relationship between the applicant and the public entity that owns the material(s)**

The Town of Stoddard is applying for funds to assist with the preservation and digitization of town-owned records and vital statistics dating from 1761 to 1960. The project involves the processing and conserving of these records, and their placement within archival storage books or containers. The project will also allow for the digitization of these records and their placement on the Town of Stoddard's recently created website ([www.stoddardnh.org](http://www.stoddardnh.org)) where they may be easily accessed by interested persons. The goal of the project is to preserve and to make available, for historical and genealogical research, records that until now have not been accessible by anyone due to their fragile nature. Grant funding in the amount of \$8,505 is being requested for this project.

The Town of Stoddard, and its newly formed Archives Committee, is working together with the Stoddard Historical Society to preserve these important materials and make them readily accessible. The Town Archives Committee is comprised of the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Treasurer, and appointed members in accordance with N.H. Municipal Records Board and governed by N.H. RSA 33-A.

A Keene State College history student intern is also being sought for the Fall 2010 semester and possibly the Spring 2011 semester. She/He will work with the Town of Stoddard and the Historical Society in this effort. Volunteers from the Stoddard Historical Society and the Town of Stoddard's Archives Committee will work under the direction of Richard Betz, a member of the Archives Committee and a Director of the Historical Society, and Alan Rumrill, also a member of the Archives Committee and the current Executive Director of the Historical Society of Cheshire County. Work has already commenced to identify where town records from this period may exist in town offices and private homes. Most of the records of importance are in the Town Clerk's Office, though important records in other locations may be identified. It is estimated that another nine to twelve months will be needed to complete the project outlined in this proposal.

The town records and vital statistics include summaries and decisions of annual town meetings dating from its incorporation in November 1774, decisions and issues arising from the implementation of town business, information on land and property holdings, land disputes, remediation of unpaid bills, and records of births, marriages, and deaths from 1761.

## Town of Stoddard, Stoddard Town Records Preservation and Digitization

In total, these records are a valuable time capsule showing what life was like in a small New Hampshire town. The records provide an in-depth view into the development and growth of a small New Hampshire town from its founding through its evolution as an agrarian-based community to a small manufacturing town, to its present day commuter-based community. Stoddard is an ideal example of the growth, decline and revival of a New Hampshire hill town. The town records offer a complete illustration of an agricultural community that reached its peak of population in the 1820s, relied on industry to survive the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and declining dramatically into the 1930s, only to be revived by the automobile as a bedroom community and tourist destination. The records demonstrate for scholars and historians how the townspeople dealt with these challenges.

Especially noteworthy are the details of each annual town meeting and all vital statistics. Some of the more interesting documents that have been found include:

- Documents related to the record of the first town meeting of November 1774.
- The detailed records of the locations and placement of the earliest roads in Stoddard from 1772.

Over the next six months the volunteers will continue to process, organize, and place these records in archival storage containers. Important fragile documents, especially Volumes 6 and 7 of the Town Records, that need special conservation treatment and preservation will be sent to preservation specialists (please see the quotation and a statement of qualification from Brown's River Records Preservation Services in Essex, Vermont attesting that they use accepted practices of the professional preservation community.). Based on an examination of the town records by a preservation specialist, it is anticipated that professional preservation will involve about 15-20% of the total records; that is material related to Stoddard Road Layouts starting from c.1772, and volumes 6 and 7 of the Town Records of 1916-1941 and 1941-1960 respectively.

A significant portion of the town records was microfilmed by the Church of the Latter Day Saints in 1976 and then in 2000, and by Brown's River Records Preservation Services in the 1980s. A total of four microfilm rolls exist in the town clerk's office of vital records from 1761-1937, and of miscellaneous town records from 1825-1910. The preservation specialists will convert these four microfilmed rolls into digital files in pdf format. The remaining paper records from this period will also need to be microfilmed and scanned to create digital files.

As digital images of the town records from 1761 to 1960 are scanned into a pdf format, the Keene State College intern will create an indexable and searchable "finding aid", using Adobe Acrobat software and its "book marks" capability, which will be linked to the digital image files. A paper copy of a "finding aid" also will be created with the assistance of the intern. The digital records will be placed on the Town's website along with the detailed computerized "finding aid" so that researchers and interested persons can more easily locate specific material. This is further described in Narrative #5. It is anticipated that this final step in the project will be completed by May 2011. All grant funds will be spent or encumbered by May 1, 2011, all encumbered funds will be spent by June 15, 2011, and a final report will be sent to the N.H. State Library by June 30, 2011.

**3. Describe the current condition of the materials and explain the imminent threat.  
(Use no more than one “typed” page)**

- **Clearly state the nature, the extent and the level of severity to the threat, danger or damage to the materials**
- **Explain why there needs to be access to the materials, and why your targeted audience cannot use the materials**

Stoddard does not and never has had suitable, centralized storage space for its town records and vital statistics. Many of the town’s records were stored in the homes of the various town clerks since Stoddard’s incorporation in 1774. This continues today with the present town clerk, who currently has her office and town records in her home. Some town records are scattered within the private homes of other town officials in Stoddard. Other records are at the Town Hall and the Town Library. Because of the various moves of these records in to and out of private homes, and the fact that the records were routinely stored in basements, attics, and elsewhere, the records were exposed to a variety of unsuitable conditions.

When the present Town Clerk assumed her position some twenty years ago, town records had been stored and were given to her in laundry baskets. While the present Town Clerk has done a commendable job in the safe-guarding of records under her control, many records remain in a fragile condition. The location and condition of other records in town is only now being determined. Many of the records are remarkably well preserved, while others suffer from over-exposure to humidity, dampness, and acidity.

The Board of Selectmen of Stoddard is currently seeking voter approval at this May’s Annual Town Meeting for a bond to finance centralized office space and records storage for all town officials. A town-owned building, recently added to the N.H. Register of Historic Places and next to the town hall, has been identified for this purpose.

There is currently no access to the town’s important historical records. As indicated above, these materials are extremely important to Stoddard, Cheshire County, and New Hampshire history. The complete nature of these records makes them a unique New Hampshire resource. They are important research materials for those studying individuals, a typical new Hampshire town’s social, economic and political issues and events, and the interactions of these individuals and the town with other towns and with the State of New Hampshire. This extensive body of public records is an extremely valuable resource that should be made available for public use. The barriers to access have been the lack of organization of the records, the fragile nature of some of the material, and the limited access that current storage of much of the material in the Town Clerk’s home provides.

**4. Explain how this project addresses the threat to the materials and how the project will result in increased public access to the materials. (Use no more than one typed page)**

- **Describe the proposed conservation work, key personnel involved, and their qualifications**
- **How will the proposed project significantly reduce or eliminate the threat?**
- **Explain how your organization will ensure continued maintenance of the materials**
- **What is the public benefit to this project?**

This project will result in the conservation and public dissemination of Stoddard's historic town records.

The documents will be processed, organized chronologically and topically, and placed in archival storage containers by a team of volunteers drawn from the Archives Committee and the Historical Society, along with the proposed Keene State College intern. Documents requiring professional treatment will be conserved by a preservation services company. A "finding aid" of all the historic records will be created by the intern. This finding aid will be placed on the town website along with digital files of all the historic records.

The team of volunteers will work under the direct supervision of Richard L. Betz, with consultative support from Alan Rumrill. Dr. Betz has an undergraduate degree in political science and history from the University of New Hampshire, and a doctorate in economic development from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, 1983. He is currently co-owner of Hemispheres Antique Maps & Prints in Stoddard, a company dealing in rare maps and books. He has had training in paper conservation from the Library of Congress and in The Netherlands. Mr. Rumrill has an MLS degree from the University of Rhode Island, 1982. He is the current Executive Director of the Cheshire County Historical Society and, as a resident of Stoddard, is Vice President of the Stoddard Historical Society. Both Dr. Betz and Mr. Rumrill have experience managing and accounting for federal and state grants.

The project will completely eliminate the danger of damage to the records due to improper storage and damaging environmental conditions. The identification, proper archival preservation and storage, and their eventual transfer to central town offices will further reduce the threat of damage due to environmental conditions. The transfer of all town records to a central location will also ensure the continued maintenance of the collection under town supervision.

There is currently no public access to the records. The completion of this project will result in increased public access in two ways. The placement of all records on the town website will ensure that Stoddard residents and the wider public in Cheshire County and elsewhere in New Hampshire will have access to the records at any time. Publicly accessible records via the internet will further reduce the wear and tear that regular handling of the original records might cause. Further, the organization and transfer of the properly processed and conserved records to the central town offices will result in public access when these offices are open.

**5. If materials are to be digitized, describe the digitization process and explain how you will provide public access to digital content. (Use no more than one "typed" page)**

- **Describe the method to be used to digitize materials**
- **How will digital files be stored and what steps will be taken to maintain the files in the long-term?**
- **How will you provide public access to the digital files created in this project?**

In 1976 and again in 2000, the Church of Later Day Saints microfilmed a large portion of the vital statistics of 1761 to 1937. Other town records from 1825 to 1910 were microfilmed by Brown's River Records Preservation Services. The four rolls of existing microfilm will be scanned and converted into digital files by a professional records preservation service. Other town records that were not previously microfilmed (that is, five bound town records books from 1774 to 1916) will be scanned by this same professional preservation service. Town records book #6, of 1916 to 1941, book #7, of 1941 to 1960, will first be professionally preserved and then microfilmed and digitally scanned and placed on CD disks.

As digital images of the town records from 1761 to 1960 are scanned into a pdf format, the Keene State College intern will create an indexable and searchable "finding aid", using Adobe Acrobat software and its "book marks" capability, which will be linked to the digital image files. For example, if an interested person wishes to find information on the first annual town meeting conducted in Stoddard, she/he will type "annual town meeting 1774" into the searchable files which can be accessed on the town website via Adobe Reader. She/he will be 'taken' to Adobe book marks that headline the relevant section of the scanned digital files where this information exists.

Copies of all the CD digital disks, along with the detailed finding aid, will be placed in the safe at the Town Clerk's office and in the safe at the Selectmen's office. Once the town offices are centralized, access to the disks will be made available in the archives room of the town offices. A copy of the disks, along with a detailed finding aid, will also be stored at the Historical Society of Cheshire County and can be used for research purposes there. Copies of the microfilm, the CD disks, and the finding aid will also be made available to the N.H. State Library and the N.H. State Archives.

Digital files of the town records will be placed on the Town's website, along with detailed finding aids. These files will be accessible via Adobe Reader software. Dr. Betz is the volunteer webmaster and has experience maintaining the town's web site. The placement of the town records on the town website will ensure broad access to these records via the internet at any time.

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CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION BUDGET SHEET

Applicant **Town of Stoddard**

Grant Title **Stoddard Town Records Preservation and Digitization**

Using the budget sheet provided

- Include proposed costs to be funded with grant monies
- Round costs to the nearest whole dollar
- Submit no more than two "typed" pages as a written justification for **each** budget category of your project

<b>BUDGET CATEGORY</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b> <i>(in dollars only)</i>
Conservation Treatment(s)	<i>Attach a non-binding price quote for the work to be performed that outlines the condition of the materials and the recommended treatment</i>	\$ 3,915.
Microfilm	<i>Attach a non-binding quote for microfilming. Amount must include duplicate rolls for the New Hampshire State Library and the New Hampshire State Archives for town records projects</i>	\$ 3,360.
Consultant Fees	<i>Attach a resume and a fee schedule for services to be used</i>	\$ 0
Consultant Travel	<i>*The mileage allowance for travel is \$0.585 Federal Government per diem rates (<a href="http://www.gsa.gov">www.gsa.gov</a>)</i>	\$ 0
Personnel	<i>This category includes any costs for processing materials and/or creating find aids</i>	\$ 0
Archival Supplies	<i>In the attachment, briefly justify the quantity of archival supplies. Do not submit advertisements, catalog pages and/or vendor sheets</i>	\$ 30.
Digitization	<i>List costs of creating, storing and providing access to digital files</i>	\$ 1,200.
Other	<i>Please explain (e.g., postage)</i>	\$ 0
	<b>TOTAL AMOUNT OF GRANT REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$ 8,505.</b>

**Budget Justification Narrative**

**Conservation Treatment(s).** Attach a non-binding price quote for the work to be performed that outlines the condition of the materials and the recommended treatment

The following material to undergo full conservation as outlined in the attached price quotation and scope of work.

Title	Conservation
Road Layouts c.1772	\$400.00
Town Records Vol. 6, 1916-1941	\$1252.00
Town Records Vol. 7, 1941-1960	\$ 2263.00 Mylar, 2 vols.

**Microfilm.** Attach a non-binding quote for microfilming. Amount must include duplicate rolls for the New Hampshire State Library and the New Hampshire State Archives for town records projects.

The following material to undergo microfilming as outlined in the attached price quotation and scope of work.

Title	Film (inc. 2 dups.)
Road Layouts c. 1772	\$150.00
Town Records Vol. 6, 1916-1941	\$330.00
Town Records Vol. 7, 1941-1960	\$ 380.00

Task: Film and scan 5 volumes of Town Records 1774-1916

Cost: \$500.00 ea., \$2500.00 total

Comment: Cost includes original roll of film, 2 duplicate rolls and 1 CD-PDF

**Archival Supplies.** In the attachment, briefly justify the quantity of archival supplies. Do not submit advertisements, catalog pages and/or vendor sheets

Adjustable Rare Book Storage Boxes for the Town Record Books: The Town of Stoddard has 7 bound volumes of Town Records, with the 7<sup>th</sup> volume in two parts. The Town wishes these to be secured within conservation quality, acid-free, 20 point thick boxes. Maximum size of 12" x 26" at \$14.69 per package of 5. 2 packages equals \$29.38.

Town of Stoddard, Stoddard Town Records Preservation and Digitization

**Digitization.** List costs of creating, storing and providing access to digital files.

Title	CD-PDF
Road Layouts c. 1772	\$50.00
Town Records Vol. 6, 1916-1941	\$150.00
Town Records Vol. 7, 1941-1960	\$200.00

Convert 4 rolls of existing microfilm to PDF  
cost: \$200.00 ea., \$800.00 total

Comment: 1 roll from L.D.S. done in 1976 is of unknown quality - after examination it may be determined that conversion is not advisable.

**TOWN OF STODDARD LETTERHEAD**

March 29, 2010

Conservation Grant Program  
New Hampshire State Library  
20 Park Street  
Concord, N.H. 03301-6314

To Whom It May Concern:

The Town of Stoddard is pleased to submit a Conservation Grant application to seek support for the preservation and digitization of the Town of Stoddard's records from 1761 to 1960 as outlined in this proposal.

We wish to attest that the records to be preserved within the Town Clerk's Office are and always have been publically owned by the Town of Stoddard. Other town records that might be identified in various locations within Stoddard are also publically owned as they were created by public officials in the course of their official duties. These town records outside the Town Clerk's office will only be preserved if it is first agreed that the records are owned by the Town of Stoddard.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to help save an important segment of New Hampshire's documentary heritage.

Sincerely yours,

John Halter  
Chairman  
Board of Selectmen  
Stoddard

Attachments:

Application cover sheet.  
Grant Narrative.  
Application budget sheet.  
Budget justification narrative.  
Budget documentation: non-binding price quote, brief history of the firm, and their scope of work.  
Labeled set of three 4x6" photos.