

CURTAINS WITHOUT BORDERS

Preserving Historic Painted Scenery

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SURVEY AND TREATMENT PROPOSAL

Site: Former Grange Hall, New Hampton, NH

Location: Dana Hill Road, New Hampton, NH

Contact Person: Barbara Lucas, Town of New Hampton

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Date of Survey: June 13, 2002

Surveyors: Chris Hadsel

Date of Conservation: May 27, 2014

Description of Curtain: Grand Drape Advertising Curtain



Artist: Arthur. S. Ives, North Woodstock, NH (signed)



Overall Dimensions: 9' 1" H x 15' 9" W (roller is approximately 18'L)

Date of Manufacture: c. 1933 **Place of Manufacture:** North Woodstock, NH

Inscriptions: series of local advertisements

Iconography: view of local covered bridge, "Smith Bridge"

Location: removed from the grange and wrapped for storage. Now at the town offices.

Use of Building: former Grange Hall, now owned by the church next door and used for youth programs, rummage sales, etc. The lack of supervision and general level of dirt and clutter were the main reasons for removing the curtain, which has now been given to the historical society.

Present Use and Condition of Stage: n/a

Overall Condition of Curtain: fragile, due to tears and powdery paint due to water damage.

Primary Support (Fabric):

Number of Panels: three 38", 38", 33" Fiber: cotton muslin Use of Adhesives: no

Previous Repairs: attempts were made to patch some of the holes, but these have generally fallen off. No stitching

Overall Condition of Fabric: several large tears, one about 3 ft long at bottom right edge.

Other 3-corner tears, none of which involve fabric loss.

Fabric Condition Notes:

Top Edge: 2-inch unpainted top margin. Small tears from tack and nail holes and at upper corners.

Side Edges: raw, some stretching and fraying

Bottom Edge: 6-inch unpainted tacking margin with numerous small rips and tears. Large tear at lower right corner.



Stains: yes, central water stains the height of the curtain

Secondary Support (Framework):

Roller: the small, original roller was retained. It is straight and sound and can be padded and reused.

Top Support: the single, replacement top board was discarded. No top support remains. Method of attachment to roller and top support: tacks and nails that have been removed.

Pulleys and Ropes: gone

Overall Condition of Secondary Support: The entire support system needs to be rebuilt, using the original roller.

Paint Layer

Medium: water soluble distemper

Mechanical Damage: yes Abrasion: yes, especially along the edges

Insecure Paint: YES. Much of the painting has been affected by water damage and dampness. The paint is overall very powdery.

Paint Loss: yes, from water and physical damage

Accretions: no Heat Damage: no

Water Damage: yes, primarily in central area

Retouching: no Previous Repairs: no

Ground Layer: yes

Underdrawing Observed: not observed, but will probably emerge with cleaning

Varnish Layer: no

Overall Condition of Media: fair. This curtain needs to be sprayed with a consolidant to help secure the paint layer.

Pre-Treatment Photos

Overall front	Lower left corner	Lower right corner	
Upper right corner	Upper left corner	Central motif	Signature
Water damage and large tears			

Pre-Treatment Solvent Testing not performed at this time

Installation Notes (concerns and need for materials):

Top Sandwich removal/installation concerns: a new top wooden sandwich needs to be constructed

Bottom Roller reuse/replacement/concerns: the existing, small wooden roller can be reused. It needs to be padded.

Ropes and Pulleys reuse/replacement/concerns: there are no pulleys, ropes, cleat

Environmental Concerns:

Building/Room is heated: the room where this curtain will be installed is heated. It is actively used year-round as a community meeting room.

Treatment Proposal: Due to the friable nature of the paint layer, vacuuming the front will have to be very gentle. Sponging will probably be impossible.

Repair rips and tears throughout, with appropriate support materials. There are numerous small rips and holes and one long rip, approximately 30”.

Stabilize raw edges at top, bottom and side edges as needed, to prevent vertical or horizontal rips.

Remove adhesive residues and glue as necessary. No glue was observed, but there may be some residue from old attempts to patch holes.

Spray the entire curtain with a solution of B72 in Acetone to help consolidate the paint layer. Two or more applications may be necessary in certain areas.

Prepare top wooden support with muslin/BEVA strips for ease of reinstallation and emergency removal. Prepare existing bottom roller with padded for installation or ease of storage. Curtain will be attached to the bottom roller with BEVA/muslin strip.

Provide pulleys, ropes and a cleat.

Selectively tone mended areas and disfiguring stains using appropriate paints. This will take a full day.

Assist local volunteers with the installation of the curtain or wrap it in Tyvek until the new site is ready.

Treatment Report: MJ Davis, Project Conservator

1. The curtain was removed from its temporary storage wrapping and placed on the prepared work surface. The curtain was gently unrolled and scrolled out carefully as not to disturb the fragile paint layer. During the unrolling process, the verso of the curtain was gently vacuumed using a HEPA vacuum set on low suction. This reduced the loose dirt on the verso. The front of the curtain was not brushed or touched due to the friable nature of the media.
2. During step 1, small and large tears were mended on the verso using 100% cotton muslin patches adhered with BEVA 371 (Bi-ethylene vinyl acetate TALAS) film using a tacking iron set to 140 F.



3. The raw edge at the top was stabilized using 2" wide muslin strip adhered with BEVA in a similar manner as in step 2. The bottom edge had 2 ½" of BEVA film applied with a 20" wide new muslin tail attached to help with attachment to the old, original roller. The left and right margins were both quite ragged and they were turned under at the design margin and secured with BEVA on the verso.
4. The recto of the curtain was sprayed overall with a solution of B72 (ethyl methacrylate copolymer TALAS) in Acetone to help consolidate the friable paint layer. Two or more applications were necessary in certain areas. The curtain was sprayed at the end of day two and left out overnight on the work tables to off-gas.
5. The top wooden support boards were attached to the curtain top margin with staples and secured together with wood screws. The new muslin curtain tail was stapled to the original wooden roller.
6. New ropes were attached to the original wooden roller by drilling a hole in the bottom roller near the edge of the curtain. The new rope was fed through the holes and secured with a knot. New double and single pulleys were attached to the top boards with the appropriate hardware.
7. The curtain was hung at the back of the stage using large eye screws placed in the stage ceiling. Lengths of chain and carabineers attached to hooks on the top boards which corresponded to the placement of the large screw eyes in the ceiling secured the curtain in place.
8. The disfiguring water stains and areas of paint loss were inpainted using acrylic paints (Flasche matte acrylic paints) applied locally with a small brush. The top central water stain will be inpainted by Wylie Garcia in the near future.

