

Washington Hall on the National Historic
Registry
Community Preservation Act 2024

Submitted to Groveland Community Preservation Committee

December 30, 2023



The Groveland Historical Society

P.O. Box 178
Groveland, MA 01834

December 29, 2023

CPA Committee
Town of Groveland
183 Main Street
Groveland, MA 01834

Dear Committee Members,

The Groveland Historical Society is submitting this request for your support and approval for funding in order to place Washington Hall on the National Register.

Washington Hall was evaluated in 2017 by Stacy Spies who was hired using a matching grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the Groveland CPA. Included with this application is the complete five page evaluation with a recommendation for Washington Hall placement on the National Register.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this very important project.

Yours truly,

Claire Walsh, President
Groveland Historical Society
978-376-6779

Community Preservation Proposal

A. Applicant Information

Name of Applicant: Groveland Historical Society

Name of Co-Applicant, if applicable: n/a

Contact Name: Claire Walsh

Mailing Address: PO Box 178

City: Groveland

State: MA

Zip Code: 01834

Daytime Phone: 978-376-6779

Email Address: clairew401@aol.com

B. Location of Project

Name of Project: Washington Hall on the National Historic Registry

Address of Project (or assessor's parcel id): 101 Washington St, Groveland, MA

C. Funding Information

CPA Category: (Include all that apply):

Open space

Historic preservation X

Recreation

Community housing

D. Project Cost

CPA Funding Requested: \$ 6,000 + \$ 600 10% Contingency = \$ 6,600.

Total Cost of Proposed Project \$ 6,600.

E. Project Information

1. Description

- a. Give a description of the project in a brief narrative (50 words or less.) *See attached cover letter and a five-page Historical Commission Survey done by Stacy Spies in 2017*

2. Goals

- a. What are the goals of the proposed project? *Placing Washington Hall on the National Register of Historic Places*
- b. Who will benefit and why? *The Town of Groveland, The Groveland Historical Society and the citizens of Groveland The National Register will provide documentation of Washington Hall's historical significance. It also can help to encourage preservation of other historic sites in Groveland*

Community Need

- c. Why is this project needed? *To support & maintain Washington Hall.*
- d. How does it address needs identified in existing Town plans? *The GHS will continue to preserve the history of Groveland, Massachusetts in a building that was the first or one of the first Community Centers in the United States. Washington Hall was built by the original Groveland Mills owner E.J.M. Hale for his mill workers who immigrated from England & Ireland in the mid 1800's. Washington Hall contained a library, including children's books with a reading room on the 1st floor. There was a meeting hall on the second floor with a stage. Mr. Hale financially supported Washington Hall for his workers until his death in 1881. Mr. Hale expanded and converted his mills into woolen mills over 70 years and became one of the largest & oldest manufacturers of flannels & woolens in New England. The Groveland Mills manufactured interior liners & upholstery for early modeled Ford cars. A great deal of machinery from The Groveland Mills was sent to the Ford Museum in Michigan after the Mills closed. We have constantly collected & displayed historical artifacts at Washington Hall for visitors to see and enjoy since opening and re-dedicating the building to the public in 2015.*

3. Community Support

- a. What is the nature and level of support and/or opposition for this project? *We have not heard any opposition to this project.*
- b. Include letters of support: *Three letters of support are included with this application*

4. Timeline

- a. What is the schedule for project implementation? *2024*
- b. Include a timeline for all critical milestones. *We plan to have Washington Hall placed on the National Register by the end of 2024.*

5. Implementation

- a. Who will be responsible for implementing the project? *Groveland Historical Society*
- b. Who will be the project manager? *Claire Walsh, President Groveland Historical Society*
- c. What relevant experience does the project manager have? *A Twenty-five year involvement in the Groveland Historical Society and project manager for the restoration of Washington Hall 2006-2015.*

6. Success Factors

- a. How will the success of this project be measured? **It will be measured by the successful listing of Washington Hall to the National Register in 2024.**

7. Budget

- a. What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? **\$6,000.00**
- b. All items of expenditure must be clearly identified.: **This project will be done by a surveyor appointed by the StatesHistoric Preservation Office**
- c. Distinguish between hard and soft costs and contingencies. (NOTE: CPA funds may NOT be used for maintenance.): **N/A**
- d. You must include a budget item for closing costs if your project is a land purchase.: **N/A**
- e. You must include a budget item for signage or labeling to meet Groveland CPC requirements.: **No signage at this time.**
- f. You must include the cost of a Conservation Restriction for land purchases and or a Historic Preservation Restriction for historic projects. (Contact CPC for more information.) **N/A**

8. Other Funding / Matching

- a. What additional funding sources are available, committed, or under consideration? **None at this time**
- b. How will CPA funds be used to leverage or match other grants and donations? **To be evaluated if, this occurs.**
- c. Include commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.: **Our plans are to fund this proposal with CPA Funds only.**

9. Maintenance

- a. If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how much will it cost? **Unknown @ this time**
- b. If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded? **This will need to be evaluated if, any kind of maintenance is required in the future. It is quite possible that it may be able to be managed by the Historical Society.**

10. Additional Information

Provide the following additional information, as applicable.

- a. **Ownership**

Include documentation that shows you have control or plan to gain control over the site, such as Purchase and Sales Agreement, option, or deed.

(If the proposal is on town-owned land, either the applicant or the co-applicant must be the town Board, Commission, or Department in control of the land.): **Our 5-year lease with the Town of Groveland was renewed in 2022**

- b. Construction Plans **N/A**
For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal: **N/A**
- c. Compliance
Provide evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning by-laws, environmental requirements or any other laws or regulations.
If the project is not in compliance, include plans to obtain necessary approvals: **N/A**
- d. Approvals
Provide evidence that the appropriate Town Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land require approval from the Board of Selectmen.): **There will be no change in usage of Washington Hall with this listing on The National Register**
- e. Environmental Hazards
Provide assurance that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place. **There is no known hazardous material in the ground surrounding Washington Hall or within the structure.**
- f. Standards
Provide assurances that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed. **There will be no construction, restoration or rehabilitation associated with this proposal.**
- g. Appraisals
If the requested funds are for a real estate acquisition, an independent appraisal will be required. The appraisal must be completed or updated within one year prior to the date of application. Please note that CPA funds cannot be used over the appraised value of a land purchase project: **N/A**



TOWN OF GROVELAND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING & CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

183 Main Street
Groveland, MA 01834
(978) 556-7214

December 21, 2023

Groveland Community Preservation Committee
183 Main Street
Groveland, MA 01834

RE: Application to Place Washington Hall on the National Register of Historic Places

Mr. Dempsey,

Please find this letter as a show of support for the Community Preservation Committee application put forward by Claire Walsh to have Washington Hall placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Washington Hall has become an icon within the Town for its historic presence as one of the oldest community centers in the United States. By placing it on the National Register of Historic Places this important site will be forever immortalized and preserved.

The Economic Development, Planning, and Conservation Department is happy to offer its support for this application. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Annie Schindler
Town Planner & Conservation Agent

F
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M
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J



Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

39-124	South Groveland		GRV.68
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Town/City: Groveland

Place: South Groveland

Address: 101 Washington Street

Historic Name: Washington Hall

Uses: Present: Community Center
Original: Community Center

Date of Construction: 1874

Source: Dorgan

Style/Form: Stick Style

Architect/Builder: Josiah Littlefield, probable

Exterior Material:
Foundation: Stone, Uncut
Wall/Trim: Wood Clapboards; Wood board and batten
Roof: Asphalt Shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: none

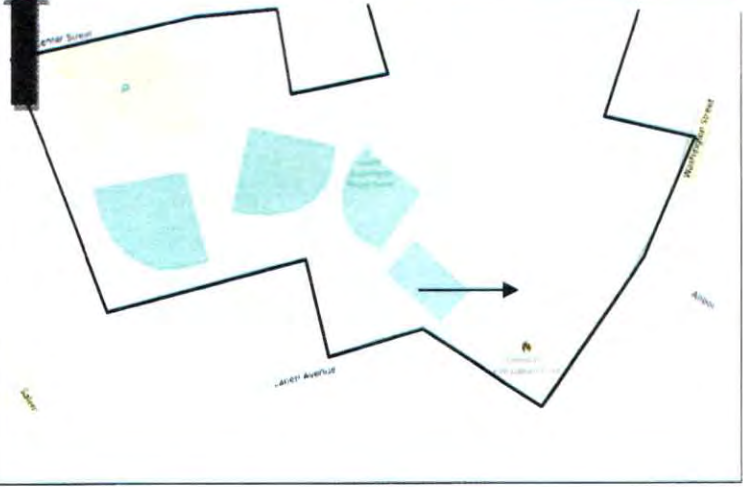
Major Alterations (with dates): none

Condition: Excellent

Moved: no yes **Date:**

Acreage: 11 acres

Setting: Building located atop a high embankment facing east to Washington St. Rear of property at grade with rear (west) elevation. South and east of the building is primarily residential. A 20th C fire station is located immediately adjacent to the south. Playing fields are located west of the buildings.



Recorded by: Stacy Spies
Organization: Groveland Historical Commission
Date: June 2017

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GROVELAND

101 WASHINGTON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Area(s) Form No.

720 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

GRV.68

 Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.*If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Washington Hall is located atop a hill at the southeast corner of a large town-owned lot that also contains sports fields and a fire house that is located immediately adjacent to Washington Hall. The hilltop area immediately adjacent to the building's north and west elevations is wooded. A paved driveway and parking lot leading from Lanen Avenue access the rear entrance.

Measuring 32 feet wide and 60 feet deep, the building rises two stories from a field stone foundation to a front-gabled roof. The roof has overhanging eaves above a wide entablature with paired curved brackets above each window bay. The building is clad with wood clapboards interspersed with vertical boards aligned with the window bays. The façade (east) elevation is three bays wide; side elevations contain five bays. The east elevation contains centered entrance of double-leaf paneled wood doors beneath a transom light. A front-gabled hood over the entrance features a decorative king-post detail of chamfered timbers, a robust cornice, and compound jigsaw brackets. At the attic level, the gable peak is sheathed with vertical board and batten. The gable peak features a wide cornice and a pendant detail. The main entrance on the east elevation leads to a center hall flanked by an office and the former public library. A flight of stairs leads from the northeast corner of the building to the second floor. The center hall leads from the main entrance to a large meeting room that fills the west half of the first floor. A straight-run staircase leads from the meeting room to the lecture hall, a single room that fills the second floor. A raised stage is located along the west end of the room.

The use of the Stick Style in the design of this building is locally unusual. The building is well-preserved and in excellent condition.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Ezekiel James Madison Hale (1813-1881) commissioned Washington Hall and had it constructed on the site of Jacob Reed's meetinghouse.¹ E.J.M. Hale financially supported all activities within the building. The upper level contains a lecture hall in which lectures and concerts were held. The building also served as a meeting space for classes and society gatherings. At the first level was located a free public library and reading room that, by 1930, contained over 6,000 volumes. Mr. Edward Sides, 104 Washington Street (GRV.232), served as caretaker and librarian. The contents of the library were moved in 1939 to the Langley-Adams Library.

E.J.M. Hale was born in Haverhill into a textile manufacturing family. Hale's grandfather, Ezekiel Hale, Sr. (1763-1852) was "one of the pioneers in the American manufacture of textile fabrics,"² and began his career in cotton textile production. In 1804, Hale, Sr. expanded into woolen textiles with the establishment of a successful woolen textile mill in Haverhill. His son, Ezekiel Hale, Jr. (1788-1868) continued the mill upon the death of Hale, Sr. Ezekiel Hale III, i.e. E.J.M. Hale, was graduated from Dartmouth College in 1835 with plans to practice law. Textile manufacturing, however, proved to be more appealing than reading law, and E.J.M. Hale went to work with his father operating the textile mills established by his grandfather. Upon his father's retirement, E.J.M. Hale assumed full management of the mills.

In 1859, E.J.M. Hale further expanded his business interests with the purchase of a mill on Johnson's Brook in South Groveland which produced seamless meal bags. The mill was located on the south side of Center Street southeast of the intersection of

¹ Woodbury Vol. 7:80.

² Williams, *Biographical Encyclopedia*, p. 242.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GROVELAND

101 WASHINGTON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

770 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GRV.68

Center Street and Washington Street. Hale doubled the size of the mill and converted it to a woolen mill for the production of high-quality flannel and flannel dress goods. Over the next 70 years, Groveland Mills became the one of the "oldest and largest flannel and flannel dress goods mills in [New England]."³

This mill, although Hale's first acquisition in South Groveland, would come to be known as Mill No. 2. Hale expanded the business in 1861 with the construction of the "Lower Mill," also known as Mill No. 1, on the north side of Salem Street northeast of the intersection of Washington Street and Salem Street. The mill measured 137 feet long and was expanded with an 80-foot-long addition in 1875. In 1869, Hale constructed a third mill complex, known as the "New Mill," "Top Mill," or Mill No. 3, on the east side of Washington Street north of Center Street and south of Main Street. This last mill was the largest of the three, measuring 316 feet in length. The building contained 103,441 square feet in the main building alone. These mills were three and four stories in height and constructed of brick. In 1877,

The mills contained "36 sets of machinery, which means 108 carding-machines, 49 "mules" or spinners, and 238 looms... [A] brick repair shop [was] built at the lower mill... There [were] four brick picker houses, separate from each of the mills; a brick dye-house, and a forging-shop; also, three extensive fire-proof storehouses for wool and merchandise."⁴

Of these industrial buildings, just two storehouses (GRV.223 and GRV.225) and a converted counting house (GRV.251) remain. A fire in the 1930s consumed many of the mill buildings. Remaining buildings were demolished thereafter.

With the purchase of that first mill in 1859, Hale began the rapid development of South Groveland from a crossroads agricultural community into an industrial company town in which Hale was the dominant landowner. Hale commissioned new residential buildings and purchased existing housing stock. Hale courted woolen mill workers from England, Ireland, and Canada, and went so far as to send wagons meet ships at the dock to bring the new workers to South Groveland. In the 1870s, Hale employed approximately 400 men, women, and teenagers. Between 1850 and 1885, Groveland's population increased by approximately 75%. In 1850, Groveland's overall population was 1,286. In 1885, the population was 2,272.

J.M. Hale's architect of choice was Josiah Littlefield of Haverhill. Hale commissioned Littlefield to design the large Mill No. 1 and Mill No. 3. Secondary sources state that Littlefield was responsible for the design of all the new residential construction undertaken by Hale in South Groveland, including the Hales Court and Mill Street tenements. Josiah Littlefield (1826-1917), as described in a National Register of Historic Places nomination for a building he designed in Haverhill, "was one of Haverhill's notable architects in the last quarter of the 19th century, a time of unprecedented industrial growth... The town directory (1867) lists Littlefield as an architect, contractor, and builder... By 1880, J.M. Littlefield, architect and civil engineer, was located at 69 Merrimack Street... According to a local newspaper report (undated) he opened his office in 1873 and employed four assistants. Apparently, Littlefield had no formal training in architecture. Instead he began his career as a carpenter and later worked as a "first class builder..." At least 24 buildings designed by Josiah M. Littlefield are documented and filed at the Massachusetts Historical Commission. His work in Haverhill, completed between 1868 and 1901, included various building types besides industrial buildings, including schools, a library, multifamily residences, and a firehouse."⁵ Littlefield also worked with fellow Haverhill resident E.J.M. Hale outside of Hale's mill business. Hale provided the land and money to build the Haverhill Public Library. Littlefield won the design competition for the library in 1874. Given the extensive working relationship between Hale and Littlefield, it seems likely that Littlefield was also the designer of Washington Hall. Further research will be needed to confirm this theory.

At the time of E.J.M. Hale's passing in 1881, the company included Washington Hall, the three mills, multiple storehouses and accessory buildings, 58 dwellings, and 260 acres of land and water rights. Groveland Mills was closed in 1929 and the extensive property holdings in South Groveland were liquidated over the next decades. Ownership of Washington Hall was transferred to the Town of Groveland. Washington Hall was used by an American Legion post and as a youth community center during the 1970s and 1980s. Vacant for many years, Washington Hall was recently restored through the efforts of local citizens and now serves as the location of the Groveland Historical Society.

³ Teuss, *The Story of Essex County*, p. 354.

⁴ Tracy, *Standard History of Essex County*, p. 159.

⁵ Tremont Preservation.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

GROVELAND

101 WASHINGTON STREET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

GRV.68

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

- Dorgan, Dr. Jane. *Groveland Massachusetts: A Small New England Town Tribute 2000*. Self-Published, 2000.
- Feuss, Claude M., ed. And Scott H. Paradise, Comp. *The Story of Essex County*. Vol. III. New York: The American Historical Society, 1935.
- Hurd, D. Hamilton. "Groveland." *History of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Volume II, pp. 1694-1706. Philadelphia: J.W. Lewis and Company, 1888.
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Survey. 1906, 1949, 1954.
- Tracy, Cyrus Mason. *Standard History of Essex County, Massachusetts, embracing the history of the county from its first settlement to the present time, with a history and description of its towns and cities. The Most historic county of America*. H. Wheatland, ed. 1878.
- Tremont Preservation Services. "Charles H. Hayes Buildings, Haverhill, MA" National Register Nomination. 2010.
- Walker, George H. & Co., *Atlas of Essex County*. Boston: George H. Walker & Co., 1884.
- Williams, H. Clay. *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Massachusetts of the Nineteenth Century*. Vol. 2. Boston: Metropolitan Publishing and Engraving Company, 1883.
- Woodbury, Dr. Louis A. Collection. Langley-Adams Library, Groveland. (Index and seven volumes)

SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



West and south elevations.

National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement Form

Check all that apply:

- Individually eligible **only** in a historic district
- Contributing to a potential historic district Potential historic district

Criteria: A B C D

Criteria Considerations: A B C D E F G

Statement of Significance by Stacy Spies
The criteria that are checked in the above sections must be justified here.

Washington Hall was constructed in 1874 as a community center for residents of South Groveland. The project was commissioned and funded by Groveland Mills owner Ezekiel James Madison Hale (1813-1881). In 1859, E. J. M. Hale established Groveland Mills by purchasing a seamless meal bag mill on Johnston's Brook in South Groveland, doubling it in size and converting it to a woolen mill for the production of flannel goods. With the construction of two more woolen mills on Johnston's Brook within the next ten years, Hale spurred the creation of a bustling industrial community in South Groveland. Hale's influence on the community of Groveland was far-reaching. In addition to building the mills and their related storage and office buildings, Hale purchased or commissioned approximately 58 residential buildings to house his workers. Hale also facilitated the construction of two churches in South Groveland.

Washington Hall is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for its association with Groveland Mills. Groveland Mills transformed South Groveland from a crossroads agricultural community to a form more closely resembling a company town. Groveland Mills had a profound and widespread effect on the physical form of South Groveland with the construction of dozens of dwellings, places of worship, and recreational facilities. The building retains integrity of location, design, feeling, materials, setting, association, and workmanship.

Washington Hall is eligible for listing on the National Register under Criterion C as an excellent example of a meeting hall. The use of the Stick Style for Washington Hall is a locally unusual choice.