

TOWN OF HARWICH -COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

**2014 CPA PROJECT FUNDING REQUEST APPLICATION**  
**for**  
**2015 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**Project Funding Request Application - FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015**

Submitting Organization: **Brooks Free Library**

Submission Date: **9/29/14**

Project Manager: Library Director Ginny Hewitt

Project Manager's Address,

Phone #, EMAIL Address:

Brooks Free Library

739 Main St.

Harwich MA 02645

508-430-7562 ext 8

vhewitt@clamsnet.org

CPA Category: (Please select all that apply)

Open Space

Community Housing

X Historic Preservation

Recreation

Town Committee or Board (if applicable): Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees

Second Contact Person- name, address, phone number, email:

Mary Warde, Chairman, Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees

508-4302-7530, mvwarde@comcast.net

**PROJECT TITLE: Restoration of Rogers Groups Sculptures**

**PROJECT AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$23,000**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The Library owns 26 historic Rogers Groups sculptures. This project requests funds for a qualified art conservation/restoration professional experienced in restoration of Rogers Groups to perform an on-site evaluation and assessment, develop a conservation treatment plan and the funds to have that work performed. More detail is provided below.

**HOW DOES THIS PROJECT FIT INTO HARWICH'S LOCAL  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN and/or other PLANS?**

This project fits in well with the Local Comprehensive Plan, which details the importance of protecting and maintaining the Town's cultural, recreational and historical assets. Preserving the arts and our cultural heritage are important in and of themselves and also for tourism/economic development. The Town Planner is currently working on a submission to designate Harwich and/or Harwich Center as a Massachusetts Cultural District. This project request is consistent with that effort.

## HOW DOES THIS PROJECT HELP PRESERVE HARWICH'S CHARACTER?

Brooks Free Library's collection of Rogers Groups sculptures is among the oldest and most treasured artifacts in the Town's cultural heritage. In 1881 Harwich philanthropist Pliny Nickerson donated 40 Rogers Groups to Brooks Free Library to celebrate the opening of the Town's first public library. The original collection was added to over time and eventually the Library owned 69 sculptures. Only 80 Rogers Groups were mass-produced and cast in plaster, so at one time the Brooks Free Library collection was thought to be the largest collection outside of New York City and was perhaps the largest public collection.

John Rogers created these clay and plaster statues, which generally standing two to three feet tall and depict literary and historical scenes, the Civil War and everyday life from 1859 to 1892. Known as the "People's Sculptor," Rogers' works were highly prized at the time and have become increasingly valuable. Today, the Library owns 26 Rogers Groups. (Details on change in collection size below.) Each year serious art lovers and collectors of Americana visit the Library specifically to see so many of the sculptures in one place.

To make his groups, Rogers first sketched the design, and then modeled it in clay. From this was taken a pattern cast for the bronze master model. The bronze was used to make a pliable mold into which the plaster was poured, wire embedded in weak areas for support. The finished groups were coated with boiled linseed oil, and then painted putty gray. The statues owned by the Library were finished with new gray paint in the late 1950's by members of the Harwich Women's Club using a paint formula provided by the John Rogers Society.

As mentioned above, at one time the Library owned one of the largest collections of Rogers Groups. That changed on March 31, 1976, several weeks after a Boston Globe feature on collectors' interest in Rogers Groups and their increasing value, when thieves broke into the Library and stole 56 Rogers Groups. While the Finance Committee met across the street at Town Hall and residents attended a town meeting at the high school on Oak Street, the thieves tore down the drapes, wrapped the statues in them, and vanished into the night. Despite a lengthy investigation by local authorities and the FBI, the theft was never solved and remains a mystery. Local rumors have long held that the thieves, unable to sell such a large, identifiable collection, squirreled the sculptures away in attics and basements where they still remain.

After the theft the Library was left with 13 Rogers Groups. The collection has been added to since then and today the library owns 26 Rogers Groups. Some are in worse condition than others but all are in need of restoration, with varying amounts of chipping and cracking, peeling and flaking paint. One sculpture, Parting Promise, was damaged during the theft when it was dropped in the parking lot and left by the thieves. The arms are broken off the figures in this statue.

A professional art restorer with experience working with Rogers Groups is needed to assess each piece and recommend the appropriate treatment. Groups with minor flaking and peeling may be repaired more easily while others with more extensive flaking/peeling or chips may need extensive work. What that work should be – touchups, surface conditioning, repainting, and/or structural damage repair including casting – will not be known until each piece is

inspected. The guidance of a professional conservator with experience in restoring Rogers Groups is needed to create a conservation treatment plan. This plan would answer questions such as - should the peeling just be repaired, was the piece previously re-painted and does that coat need to be removed, can or should the pieces all be re-painted in the same gray color of our original collection or would that diminish the appearance and value of some or all of the pieces, etc.

A list of the Brooks Free Library's collection of Rogers Groups, with notes on their condition and estimated values, is attached.

**ESTIMATED START DATE: July 1, 2015**

**ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE: June 30, 2016**

**PLEASE LIST OTHER COMMISSIONS/BOARDS/COMMITTEES/ORGANIZATIONS that may have involvement, jurisdiction, partnering, etc:**

The Historic Commission/Historic District does not have jurisdiction over this project since it does not involve architectural elements of a historic building or the exterior appearance or streetscape of the Historic District. We hope, however, they would endorse the goal of preserving the Town's cultural heritage through restoring this Rogers Group collection. Similarly, this project does not come under the scope of the Cultural Council, but we expect they would also support the goal of this project. The Town Planner intends on applying for Harwich and/or Harwich Center to be recognized as a Massachusetts Cultural District. We have not yet approached them but would expect support for this project from other community organizations such as the Harwich Historical Society and the Guild of Harwich Artists.

**Have they reviewed and responded to this application:**

No, not yet. This project does not appear to fall under the jurisdiction of other Town departments, boards or committees but we will be happy to meet with any the CPC would like us to meet with to make them aware of our proposal and request their support.

**PROJECT BUDGET:** Attach project budget estimates for your funding request. If the request involves a Town-owned asset, provide the project's projected operating expenses, including maintenance.

Recommendations were obtained from the New Canaan Historical Society, home of the John Rogers Studio and Museum, which is a National Historic Landmark. Multiple requests for cost estimates have been sought from professional art conservators with experience restoring Rogers Groups. It has been difficult to obtain precise cost estimates since each has indicated they would need to examine the collection and individual pieces in person to make a formal proposal, and their distance from Harwich has not allowed that. A summary sheet and cost estimates are attached. If awarded these funds, we would seek more formal

proposals from multiple conservators before awarding the contract(s). I have learned that it is generally advisable to have the same company that created the conservation/restoration treatment plan perform the actual work. There will be no on-going operating costs incurred by this project.

See attached summary sheet and cost estimates.

**COST ESTIMATE(S):** Attach cost estimates or firm quotes (if available) for all projects.

A summary and cost estimates from art conservators are attached.

**LAND and/or BUILDING ACQUISITION PROJECTS:** Attach surveys, appraisals and agreements, if available. Please set forth name of present owner and attach copy of deed conveying property unto present owner. In addition to property address, please provide Harwich Assessors Office identification (Map#, Parcel #). For proposed Open Space land purchases, be prepared to discuss public access with the Committee.

CPA Funds Received Previous Year(s) For This Project (if applicable):

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>CPC Funds Approved</u>	<u>Town Meeting Article #</u>
<u>2009-10</u>			
<u>2010-11</u>			
<u>2011-12</u>			
<u>2012-13</u>			
<u>2013-14</u>			

If project is expected to continue over more than one year, or if funding the project via full or partial bonding is anticipated, please detail the cost of project on the following chart (narrative explanation should be attached on a separate sheet).

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Total Cost</u>	<u>CPC Funds</u>	<u>Other Funding</u>	<u>Estimated Funds</u>
<u>from</u>		<u>Requested</u>	<u>Sources</u>	<u>Other Sources</u>
<u>2013-14</u>				
<u>2014-15</u>				
<u>2015-16</u>				
<u>2016-17</u>				

**Signature - Chief Executive Officer or Chief Administrative Officer**

**Tit**

**le or Board Chair**

For Community Preservation Committee Use:

Project Request received on:

Associated Town Committee(s): (initial)

Date(s) Reviewed On:

Final Determination:

Approved:

Denied:

Date:

CPC Contact Information:

Robert MacCready - Housing Authority

[maccready@haconcapecod.org](mailto:maccready@haconcapecod.org)

David Purdy - Housing Committee

[capedave@yahoo.com](mailto:capedave@yahoo.com)

Robert Bradley - Historical Commission

[bradleybob60@yahoo.com](mailto:bradleybob60@yahoo.com) Janet Bowers- Rec.& Youth Commission

[janquiltoncc@gmail.com](mailto:janquiltoncc@gmail.com) Katherine Green - Real Estate&Open Space

[ksqr58@gmail.com](mailto:ksqr58@gmail.com)

Walter Diggs- Conservation Commission

[cordovawwd@aol.com](mailto:cordovawwd@aol.com)

Peter de Bakker- Planning Board

[debakker.peter@gmail.co](mailto:debakker.peter@gmail.co)

m Cindi Maule- Selectmen's Appointee

[cmaule@haconcapecod](mailto:cmaule@haconcapecod)

[org](http://org) Dan Tworek - Selectmen's Appointee

[dtworek@comcast.net](mailto:dtworek@comcast.net)

Budget (continued from CPC application form)

Summary Sheet - Estimates from Conservators attached

- I. Assessment and preparation of a Conservation Treatment Plan - \$3000

Note: \$2500 estimate rec'd from Francis Miller, ConservArt LLC

- II. Cost estimate for restoration: (reinforce structural defects, remove loose or unstable paint, repair chips and surface losses, restore smooth finish with uniform color on piece, protective coating, transportation and insurance) - \$ 20,000

Note: Cost estimate of \$450 - \$600 for each Group rec'd from Robert Shure, Skylight Studios for a total of \$15,600. Since on-site assessments were not used to prepare estimates, they varied significantly. A higher estimate was rec'd from Restoration Services, totaling \$23,400 - \$26,000. This estimate was higher based on a separate charge for repairing chips, but this estimate was provided without an on-site assessment of each piece and is likely to be higher. Skylight Studios has experience with Rogers Groups and other plaster sculptures and reviewed photographs showing the typical conditions of the pieces in preparing their estimate so it is likely to be more realistic. Still, the requested \$20,000 provides \$4,600 over Skylight Studios estimate for structural repairs that may not be apparent in the photographs as well as other unknown contingencies.

Three additional conservators experienced with restoring Rogers Groups provided a lot of insight into the variability of costs in restoring these sculptures, which depend on the experience and expertise of the conservator, in addition to the actual condition of each Group and its prior treatment(s). They declined to provide cost estimates for the work without an on-site assessment since they were not responding to a previously prepared conservation treatment plan.

- III. Total Request \$23,000

\$23,000 will allow us to obtain the services of a conservator experienced in restoration of Rogers Groups in assessing the collection and determining what work is needed, and to begin the restoration work if not complete it. The \$20,000 for the restoration work is expected to be sufficient to restore all the sculptures, but it is possible that the assessment will reveal more costly work is needed on several pieces. Rather than ask for a larger amount in this request to cover that possibility, we have decided to be more conservative in this request. If the \$20,000 does not cover all the work identified in the assessment we will seek additional funds from the CPC or other sources in future years to restore any sculptures that have not yet been restored.

One additional note: One sculpture, Parting Promise, as mentioned above, was damaged during the 1976 theft. It contains two figures - both arms on the gentleman and one arm on the lady were broken off and are missing. This project request does not include restoring that sculpture to repair the missing arms. While researching this project I have learned that it is possible to re-create the missing arms using an experienced Rogers Groups restorer who has access to other copies of that piece or the mold that was used. The assessment and treatment plan would provide the costs for that work, and also provide professional advice on whether re-creating the missing arms is something we could or should do. Incurring the damage during the theft is now part of that piece's history - and our Library and Town history - and we may determine that re-creating the missing arms, even if possible, is not desirable.

Estimate for Assessment and Preparation  
Of Conservation Treatment Plan – ConservArt LLC

**Francis Miller** <millerfrancis@hotmail.com>  
To: Virginia Hewitt <vhewitt@clamsnet.org>

Wed, Oct 1, 2014 at 9:28 AM

Ginny,

An assessment and conservation plan for the sculptures would be the best approach and that's what I did for the New Caanan Historic Society collection. They used the plan as a component to apply for and receive a Save America's Treasures Grant.

The cost for a Conservation Treatment Plan would be \$2,500 and would include the following:

- Onsite visit
- Overview of the Rogers Group collection
- Condition Assessment for each sculpture
- Preservation Recommendations for the collection
- Treatment Recommendation for each sculpture
- Itemized Treatment Budget
- Printed Report and digital copy on CD with digital photographs of each sculpture.

Each photograph will have a printed photocard for identification; photocards are particularly useful for keeping detailed views organized. A list of the collection would be required before the site visit.

In regards to your previous comments, I do not provide value assessments for objects, but is safe to say that painting all the sculptures the same would be a historic loss and likely diminish value. From a conservation perspective, saving as much of the original as possible is advised, unless there is a greater loss /threat to stability, aesthetics, etc.

Call me if you want to talk about it in more detail.

Thanks.

Francis

ConservArt LLC  
Francis Miller, Conservator  
Professional Associate of AIC

19 Lansdowne Avenue  
Hamden CT 06517

Estimate for Restoration Work – Skylight Studios

Robert Shure  
Skylight Studios  
105 Salem St  
Woburn MA 01801  
781-933-3822  
[services@skylightstudiosinc.com](mailto:services@skylightstudiosinc.com)

Sept. 26, 2014

In order to restore the Brooks Library collection of Rogers Groups we would pick them up so we could complete the treatment at our studio. We will carry the necessary insurance for the transportation, as well as covering them when they are here. As part of our scope of work we will document the treatment of each sculpture and provide specifications for any recommended maintenance.

In general we will examine each piece for structural defects and provide reinforcement if needed. Any loose or unstable paint will be mechanically removed. All chips or losses to the surface or finish will be filled to match the surrounding form and textures. The color of each piece will be refinished to make the collection uniform. The exact color and finish can be specified by the Library. We will also provide an invisible protective coating over the finish. We can send pictures during the entire process for your approval and upon completion transport the sculptures back to the library.

The projected cost to restore each Rogers Group would be from 450 to 600. This cost would include the transportation and insurance.

$$\begin{array}{r} \$600 \\ \times 26 \\ \hline \$15,600 \end{array}$$

Cost of evaluating and creating a conservation treatment plan – not yet rec'd.

Estimate of Restoration Work – Restoration Services

Restoration Services  
Holly Czapski  
9 Mystic St  
Arlington MA 02474  
781-648-3322  
info@restorationservices.com  
www.restorationservices.com

Final - Sept. 23, 2014

Seal and Touch-up & Chip Repair

*\$13,000 seal and touch up (\$300-\$500 each)*  
*\$ 7,800 chip repair (\$100-\$300 each. Estimate 1.5 chips per piece X \$200 average)*  
*\$20,800 Total*

OR

Re-painting and Chip Repair

*\$15600 re-painting instead of seal and touch-up*  
*\$ 7,800 chip repair (\$100-\$300 each. Estimate 1.5 chips per piece X \$200 average)*  
*\$23,400 Total*

Transportation and insurance

Not included in their estimate. We would need to arrange.

*\$2600 Estimate \$100 each piece*

Total Cost \$23,400 - \$26,000

BROOKS FREE LIBRARY ROGERS GROUPS COLLECTION

Sept. 26, 2014

Rogers Groups owned in 1976 that were not stolen			Location Now	Color/Condition	Estimated Values
1	Fairy Whisperer		1st Floor DVD	darker gray, some flaking, splotches & chips	\$5,000 to \$5,500
2	We Boys (horse's head up)		Doane Room	dark gray/tan, no flaking	\$3,500 to \$4,000
3	We Boys (horse's head down)		Mezzanine	light gray, some flaking	\$3,300 to \$3,800
4	Going for the Cows		Doane Room	gray, lots of flaking	\$2,900 to \$3,300
5	Private Theatricals (The Scenes)		Doane Room	gray, some dings, some flaking	\$3,700 to \$4,200
6	The Balcony		Doane Room	darker gray than when re-finished, no flaking	\$3,500 to \$4,000
7	Is it so Nominated in the Bond?		Doane Room	dark gray, some flaking	\$3,300 to \$3,800
8	The Wrestlers		Doane Room	dark gray/tan, flaking on base	\$4,400 to \$4,900
9	Fetching the Doctor		Circulation Desk	gray, solid, no flaking	\$3,500 to \$4,000
10	Fighting Bob		Doane Room	darker gray than when re-finished, no flaking	\$3,700 to \$4,200
11	Faust and Marguerite: Leaving the Garden		Doane Room	gray/tan, minor flaking couple spots	\$4,000 to \$4,500
12	Faust and Marguerite: First Meeting		Doane Room	darker gray, small amount flaking	\$4,000 to \$4,500
13	Parting Promise		Non-fiction	broken arms both figures, dark tan, minor flaking	\$1,800 to \$2,300
Rogers Groups Acquired Since The Theft					
14	Wounded to the Rear or One More Shot		Fiction Room	dark tan, not flaking	\$4,000 to \$4,500
15	Wounded to the Rear or One More Shot		Mezzanine	dark tan, not flaking	\$4,000 to \$4,500
16	Uncle Ned's School		Fiction Room	dark tan, 1 large chip w/ white plastic showing	\$3,000 to \$3,500
17	Uncle Ned's School		Non-Fiction Room	light gray, lots flaking, chipping, poor condition	\$3,000 to \$3,500
18	Council of War		1st Floor, DVD	dark tan, flaking and chipping	\$3,000 to \$3,500
19	Why Don't You Speak for Yourself John		Doane Room	gray, some flaking	\$3,500 to \$4,000
20	Coming to the Parson		Doane Room	gray, some chips and flaking	\$3,700 to \$4,200
21	Rip Van Winkle		Mezzanine	dark tan, small amount of flaking	\$3,300 to \$3,800
22	Elder's Daughter		Non-Fiction Room	biege, not flaking	\$3,000 to \$3,500
23	Checkers Up At the Farm		Non-Fiction Room	dark gold finish	\$2,500 to \$3,000
24	A Frolic at the Old Homestead		Non-Fiction Room	dark tan, lot of flaking, white plaster showing	\$3,300 to \$3,800
25	Ha! I Like Not That!		Non-Fiction Room	dark tan, lots of chipping, flaking	\$2,500 to \$3,000
26	Checkers Up At the Farm (2nd copy)		HPD	dark finish, poor condition, lots of flaking	\$3,300 to \$3,800
TOTAL EST VALUE					\$88,700
					\$101,600

Coming to the Parson – Doane Room



Council of War – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, DVD area



Ha! I Like Not That! -2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Non-Fiction Room



Parting Promise – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Non-Fiction



Rip Van Winkle - Mezzanine



A Frolic at the Old Homestead, and close up of flaking/peeling/cracking



The Balcony



Fighting Bob



Fetching the Doctor



Wounded to the Rear (2<sup>nd</sup> copy)



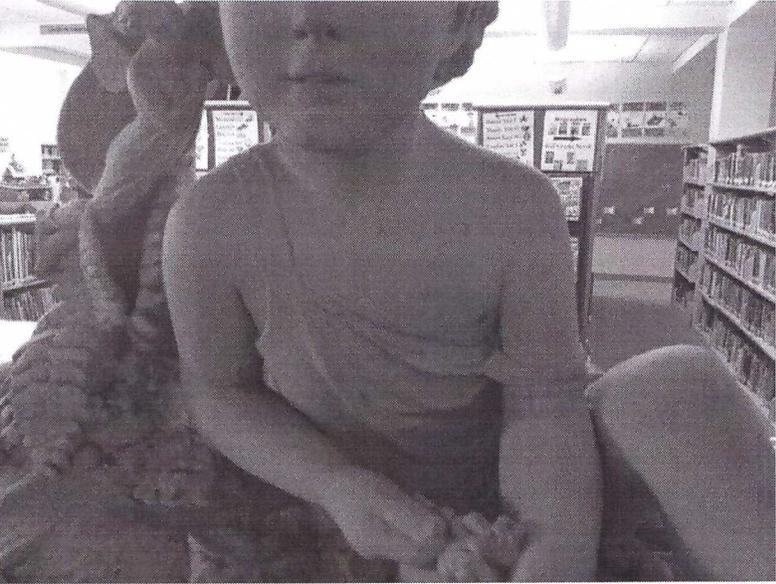
The Elder's Daughter- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Non-Fiction Room



Going for the Cows – Doane Room



Fairy Whisperer – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, DVD area

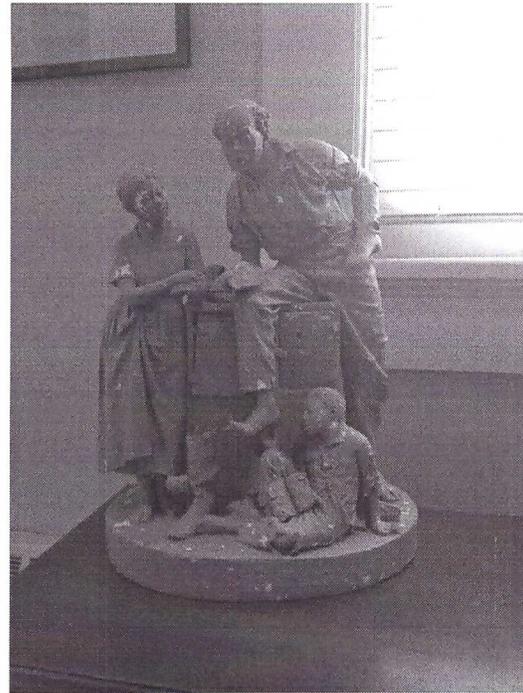


Fairy Whisperer, close-up of cracking/flaking

Uncle Ned's School – 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Fiction Room



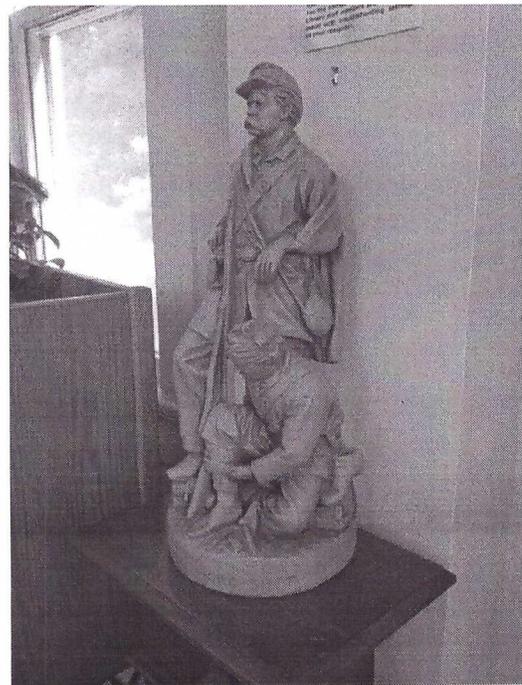
Uncle Ned's School – 2<sup>nd</sup> copy – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Non-Fiction Room



Why Don't You Speak for Yourself, John?

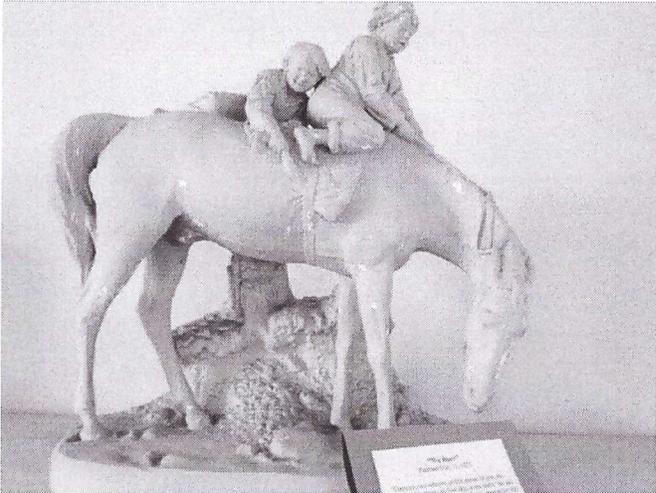


Wounded to the Rear (1<sup>st</sup> copy) – 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Fiction

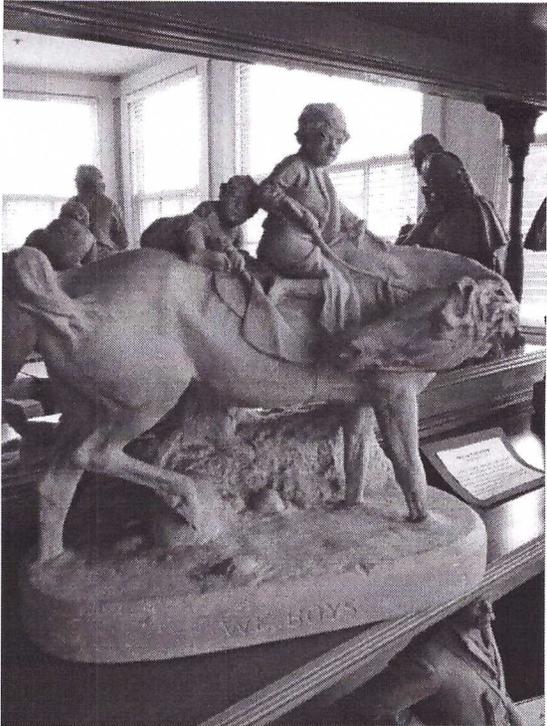


Wounded to the Rear (first copy) – 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Non-Fiction

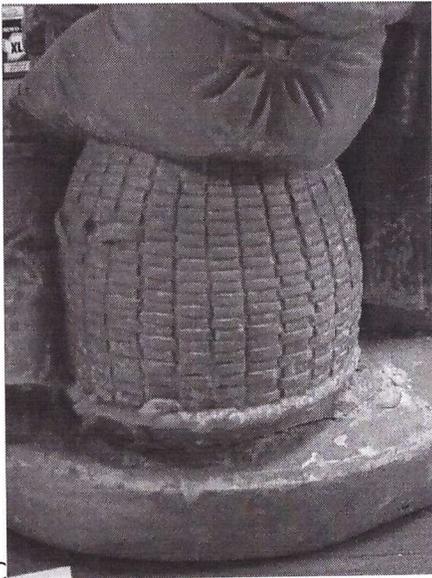
We Boys (Horse's Head Down) – Doane Room



We Boys (Horse's Head Up) - Mezzanine



Checkers Up At the Farm (second copy) – Location: HPD



C