

Wittenborn-Wagner House, Rufus Porter Wall Paintings  
River Road near the Orford Town line, Town of Lyme  
Lyme Vicinity  
Grafton County  
New Hampshire

HABS No. NH-79

HABS  
NH  
5-LYM.V  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## WITTENBORN-WAGNER HOUSE, RUFUS PORTER WALL PAINTINGS

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Location: River Road near the Orford Town line, Town of Lyme, Lyme Vicinity, Grafton County, New Hampshire.

Present Owner: Frederick E. Wagner, Lyme, New Hampshire.

Present Occupant: Allison G. Catheron, II

Present Use: Private residence

Brief Statement of Significance: Very well preserved, extensive example of the work of Porter, an itinerant painter.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Original and subsequent owners: Original owner unknown. The present owner obtained the property from George Wittenborn, New York bookseller.
2. Date of the paintings: c. 1825.
3. Artist: Rufus Porter was born in 1792 in West Boxford, Mass., and died in 1884 in New Haven, Conn. He led a varied life working at many different things, notably inventing, journalism and painting. Porter travelled very widely throughout New England, part of the time as an itinerant painter. In this capacity he travelled through the Middle Connecticut River Valley c. 1825.
4. References: Jean Lipman, Rufus Porter, Yankee Wall Painter (Art in America, 1950). Writers' Program New Hampshire, Hands that Built New Hampshire (Brattleboro, Vermont: Stephen Daye Press, 1940).

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby and  
Henry C. Edwards  
Architects  
National Park Service  
September 1959

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2 -

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HABS No. NH-79  
Page 2

PART II. TECHNICAL INFORMATION

1. Extent of the paintings: The paintings cover the walls of a first floor parlor and hallway, a stairway, and a second floor parlor and hallway.
2. Physical background: The paintings are painted on the plaster walls of a medium sized, 2 story, frame farm house in a rural setting.
3. Evaluation of Porter: "Porter's mural paintings, like his inventions and his scientific journals, were pioneer products, far ahead of their time. They represent our first native landscape school, and are among the most original and important artistic achievements of nineteenth century America." (Lipman, p. 170).

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