

Historic Paperhanging Techniques: A Bibliographic Essay

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Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to provide a context for installing reproduction wallpaper in historic homes. The trimming and borderwork found in surviving installations is discussed. Techniques for hanging wallpaper are described and linked to a bibliography about historic paperhanging.

Four chronological divisions are made:

Early (1750-1860) - scissor trimming; overlapping; tacks, battens & canvas.

Middle (1860-1900) - trimming machines; straightedges; track trimmers; muslin on boards.

Late (1900-1940) - perforated selvages; trimming knives; paneling; miter boxes.

Modern (1940-1975) - butt seams; factory trimming; inlaid and overlaid borders; handscreens.

Contemporary professional paperhangers follow rules about placing and balancing patterns in order to hang wallpaper the right way. The installer either knows these parameters, or finds them out. Another rule is that seams should show as little as possible. But, pursuit of a seamless installation, if carried too far, can lead to a paradox: these days, a wallpaper installation is sometimes most admired when it looks the least like a wallpaper installation. That is, when it shows no seams at all.

This background helps to explain why overlapping, mismatching, and wavering scissor trimming — all marks of historic paperhanging — can challenge the contemporary eye. This can lead to uncertainty while restoring a historic home with reproduction wallpaper. Everyone agrees that paper should be hung “the right way” for each period, but that way can be hard to find.

Other than examining well-preserved installations, it’s difficult to know much about how wallpaper was hung. Most information in the trade has been passed along by peers, or learned on the job. Trade magazines are helpful, but they don’t begin until around 1875. Other information is found tucked into books on wallpaper history, and in archival sources. It’s important for researchers to know that wallpaper was most often called “paper-hangings” prior to 1900.

Paperhanging technique is not easily bounded by dates. Although wallpaper styles change constantly, paperhanging tools and materials have changed very little. Thus, technique tends to be accumulative. Wallpaper was scissor-trimmed and overlapped from the start, but these treatments continued long past 1860, when mechanical trimming began, and did not cease until the mid-20th century. Another reason technique is not easy to pin down is that wallpaper has always appealed to diverse markets.

The outlandish borderwork and rough trimming typical for a farmhouse installation of about 1800 would not have passed inspection if done in the parlor of a city townhouse. Farmhouses were often hung by a handyman (perhaps someone installing for the first time), while townhouses might have been hung by a professional lately arrived from London or Paris.

In all ages, installers were sometimes defeated by the requirements of pattern — the drop match of large patterns, for example, or the need to frame arabesque panels rather than run them into woodwork. Not a few wallpapers and borders appear to have been hung upside-down. It can be difficult to judge whether a pattern was hung wrongly — or just differently, according to a preference of the client or installer. Even if seemingly wrong to our eyes, the visual evidence should be respected during a restoration of the room with reproduction wallpaper.

Early, 1750-1860

Wallpaper was used by the elite in Northeastern cities before 1750.¹ As the Revolution approached, there were already two classes of installers. Professionals settled largely in seaports and consisted of immigrant upholders, stationers, painters-stainers and others who were either trained to install paper-hangings, or familiar with their use. Away from the cities, hanging was done by amateurs, or those we may call “catch as one can” installers. These were largely native American handymen and small-volume tradesmen such as glaziers and carpenters. D-i-y homeowners who could not find or afford anyone else were another group. Women and blacks hung paper too, though the evidence is slight.

The first steps were to trim the unprinted selvedge from one side and cut the sheets to length. The selvedges measured 1 to 2 inches. Invariably, it seems, this work was done with scissors or shears.² Early installations show a wavering trim line. As each strip was pasted and hung, the trimmed edge overlapped the preceding untrimmed edge. Paper was usually hung away from the light to avoid the shadow of the overlap but this rule was not invariably followed. Although it's likely that professionals used plumb bobs and chalked lines to engineer the work as they had in Europe, amateurs seem not to have used these tools.³

Wallpaper was occasionally tacked directly to the wall in Europe, but, in this country it seems that wheat paste was the almost universal choice. Tack holes are occasionally found in early American installations, but these seem always meant for supporting canvas, which in turn would support the paper. A feature of early installations are large underlaps. It's not unusual to see up to 2 inches or so, including a deckle edge, proving that the underlaps were not trimmed at all. A variety of substances were added to fortify or preserve wheat paste, but since these had no visual impact, they are not addressed here.

¹ James Birket, *Some Cursory Remarks Made By James Birket In His Voyage To North America, 1750-1751*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916; see pp. 8 and 28 for Newport and Portsmouth. Pritchard, “Rethinking Two Houses.”

² The terms seem largely interchangeable, though scissors are often shorter, lighter and more symmetrical.

³ Teynac, p. 32 (Papillon's drawings), Plate Five, Strip One; Arrowsmith, 9.

Border use was extensive in early America. Up to 10 or 12 narrow courses of border could fit on a width of about 21 inches. Varying lengths of these were pasted, folded over, and scissored, then applied against all trim. Sidewall paper was often trimmed well short of the molding, since borders would cover the gap. A double-course of narrow border was sometimes placed in corners as well.

Borders for fireplace screens are often overlapped at 90 degrees rather than mitered, and when mitered corners appear, they're usually overlapped, rather than finished to a butt seam. The 90-degree overlaps may seem abrupt, especially when they interrupt the flow of design within a border. And yet, this abruptness is historic.

Lining paper (so-called "elephant") was used in Europe, though limited to the better installations. Its use was even more limited here. This cheap, thick paper absorbed paste from the finish paper and gave a smooth surface for delicate or costly goods. It could also serve as a base for a distempered wall. The liner was sometimes rubbed smooth with a pumice stone. During the 1811 construction of a house in Baltimore, for example, a paperhanger charged for "1 Rimm Paper for lining walls . . . [\$]3.50" and "Lining walls & rubbing down w Pumice . . . [\$]8.00."⁴ Frugal colonial habits and unfamiliarity help to account for the scarcity of lining paper. But, there's another reason: since most wallpaper was porous, it was easily sized and hung over. The existing paper became a lining paper for the next installation. This helps explain "wallpaper sandwiches" of a half-dozen or more layers.

There are references for canvas underlayments, even if survivals are rare. Thomas Hurley in 1786 was charging twice as much for hanging paper on canvas as he was for hanging paper on walls. Another ad touts the superiority of a technique ("the English method") that sounds suspiciously like a canvas job.⁵ In this method, a sewn canvas was tacked to the perimeter of a room and then paper was pasted on the canvas. This method prevented splitting of the paper caused by seasonal contraction of wooden walls. It also helped avoid problems caused by wet walls.⁶

To judge from early installations, paperhangers were sometimes only mildly interested in matching the patterns. Several possible reasons come to mind: incompetence; furnishing materials were sometimes scarce, so off-cuts were not likely to be discarded; and, matching with precision was simply not as important for earlier generations. Jane Nylander found that mismatches also abounded in early fabric installations. She states that in restoring a decorative scheme, "matching horizontal repeats in work for periods before 1840 and 1850 is seldom necessary, because it seems not to have been a standard practice at that time."⁷

⁴ Robert Alexander, "The Riddell-Carroll House in Baltimore," *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 28, Nos. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn, 1993), p. 128.

⁵ For Hurley, see Prime, *Second Series*, p. 280. A. R. Williams advertised that "he is acquainted with the English method of puting up paper, will insure never to come loose from the walls." *The American Patriot*, Baltimore, Feb. 24, 1803, 5-4 (MESDA).

⁶ Annotated bills describing the process in mid-18th century England (traveling paperhangers, purchases, sewing, tacking, lining and installing wallpaper) are found in *Furniture History*, Vol. 9 (1973), "Chippendale's Harewood Commission."

⁷ Jane Nylander, *Fabrics for Historic Buildings*, 20.

There were variations in the practice of overlapping. A paperhanger charged .25 cents a roll to install paper that he described as “cut close” at a Baltimore hotel in 1836, but only .20 cents a roll for other sidewall installation.⁸ In 1851, the author of an English manual remarked that “I prefer cutting *both edges* before commencement, as that which has to be undermost can be cut exactly to what I wish, viz: — leaving on only a very little for the other to lap over, and which in thin delicate papers is indispensable. . . .”⁹ This manual, Arrowsmith’s *The Paper-Hanger’s and Upholsterer’s Guide*, summarizes 50 years of English practice (Mr. Arrowsmith had apprenticed in the 18th century). This often-reprinted volume was known in this country as *The Paper-Hanger’s Companion*. Among other techniques, the “English method” mentioned earlier is nicely detailed.

Middle, 1860-1900

9 to 14 inch paperhanger’s shears came into widespread use in this period and remained popular as late as 1950. The paper was creased to the molding and the tip of the shears run along the crease; then the paper was lifted and trimmed. Many paperhangers were probably using a straightedge and trimming knife by the Civil War (both are mentioned in Arrowsmith’s manual). Trimming underwent more changes with the arrival of the portable trimming machine. In the period 1855-65, a dozen patents were awarded. The drawings are not impressive, and indeed, there is no evidence that they were much used at the table. A dozen patents for pasting machines also appeared, and were equally unsuccessful. It seems that the requirements of residential paperhanging, which included travel to a succession of rooms and employment of hand skills, may have discouraged mechanization.

However, heavier and better designed models of crank trimmers began working their way into dry good stores and retailers’ shops. Several of these could swivel slightly, so that the trim could follow either a “direct or waved line.”¹⁰ This is proof that overlapping was still standard for making seams. By the 1880’s it was common for consumers to have paper-hangings trimmed by the shopkeeper.

Other innovations included seam rollers, felt (smoothing) rollers, and track trimmers. Versions of these tools were patented by Charles Ridgely of Springfield, Ohio beginning in the 1870’s.¹¹ It’s hard to gauge how successful Ridgely’s tools were at first. But they and similar devices were very common by the turn of the century. Straightedges evolved from plain wood to brass-bound. Track trimmers are fist-sized metal trimmers that run along a channel on straightedges; by 1909 they had 58 separate parts. Another common trimming tool was the paper-hangers’ knife (also called the paper knife), which resembled a rather fat butterknife.

These tools made neater trims possible. Yet, conditions and materials remained far from ideal. Groundwood and straw additives made for cheaper but soggy paper. The vast majority of paper-hangings had water soluble inks, so seams could still not be washed. Overlapping was safer, easier, and faster. These overlaps showed less than we might suspect — inks and grounds were usually matte and patterns were often busy. Nevertheless, there seems to be a growing awareness in this period that overlapping could be objectionable.

⁸ Bill of Walter Crook, Jr. for work at the Exchange Hotel, Dec. 7, 1836 (#4963, Downs Collection, Winterthur Library).

⁹ Arrowsmith, 52.

¹⁰ “In order to trim paper to the line of pattern (which is often irregular) . . . [the levers can be moved back and forth and side to side] . . . this sliding motion gives the operator control . . . thereby enabling the operator to cut the paper, either in a direct or waved line . . .” Waugh Patent #21,710 (1858). See also Flower Patent #35,750 (1862).

¹¹ Robert Kelly, “Charles T. Ridgely.”

Late, 1900-1940

The large collections of Q & A published in the early 20th century drawn from *The Painter's Magazine* teach much about workaday painting and paperhanging, even if they are occasionally hair-raising. Materials included vinegar, molasses, kerosene, sal soda, carbolic acid, potash, and lye.¹² In this period, plaster walls were often covered with muslin prior to painting. This method ensured that stress cracks wouldn't spoil a paint job, larger cracks would be unlikely to show, and bumps from furniture were less drastic. Canvassing was so common that manuals listed it under the painter's section rather than the paperhanger's.¹³ The preferred application tool was the canvas sweep, a short-bristled wooden-handled tool that is still with us. Seams were cut with a knife, or with scissors fitted with an attachment.

Much trimming was still done with shears in the late 19th century. Dry-trimming called for the paperhanger to sit down and trim through an entire roll with the roll cradled at his feet. He took up the roll with one hand as it was being trimmed with the other. In 1892, an authoritative manual stated that American paperhangers were beginning to prefer trimming tools to scissors, because they were faster.¹⁴ Despite this change, overlapping was so practical that it refused to die. Indeed, it persisted in parts of the South as late as the 1930's and 40's. Contributing to this regional preference may have been shiplapped walls, which practically demanded an overlapped seam.

In this technique, "paperhanger's canvas," a lightweight but strong 3-foot wide cotton, was tacked to the wide boards commonly used in the South and West in lieu of a plastered wall. Corners could be outfitted with 3-inch wide strips of heavy paper. When these were pasted, creased, and installed, they formed a crisp corner. The wallpaper followed. The paper was hung lightly on the fabric to avoid pushing the paste through the muslin to the planks. Each seam was overlapped and rolled, and paper and fabric tightened up together.¹⁵ Ceilings were hung with canvas as well, and followed the methods in Arrowsmith's book. The ceiling application seems to have outlived the wall techniques. It was done in different parts of the country as late as the 1940's. There were advantages to a canvas ceiling: no cracks, no chipping of paint, and no heavy materials overhead.¹⁶

A mail order catalog from 1897 states that: "we do not trim wall paper because the edges being exposed, if damaged in transit, would render perfect matching impossible."¹⁷ Another catalog from around 1903 shows a young consumer trimming one edge of the pasted paper with household scissors. Evidently, buyers were expected to trim paper on one side and overlap. This advice implies that standards for pasting, trimming and matching were easy-going at the d-i-y level — a suggestion that is borne out by surviving installations.

¹² See bibliography for three large volumes.

¹³ *Working Methods*, 147.

¹⁴ Jennings, 39.

¹⁵ A chapter on canvassing is found in Kelly, *Expert Paper-Hanger*, 105; information about canvassing is scattered throughout the volumes put out by *The Painter's Magazine*.

¹⁶ The best account is found in *American Painter and Decorator*, January, 1930, p. 46.

¹⁷ Sears, Roebuck Catalog (1897), p. 317.

The butt seam was finally recognized in the 20's as the correct seaming method for professionals.¹⁸ Even so, "one-edge work" continued, especially among paperhangers working in city tenements. These men were expected to hang enormous amounts of paper — averaging 25 to 30 rolls a day — and working conditions were often casual, if not sloppy.¹⁹ This was the era of the perforated factory edge: a mechanic would snap the roll smartly against a doorway, and one edge flew off. Then, the paper would be hung with the usual overlap.

Perforating trimmers resembling a small pizza wheel (sometimes called casing knives), were used along moldings. These hardly produced high-class work, but that was not the goal. The goal was to get through one's quota for the day. There were other types of seam rollers and casing knives for those who catered to the high-class trade. In these environs, lining paper was often used. The uptown paperhanger's tool kit included miter boxes and saws for creating panel edgings from wooden trim. These wooden moldings, which were used for picture rails as well, seem to have come into the trade shortly after 1900.

A more common type of paneling consisted of balanced arrangements of field, stiles and rails done with special wallpaper borders, binders, and plain and figured papers. But, stock wallpaper could also be cut into components. Paneling techniques gave great latitude to the paperhanger, and seem to have been popular, though they are little known today. In French paneling, borders ran through obstacles such as fireplaces and doorways. In effect, each wall was outlined. Space paneling broke up walls into discrete rectangles. Occasionally an appliqué bouquet of flowers or some other paper decoration was centered in a space panel. A common formula was 3-5-3; for example, one central panel of 50 inches wide could be flanked by two panels, each 30 inches in width.²⁰

The technique is reminiscent of the phenomenon known as "decors" — de luxe exercises in revival styles that were a significant part of French production in the mid-19th century.²¹ Though decors themselves seem to have been little used here, variations of the style were popular and often known as "fresco papers." Many of these were hung using the conventions just described for space paneling. With this background, the paneling done by paperhangers in the early 20th century for a popular market comes into focus. It was a revival of high-style effects, except that much humbler materials were used.

Modern, 1940-1975

The modern period is defined by changes in material (vinyl, handscreens, prepasted) more than technique. Manuals assume that butt seams are the norm, and show little concern for spoiling paper with excess moisture. That may indicate that washable paper became widespread after Imperial patented the first washable paper in 1933. The first prepasted paper (Trimz) appeared in the late 40's. Another important benchmark was reached during the 50's — universal factory pretrimming for mass market wallpaper.

¹⁸ *Working Methods*, 257.

¹⁹ "...hanging paper, lesser quality: one edge work...40 rolls per 8 hours; ...medium quality of paper, two-edge, 24 rolls per 8 hours; ...high quality papers, two-edge, 20 rolls per 8 hours..." John Ehrhardt, *Estimating Painting and Decorating...* (New York: National Painter's Magazine, 1936), p. 67. "On the cheapest class of work . . . only one side of the paper trimmed (commonly called "slap work"), a paper hanger should hang 40 to 44 single rolls per 8-hr. day . . ." Frank Walker, *The Building Estimator's Reference Book* (Chicago: Frank Walker Co., 1937), p. 1190.

²⁰ Diagrams are shown in Young, 118.

²¹ Jacque, *Les Decors de Papier Peint*.

The application of oilcloth to walls had come in the early 20th century. Vinyls were developed by mid-century as the next iteration of the idea. Laminations of fabric- and paper-backing followed, and resulted in a new product — 54" commercial wallcoverings. Adhesive manufacturers developed premixed vinyl adhesives to hang them, but this switch from wallpaper to wallcovering traveled a somewhat bumpy road. Guy Cooper's manual, *Hanging Modern Wallcoverings* (1971), was inspired by this period of trouble-shooting.

These materials were not really new. Muslin-backings were used in the 1870's to stabilize embossed and gilded papers, and powdered dextrin was added to wheat paste in the 1920's to strengthen it.²² But, what was different was the scale. Commercial wallcoverings became the most significant area of growth for the wallcoverings industry after 1975, and possibly sooner.

The methods for hanging regular wallpaper around doors and windows depicted in *Practical Instruction For Paperhanging* (1946), fig. 37-39, would not be acceptable today. "Filling back" involved splitting sheets in order to save paper and time. It resulted in many additional vertical and even horizontal seams. Since wallpaper was still relatively cheap, it was probably assumed that it would be replaced before the seams started to show. Reminiscent of the 19th century advice for placing a full ashlar block at the base in hallways, Ewing advises a full block at the bottom for the small block-patterns popular in kitchens and bathrooms in the post-WWII era.

The manual's section on paneling shows double-cutting on a plaster wall, sometimes known as inlaying. Double-cuts are made by cutting through two layers of paper, discarding the excess, and rolling to a butt seam. The 3:5:3 panel is shown in fig. 75. But, there is no mention of the need to miter wooden moldings, and the paneling advice itself was probably outdated by the early 50's.

Border use subsides in this period. Sidewall papers were cut right to the ceiling line, and when borders appear, they are often overlaid. No doubt thinner papers (which show underlaps more) had something to do with this change. In the high end, handscreens evolved rapidly and had all but replaced blockprints by the 50's.²³ In general, lining paper was used more.

By 1975, the product was costing more but being used less, and "wallcoverings" had for all practical purposes replaced "wallpaper."

Remarks on the bibliography

Not all citations in footnotes are included in the bibliography.

The Papered Wall is the best general source of information about wallpaper. Lesley Hoskin's introduction traces the evolution of wallpaper literature. Wallpaper study today is unsettled. The art historical approach, which consigns wallpaper among the minor decorative arts, is still dominant. And yet, the fields of social history, popular culture and consumer studies have suggested new and perhaps more productive ways of looking at wallpaper.

Catherine Lynn's epic *Wallpaper In America* (1980) remains an essential resource. *Wallpaper, A History* is listed here because it contains the complete set of Papillon's mid-18th century drawings, with annotation. Among the traditional historians of wallpaper, Eric Entwisle understood the practical side of wallpaper the most, and for good reason. He was a longtime director of the WPM (Wall Paper Manufacturers, Ltd., a near-monopoly). His *Book of*

²² For muslin, Richard Nylander, "Elegant Late Nineteenth Century Wallpapers," *Antiques*, 122 (Aug. 1982), Plate 8. For dextrin, Young, 57.

²³ Lois and William Kazenbach, *The Practical Book of American Wallpaper* (Philadelphia: Lippencott, 1951).

Wallpaper is dated but still valuable. Two of his articles that focus on Thomas Bromwich, the first prominent English paperhanger, are included. The contributions of Bernard Jacque to the study of wallpaper have been enormous. It's unfortunate that most of his work is not available in English.²⁴ The same problem is found with other European scholarship, notably that of Geert Wisse, who wrote an important chapter on installation for *Le Papier Peint En Arabesques*.

There are only a few picture books showing U. S. interiors, but they are valuable. A good example is *Inside Texas*. Half its 300 photos show wallpaper. Of particular interest are the ones showing slightly sagging shiplapped and canvassed walls. Another useful volume is Seale's *The Tasteful Interlude*.

Aside from technique, questions like: who hung this paper? how much did they get paid? how did they live? are also important. Historic paperhangers remain elusive. It seems that the trade was neither large enough nor organized enough to have left a trace in political and labor history. Marla Miller's article is mainly about lady tailors in early America, but it includes fresh insights into rural trades. Though women did not compete with male installers openly, it's quite possible and even probable that there were female professionals. At any rate, there's no doubt that many women hung paper part-time for friends and family.²⁵ The article "How To Paper A Room," which appeared in a farm journal in 1872, shows women hard at work, full skirts and all. Practical d-i-y paperhanging advice like this was rare in the 19th century, although the activity was widespread. Another article of this type is: "Suggestions On Wall Papering."

For books about paperhanging in the U. S., Kelly's *The Expert Paper-Hanger* (1912) seems the most reliable, followed by Young's *Wallpaper and Wallpaper Hanging* (1926). Both men were instructors at paperhanging trade schools. *Working Methods*, published by the Master House Painters in 1922, became a long-running bible for its successor organization, the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America (PDCA). The manual was updated in 1949 and 1975.

The information in trade periodicals is more fluid than that found in books, so reading them is helpful for understanding the workaday world of the paperhanger. In contrast, little practical advice is found in high style "Decorative Art" types of periodicals, and in popular journals. The outstanding trade periodical is *House Decorating and Painting*, a Philadelphia-based journal which ran 1885-1898 under editors A. A. Kelly and A. S. Jennings. Even though the subscriber base was boss painters, information for journeymen predominates. A similar practical bent is found in the union's publications, but these have three handicaps: they are much later; they are much less frequent; and, paperhanging advice is mixed in with that intended for painters, glaziers and plasterers. Look for titles that include the word "Brotherhood."

²⁴ But see his "An Economic Approach to Scenic Wallpaper" in *French Scenic Wallpapers*, the English-language version of the catalogue raisonné about French Scenics; also, "From 'papiers en feuil' to 'decor' . . ."; and, his articles in *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, the former journal of the Bard Graduate Center.

²⁵ They were encouraged by advice books: "it is equally important that young girls should be taught to do some species of handicraft that generally is done by men, and especially with reference to the frequent emigration to new territories where well-trained mechanics are scarce. To hang wall-paper, repair locks, glaze windows, and mend various household articles, requires a skill in the use of tools which every young girl should acquire . . ." Catherine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *American Woman's Home* (New York: J. B. Ford and Co., 1869), p. 230.

A. A. Kelly published *The Master Painter* magazine (later *Master Painter and Decorator*) starting in 1895. This had an independent stance and reported on the activities of both the boss painters (Master House Painters) and the union (Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers). As such it is a useful cross-check for claims from either group. Note that these organizations, even at their peak, did not include all paperhangers, many of whom ran small shops, or were sole practitioners or part-timers.

Among academic papers, Foster's "Wallpaper in Richmond" is interesting for the light it sheds on an individual: Francis Regnault, Jr. He was the son of a prominent Philadelphia paperhanger and claimed that he "served an apprenticeship" in the early 19th century. Since the apprenticeship system was all but broken, it was probably informal. Nevertheless, his career as retailer/paperhanger in Richmond, VA was successful. He worked at Prestwoud Plantation in Clarksville, VA, in the 1830's and hung three scenics which survive.

The special issue of the AIC journal from 1981 is an important collection of papers about wallpaper conservation — and certainly the largest ever assembled. For contemporary information about canvassing and papering shiplap walls, there is only the article by Linda Whitehead for *Old House Journal* (available online) and a small self-published manual by a veteran paperhanger, Bill Reimers. "Decorating The Appalachian House" is a unique contribution to the literature. It's a fascinating look at how people under severe constraints beautified their dwellings by using newspaper and magazines as wallpaper.

The best collection of paperhangers' daybooks and diaries is at the Downs Collection, Winterthur Library, which includes: Holmes, (1814-23); Wait, (1826); Wilson, (1837-38); Philbrick, (1827-44); Crocker, (1835-45); Hubbard, (1844-48); Bissell, (1850); Moulton, (1854); Nixon, (1869); Orcutt, (1863-71); Brewster, (1871); Lane, (1879); Clark, (1894); and an anonymous New York City painter/paperhanger (1903). Winterthur also collects business directories for major cities. These have information about paper-hangings manufacturers and, often, individual paperhangers. Other institutions that collect directories are the Library Company (Philadelphia), Historic Society of Philadelphia, Boston Research Library, Library of Congress, and the New York Public Library.

The U. S. government study: "Paper Hanging: An Analysis . . ." from 1925 is important for statistics, including a citation of 300,000 rolls production for 1923. Other documentary sources include the voluminous advertisements collected by Prime, Dow and Gottesman into book form. These are still valuable. They are firsthand reports about how wallpaper was made, sold and hung, even if some of the references remain obscure. The internet is an outstanding conduit for information and lately many state archives have been posted. A good example is Wisconsin's "Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics" for 1890. Conditions of the paperhanger workforce are described on p. 29.

Though paperhanging is hardly mentioned, the Josiah F. Bumstead journals are a vivid chronicle showing mid-19th century paperstainers on the cusp of becoming manufacturers. Photocopies of ten volumes (1840-1860) are in the collections of Historic New England, with finding aid. My article about distemping on batten/canvas/paper underlayments at Kathrineberg might interest those who find similar references. These methods were popular in Europe, but seem little used in the U. S. after 1800, perhaps because painting and wall materials improved, or, because wallpaper itself had become so popular.

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