

THE WAYSIDE

Minute Man National Historical Park

Piazza Room and Una's Room Wallpaper



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Purpose and Scope

On August 28, 2012 there was a small fire in the northwest corner of the north wing of The Wayside at Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, Massachusetts (MIMA). The fire started on the roof, and activated the building's interior fire suppression system in that wing. Though the fire was easily contained and did not cause extensive damage, the first story Piazza Room and Una Hawthorne's Bedroom (Una's Room) on the second story did sustain water damage. The damage was primarily to the ceilings and wallpapers in both rooms, as well as some of the woodwork.

At the request of Nancy Nelson, MIMA Superintendent, Terrie Wallace, Ph.D., MIMA Curator, contacted Eric Breitreutz, Chief, Historic Structure Research & Documentation Branch (HSRD, formerly Historic Architecture Program), for assistance with the damaged wallpaper and advice on replacement wallpapers. James Lee, Architectural Conservator, was asked to contact Terrie and assist the park in this matter. To that end James contacted the park, visited the archives and site, and researched historic wallpapers.

MIMA has PMIS projects slated for FY2014 that include the replacement/reproduction of some historic wallpapers at The Wayside, which would be an opportune time to reproduce and replace the wallpapers in the Piazza Room and Una's Room. However, the park would like an interim solution in order to assess the possibility of opening the rooms during the FY2013 season. The recommendations for the replacement wallpapers for the Piazza Room and Una's Room and a possible interim treatment are included in this brief report.

For the purposes of this consultation and report, it is presumed that the interpretive period for The Wayside of circa 1922 will not be changed. Furthermore, it is assumed that the documentation and conclusions in *The Wayside, Historic Structure Report Part II, Architectural Data Section*, by Orville Carroll, June 1968 (The Wayside HSR) are accurate.

Methodology

James Lee reviewed Terrie Wallace's summaries of information about the wallpaper, and visited the MIMA archives and The Wayside for further research and assessment. Terrie's summaries were quite comprehensive and provided most of the required documentation (some of which was used in the subsequent sections). At The Wayside the wallpapers were examined, measured, and photographed. Samples of the current wallpapers in both rooms were taken and are stored in the files at the Historic Architecture, Conservation, and Engineering Center, Lowell, Massachusetts (HACE). The Wayside HSR was read for information pertaining to the Piazza Room and Una's Room, and the wallpapers in those rooms. The HACE files were researched for samples of wallpaper from The Wayside, reports and memos concerning the rooms in question, and contract files. In addition, research was done on websites that specialize in historic wallpapers and wallpaper reproduction. The current owner of the Waterhouse Wallhangings Collection was also consulted over the telephone and via email.

Piazza Room

The historic wallpaper for the Piazza Room appropriate to the 1922 interpretive period was identified in The Wayside HSR as a red-check patterned wallpaper that was first applied in 1899. This was based in part on an 1899 letter from Mrs. Lothrop, which stated “‘...new [wall] paper in two libraries . . .’ (Reference to red-checked paper in the Piazza Room and plain red paper in Mrs. Hawthorne’s Parlour.)” The HSR apparently interpreted Mrs. Lothrop’s 1899 letter as a reference to the installation of the red-checked wallpaper in the Piazza Room (HSR, 38). The physical evidence documented in the HSR included the following description: “Type of wallpaper is a red-checked pattern over a pink field with horizontal and vertical red pin stripes and vertical yellow pin stripes. First applied in 1899, and subsequently repaired in the northwest corner (HSR, 70).” Orville Carroll photographed the existing wallpaper in 1966, which appears to be the check-patterned paper (figs. 1 and 2). In the HSR he recommended removing the damaged wallpaper in the Piazza Room and replacing it with a reproduction wallpaper matching the 1899 paper (HSR, 70 and 74).

Orville Carroll consulted with Dorothy Waterhouse, Waterhouse Wallhangings, on several wallpapers at The Wayside in 1968. Waterhouse noted that the wallpaper in the Piazza Room was impossible to reproduce. That same year Allen-Doane Company, Boston, MA, gave Orville Carroll an estimate to reproduce the Piazza Room red-checked wallpaper through a silk screen process for \$300 (Architectural Conservator’s Research Notes, MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 5). There was no documentation of follow up with Allen-Doane, but a letter from Mrs. Albert Douglas at Brunswick & Fils, New York, dated April 25, 1969, said that the tiny plaid from the Piazza Room could be printed. However, she noted that the pattern size would have to be increased 50 to 100 percent, because the silk screen process could not match the detail of the small plaid that was originally roller printed (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 6). That letter included a black-and-white photostat of the paper that matches a wallpaper sample in the archives (see subsequent paragraphs). Again, there was no documentation of follow up with Brunswick & Fils probably because the increased size of the pattern was not acceptable for the reproduction.

In 1970 Orville contacted Bernard Scott at Waterhouse for further assistance with the Piazza Room wallpaper. In August 1970 there was a requisition and purchase order with Waterhouse Wallhangings, 420 Boylston Street, Boston, MA, for 30 rolls of red plaid wallpaper, 20¼ inches wide, for the Piazza Room, at \$10.00 per roll for a cost of \$300.00. Orville Carroll had provided a sample of the wallpaper for the order (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 5). The following month there was a requisition to remove the wallpaper in the Piazza Room, and in January through April 1971 Herbert Rudkin, Canton, MA, was hired for paper hanging at The Wayside (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 6). That work presumably included hanging the 1899 reproduction wallpaper in the Piazza Room.

The MIMA archives included some wallpaper samples from the Piazza Room, one dated 1900–1902 that appeared to be the closest match the description of the wallpaper in the HSR (it also matches the photostat copy sent to Brunswick & Fils). It is a red paper with dark (black and dark red) horizontal and vertical lines, and lighter (perhaps yellow) vertical lines laid over that forming the checkered pattern (fig. 3). The lines have the appearance of small hatch marks giving the paper a textured appearance. Photographs of the room taken in 1966 depict a checker-patterned wallpaper, which is similar to the small sample in the archives (figs. 1 and 2). That paper is also similar to the wallpaper currently in the Piazza Room, suggesting that it was the paper used by Waterhouse for the reproduction. However, the

reproduction paper has black horizontal hatched lines with red applied in a diagonal pattern over a pink ground (fig. 4). In 1972 Orville Carroll noted that the red-checked wallpaper in the Piazza Room was a poor reproduction based on the 1899 historic wallpaper (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 5). Based on the correspondence and the final product, the historic red-checked wallpaper was difficult to reproduce through the silk screen process.

As previously described, the wallpaper in the Piazza Room was damaged by the water from the fire suppression system. The northwest corner has the most damage (fig. 5). There and around the north window the wallpaper has become un-adhered and is water stained. There is additional damage over the fireplace mantel and north of the chimney where the wallpaper is water stained and un-adhered (fig. 6). There are also areas on the south and west walls where the wallpaper is open at the seams. The existing wallpaper is 19 inches wide with matched seams and no overlap with the exception of one piece on the north wall. A piece of the reproduction wallpaper was removed from the site and will be stored in the HACE files in Lowell, MA. The damaged wallpaper will have to be removed and replaced with an appropriate reproduction wallpaper.

Una's Room

The wallpaper in Una's Room was thoroughly researched by Orville Carroll. The HSR concluded that the wallpaper in the room in 1968 was the historic wallpaper dating to circa 1922. Orville's research determined that the wallpaper was the "Queen Anne" pattern, No. 6136, produced by the Thomas Strahan Company. Photographs of Una's Room in 1967 show the historic wallpaper in-situ (figs. 7 and 8). That wallpaper matches the "Queen Anne" pattern.

Correspondence between Orville Carroll and S. Abbot Smith, Chairman of the Board, Thomas Strahan Company, Chelsea, Massachusetts, in April 1968 confirmed that the wallpaper in Una's Room was the "Queen Anne" pattern, No. 6136 first produced by the Thomas Strahan Company in 1917 or 1918, and popular for many years. Smith also said that the rollers for the pattern were available, but that it would be expensive to reproduce just one room lot (Architectural Conservator's Research Notes, MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 5). The Wayside HSR, June 1968, included the following description and recommendation for the wallpaper in Una's Room: "We have no definite date as to the application of the existing wallpaper in this room. In 1922, Mrs. Lothrop bought 14 rolls of wallpaper and also 8 rolls of wallpaper. The 14 rolls of paper is approximately the amount required to paper this room. The redecorating of the room would also correspond with the laying the new birch floor in 1922. It is recommended that we accept the wallpaper as 1922, and repair only where damaged on the north wall (HSR, 72)." Though the date of installation may not have been conclusively determined, the wallpaper was the "Queen Anne" pattern produced by the Thomas Strahan Company during the 1922 time period. Further correspondence from Smith in December 1968 indicated they could produce a room lot of that paper "when, as, and if you want it," the pattern is the one with the "little detached baskets and birds." Orville was pleased that the company was interested in the project and had the rollers for reproducing the wallpaper (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 5). However, at the time the historic wallpaper was left in place and repaired as recommended in the HSR.

Subsequent correspondence with Paul Chase of the Thomas Strahan Company in 1971 determined that the rollers no longer existed and the wallpaper could not be reproduced

(MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 5). A small sample of the wallpaper returned with Mr. Chases letter matches the “Queen Anne” pattern used in Una’s Room and has the “TS” watermark on the overlap.

Since the rollers for the “Queen Anne” pattern were no longer available, estimates were sought for the reproduction of the wallpaper in Una’s Room. In 1974 Waterhouse Wallhangings was the lowest of three bids for the reproduction of the historic wallpaper for Una’s Room at a cost of \$1,703 (other bids included Allen – Doane & Co., Boston: \$1800; and Bounsweig & Fils, New York, NY: \$2000). Waterhouse was contracted to reproduce the “Queen Anne” pattern including artwork and preparing 10 screens to print 28 rolls of the approved reproduction. The purchase order was issued for Waterhouse Wallhangings, Boston, Massachusetts on June 14, 1974, PX 1820 4 0645, and invoice # 543 for the job was dated January 20, 1975 (Curator’s Office Files: Wayside - Wallpaper). However, later documentation indicated that the Waterhouse reproduction was not installed at that time, and was considered a poor reproduction.

A memorandum from Orville Carroll to the MIMA Superintendent dated August 2, 1983 noted that the existing wallpaper in Una’s Room was the Thomas Strahan “Queen Anne.” He further noted that the wallpaper was pulling away from the plaster walls and that the only solution may be to reproduce the wallpaper. He suggested using the “small roll leftover from the original job” to match the paper (HACE, Correspondence files). That memo confirms that the historic wallpaper was still in place in 1983.

Apparently following Orville’s advice MIMA Curator, Lynne Leopold-Sharp, prepared a Project Directive on August 18, 1983 to produce silk screened wallpaper to match historic wallpaper in Una’s Room at The Wayside. The estimated cost for the project was \$5,500 (Curator’s Office Files: Wayside - Wallpaper).

The historic wallpaper in Una’s Room was still in place in 1986. Orville’s memo to the Chief, Historic Preservation, North Atlantic Region, on February 26, 1986 noted that the existing wallpaper was probably the “Queen Anne” pattern and that it should be reproduced. He also wrote that “the wallpaper reproduced by Waterhouse Wallhangings is not acceptable because of its poor quality paper and excessive width of 30 inches (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 5).”

On March 13, 1986 Andrea Gilmore, Architectural Conservator, wrote the MIMA Curator that on February 25th she had taken the unused pieces of the historic wallpaper in Una’s Room and encapsulated them in mylar. Gilmore noted that the pieces did not contain a full pattern repeat, but could be used for color matching. Her estimate for reproducing the wallpaper was \$6,875. Gilmore’s memo suggests that this estimate was based on other estimates that the wallpaper reproduction company Scalamandre had recently provided, and was not a direct quote for this project (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 4). The records did not include any documentation of Requests for Proposals or bids for reproducing the historic wallpaper in Una’s Room in 1986.

In a memo to E. Blain Cliver, March 13, 1986, Gilmore wrote that the park had removed all of the historic wallpaper from Una’s Room on February 27th and 28th (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 4).

Another memo from Orville Carroll to the MIMA Curator written December 8, 1986 basically summarized the situation. He included a piece of the unused wallpaper noting that

it was the “Queen Anne” pattern, either No. 6136, 9819 or 6186, manufactured by the Thomas Strahan Wallpaper Company in 1922. He wrote that he had contacted the Strahan Company about the wallpaper again, but was unsuccessful in locating the original rollers for the wallpaper. The company was then owned by U.S. Gypsum Company (MIMA 39645, Box 1, Folder 4).

In July 1987 MCM Wallcovering Installations, Boston, Massachusetts wrote the MIMA Curator with a description of the process used for installing the wallpaper in Una’s Room (Curator’s Office Files: Wayside - Wallpaper). There was no indication of where the wallpaper had been purchased, but the correspondence indicated that the current wallpaper was installed at that time.

Terrie Wallace’s review of the MIMA archives found a small piece of the “Queen Anne” wallpaper referred to by Orville Carroll, as well as a piece returned with the letter from Thomas Strahan Company. In addition to reviewing the archival documentation and summarizing her findings, Terrie contacted Andrea Gilmore, former curator Lynne Leopold-Sharp, and Scalamandre for information about the reproduction wallpaper. Lynne Leopold-Sharp had no specific recollection of the project or details of the wallpaper reproduction. Gilmore believed that Scalamandre had done the reproduction, but Terrie’s follow up with that company found no records of the project.

James Lee did find the larger remnants of the historic wallpaper encapsulated by Andrea Gilmore in 1986 in Lowell, MA (HACE Wallpaper Files). The remnants appear to be the cut-offs from the circa 1922 wallpaper installation, and as Gilmore noted there is no full pattern repeat (fig. 12). However, the files included some of the damaged wallpaper removed from Una’s Room in 1986, and the various pieces can be used to determine the full repeat of the “Queen Anne” pattern. The wallpaper was 20 inches wide with overlaps. The printed pattern was approximately 18¼ inches wide, and the repeat is about 16 inches.

Research on various websites confirmed that the wallpaper in Una’s Room was “The Queen Anne,” pattern No. 6136 produced by the Thomas Strahan Company. Though that pattern was reproduced for the park by Waterhouse Wallhangings in 1974 (albeit too wide), the current owner of Waterhouse collection does not have the rollers or screens for that pattern.

The water damage in Una’s Room is more extensive than in the Piazza Room (figs. 9–11). All of the wallpaper is water stained. In the northwest corner the wallpaper has either fallen off or been removed. In other areas the wallpaper is peeling from the walls, and a majority is unadhered. Examination of the existing wallpaper and the manufacture’s watermark on the overlap determined that it is a Waterhouse Wallhangings reproduction paper, and it appears to be a silk-screened paper. Apparently the wallpaper reproduced and ordered in 1974/75 was used in 1986 when the historic wallpaper was removed and replaced. The existing wallpaper is 27¾ inches wide with a 27 inch wide printed area and a ¾ inch overlap (varying). However, the pattern, pattern size, and repeat (about 16 inches) closely match the historic wallpaper samples. The width of the wallpaper and the Waterhouse watermark appears to confirm that it is the paper that Orville Carroll objected to because of its excessive width and poor quality paper. A piece of the reproduction wallpaper was removed from the site for comparison with the historic wallpaper samples. It will be stored in the HACE files in Lowell, MA. The existing reproduction wallpaper will have to be removed, and replaced with an appropriate reproduction wallpaper.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the park remove the damaged wallpaper in both the Piazza Room and Una's Room, and replace it with reproduction wallpaper matching the historic wallpapers. The historic wallpapers were identified in The Wayside HSR and the MIMA archival documents. Those documents and the historic wallpaper remnants should be used to guide the reproduction of the historic wallpapers.

The reproduction wallpaper in Piazza Room should match the red-checked pattern of the small piece identified as the 1900–1902 Piazza Room wallpaper. This appears to be the closest historic wallpaper to the date of interpretation, and also appears to be the wallpaper Orville Carroll used for the reproduction in 1970. The wallpaper should be 19-20 inches wide with an overlap as specified for the reproduction in 1970 (the current paper is 19 inches with no overlap, which could be $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches). The red-checked reproduction wallpaper should be installed over a line paper. The reproduction of the checkered pattern may encounter the same issues with the size of the pattern in a screened vs. roller printed paper that Orville found in 1970. In that case other options for reproducing the historic pattern, such as a digital printing method, may be explored.

Another concern in the Piazza Room is the different wall substrates. The room has a horizontal board wainscot with plaster above that. These surfaces will expand and contract at different rates possibly causing the wallpaper to develop small horizontal tears (some are currently evident). Solutions to this potential problem should be addressed during the installation of the liner paper and reproduction wallpaper.

The reproduction wallpaper in Una's Room should match the historic wallpaper identified as the Thomas Strahan Company "Queen Anne" pattern No. 6136. The reproduction wallpaper currently in the room was wider than the historic wallpaper, and should not be used for the reproduction. Samples of the historic wallpaper in the Lowell, MA files should be used to determine the pattern, size, repeat, and color of the reproduction. The wallpaper should be 19-20 inches wide with an overlap, and have an $18\frac{1}{4}$ inch pattern with a 16 inch repeat (to be verified). The reproduction wallpaper should be installed over a line paper. The 1966 photographs of the room should be useful in determining how the pattern was historically applied and aid in replicating the historic appearance.

If the park would like to open these rooms for the FY2013 season, it is recommended that MIMA approach this project as a two year wallpaper replacement and reproduction project. The project should begin in FY2013 with the removal of the damaged paper, preparation of the walls, and the installation of a liner paper. The liner paper would give a uniform finish to the rooms and could be identified as a preservation project in progress. Additional information could be presented by interpreters and/or on poster board to inform the visiting public of the historic wallpaper and the preservation project to reproduce that wallpaper. This would be the interim solution for the FY2013 touring season. For FY2014 the park should develop Requests for Proposals (RFP) for both projects for the PMIS funded wallpaper replacement and reproduction. Alternately, if the park keeps the rooms closed for the FY2013 season the reproduction and replacement project could be accomplished under the PMIS funded projects for FY2014. The Historic Structure Research & Documentation Branch would assist MIMA with the preparation of interpretive materials during the FY2013 preservation in progress project, and with any RFPs for the wallpaper reproduction and replacement projects.



Figure 1. The Wayside, Piazza Room, looking north showing historic wallpaper over mantel, and on north and west walls, 1966 (MIMA Archives).



Figure 2. The Wayside, Piazza Room, showing historic wallpaper on south wall, 1966 (MIMA Archives).



Figure 3. The Wayside, Piazza Room, historic red-checked wallpaper sample (1900-1902) in MIMA Archives.

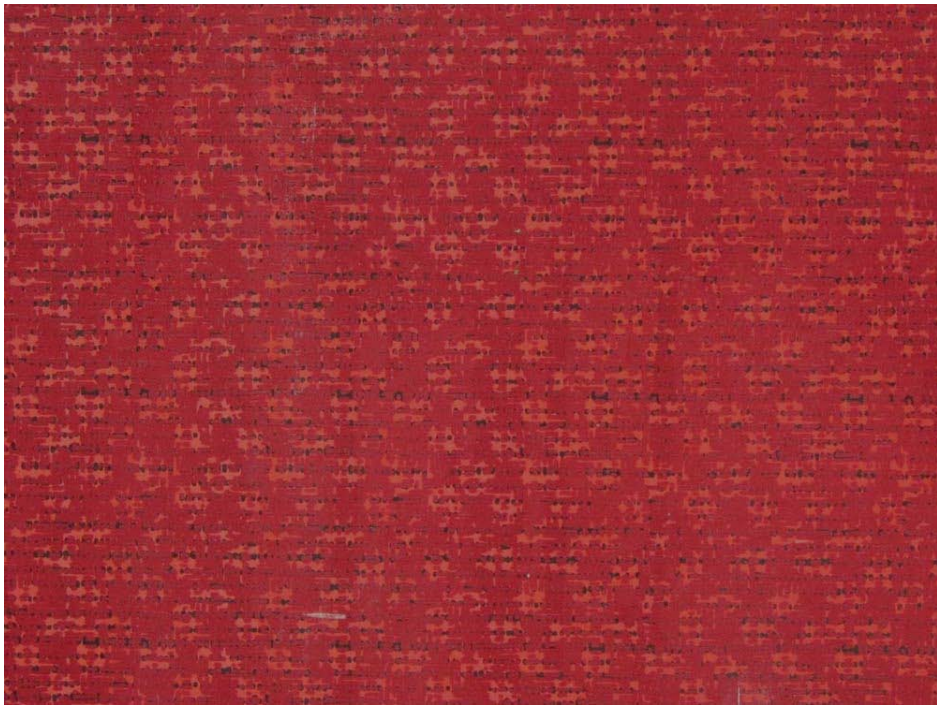


Figure 4. The Wayside, Piazza Room, current reproduction red-checked wallpaper installed in 1971 (actual color is slightly darker).



Figure 5. The Wayside, Piazza Room, northwest corner showing damaged and missing wallpaper, October 2012 (James Lee).



Figure 6. The Wayside, Piazza Room, mantel and southeast corner showing damaged wallpaper, October 2012 (James Lee).



Figure 7. The Wayside, Una's Room, east wall and mantel showing historic wallpaper, by Orville Carroll 1967 (MIMA Archives).



Figure 8. The Wayside, Una's Room, southwest corner showing historic wallpaper, by Orville Carroll 1967 (MIMA Archives).



Figure 9. The Wayside, Una's Room, east wall and mantel showing water damaged wallpaper, October 2012 (James Lee).



Figure 10. The Wayside, Una's Room, southwest corner showing damaged wallpaper, October 2012 (James Lee).



Figure 11. The Wayside, Una's Room, northwest corner showing missing and water damaged wallpaper, October 2012 (James Lee).



Figure 12. Remnants from Una's Room of the "Queen Anne" pattern No. 6136 by the Thomas Strahan Company, stored in HACE Wallpaper Files, Lowell, MA.