

Japanese Wallpaper in Canada, 1880s–1930s

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Résumé

Cette étude porte sur les papiers peints japonais exportés au Canada (et dans d'autres pays occidentaux) depuis l'époque du Meiji (1868–1912). La vogue européenne des tentures Renaissance en cuir repoussé, à partir des années 1870, l'ouverture du Japon au commerce et à la technologie de l'Occident, et la technique japonaise traditionnelle du papier imitant le cuir ont donné lieu à la production de papiers peints simili-cuir de grande qualité fabriqués à la main pour le marché occidental. Sous les auspices du gouvernement japonais, la première fabrique, dirigée par Alexander Rottmann de Grande-Bretagne, s'établit à l'Imprimerie impériale de Yokohama vers 1883. Ses produits et ceux d'établissements postérieurs, de même que les toiles de ramie et d'autres genres de revêtements muraux japonais, furent exportés en petite quantité, mais en nombre croissant, vers le Canada où ils firent concurrence aux produits occidentaux. Le coût élevé des importations amena les fabricants canadiens (et occidentaux en général) à offrir des imitations, notamment des toiles de ramie gaufrées, articles très recherchés au début du XX^e siècle. Comme d'autres produits japonais transportés par le Canadien Pacifique à partir des années 1880, le papier peint contribua à faire connaître aux Canadiens l'art décoratif japonais.

Abstract

This paper describes Japanese wallpaper exported to Canada (and other Western nations) beginning in the Meiji Restoration Period (1868–1912). The European fashion for embossed Renaissance leather hangings from the 1870s, the openness of Japan to Western trade and technology and the long-standing Japanese paper craft of making imitation leather led to the production of high quality handmade "leather" paper hangings for the Western market. Under the auspices of the Japanese government and the leadership of Alexander Rottmann of Great Britain, the first factory began operating at the Imperial Printing Works in Yokohama about 1883. Its goods and those of subsequent shops, together with grass cloths and other types of Japanese wall coverings, were exported in small but increasing amounts to Canada where they competed with Western manufactures. The costly imports inspired Canadian (and Western makers in general) to put out imitations, of which embossed grass cloths were the most popular during the early twentieth century. Like other Japanese commodities shipped via the Canadian Pacific Railway from the 1880s, wallpaper played its part in conveying elements of Japanese decorative art to Canadians.

In the halls of Eldon House, London, Ontario, an embossed Japanese leather paper permits material historians a rare look at one of the highest quality wall coverings marketed in Canada during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Purchased in Japan after 1892¹ by members of the Harris family, the richly decorated pattern in high relief displays owls perched on acanthus leaves in over ten colours; gold lacquered leaves and terra-cotta ground stand out among shades of green, pink and brown. Its swirly style, sometimes referred to as "Modern English" by British contemporaries, was inspired during the Aesthetic

Movement (1860s–90s), a period of many influences including Japanese arts and crafts. The paper's selvage bears a gold embossed mark, "Leopold & Co London & Japan," a London trading firm specializing in Japanese goods at the end of the century. No pattern like it has been found in available sources.²

Little has been written about the wallpaper made in Japan during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Present evidence suggests that its manufacture and export was the result of two influences in Great Britain during the Aesthetic Movement. The first was a revived interest in early embossed leather hangings at

a time when papermaking technology using wood and a host of other materials enabled feasible imitations by wallpaper makers. The second was Japan's openness to Western trade and technology during the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912). The coincidence of the two brought the West into contact with the Japanese craft of making imitation leather. An article in the *American Artisan* in 1870 described a manufactory near Yeddo (Tokyo) where paper, previously produced near Nagasaki, was pressed into a variety of imitation leathers which were "washable without injury . . . due to the [superior] mode manufacture."³ Used for many purposes, the "leather" cost eight to fourteen cents per sheet measuring 60 cm by 42 cm (24 1/2 inches by 16 1/2 inches).

British historians state that the embossing of leather wallpaper for the Western market began in the mid-1870s. This imitation may have been the same as made by craftsmen who were visited in 1877 by Dr. Christopher Dresser, noted British botanist, artist and author who toured Japan to collect samples of art-manufactures for Western makers.⁴ Some may have been exhibited at the 1878 Exposition universelle et internationale in Paris where Japanese exhibits in the wallpaper class won three awards. French historians list "Ikébé (K.)" as a winner of a bronze medal, and "Haibara" and "Imai" as recipients of honourable mentions,⁵ although the list gives no indication that prizes were for leather papers. As early as the 1860s imitation leather was exported to the United States. Referred to as "oil leather papers," they were more expensive than later varieties and used economically to panel cabinets and line furniture.⁶ Perhaps they were the same as the "stamped" leather papers made near Tokyo which Christopher Dresser wrote were the chief export variety prior to 1877.⁷

By the 1880s Japanese leather wallpapers displaying international designs were finding an assured market in the West. Historians credit Alexander Rottmann, "a man of fine artistic taste,"⁸ with its growth. He began by engaging Japanese artisans in small shops and ended by establishing a large enterprise under the auspices of the Japanese government. At the Imperial Printing Works in Yokohama, where bank notes, primers and state documents were printed, Rottmann gained the assistance of government officials in setting up a section for the manufacture of embossed leather hangings in styles and in a format (rolls) suited to the Western market. He organized the house of Rottmann, Strome and Co.,

Yokohama and London, in 1883 with exclusive rights to export leathers. Some displayed Japanese elements of design, others imitated Renaissance leathers. A number were designed by well-known British artists such as Arthur Silver and Harry Napper. As Western demand increased the government opened a Tokyo factory. About 1890 both operations were relinquished by the government and purchased by Rottmann, Strome and Kobayishi Beiki as the Yamaji Hekishi Shawan Paper Co.⁹

Rottmann's papers were "non-arsenical, damp-proof, washable . . . more durable than any other material of a similar character."¹⁰ In 1884 the company obtained a gold medal at the London International Health Exhibition and in 1885 a silver medal at the Antwerp Exhibition.¹¹ The firm's 1886 statement that it was the "original manufacturer of the highly embossed Japanese Wall Hangings which require no after treatment"¹² implied competition with British sanitary papers which were colourable after purchase, such as Lincrusta Walton and Anaglypta. Improvements to the Japanese process¹³ may have included the option of ground colour. A description of how "world famous leathers" were made at the Imperial Works in Yokohama in 1896 stated that goods were rarely shipped before grounding:

All our readers must have been struck with the tough, fibrous, woolly appearance of these Japanese leather papers. When they are pulled apart or torn there is a fibre which at first sight looks like a cloth, so tough is it. This is obtained from the paper plant, known to botanists by the name of *Edgeworthia Papyrifera*, a plant abundant and common in Japan.

The first step towards the completed paper is the cutting of the block. . . . A large cylinder of hard wood is suspended on a frame and the engraver sits to it, cutting out the design with knife or chisel, as the case may require.

. . . The roller having been cut or properly prepared, the next step is to put the paper on. This is done by men, as it is an operation demanding continuous and prolonged exertion such as few women could sustain. The paper is taken in pieces of one yard square, and laid [damp and soggy] on the engraved cylinder. The subsequent pieces of paper, in layers of about three or four, are pasted by women, and afterwards laid one above the other, and the operative then takes his brush, which is small, long-handled and filled with soft bristles, thick-set in a rough and ready style, and with these a vigorous pounding process goes on, the paper being beaten into the mould very much after the manner of brass *repoussé* work. As each section is completed the cylinder is given a turn, and

another part comes into view and is attacked, and so the process goes on until the whole length is covered.

The paper is now taken on bamboo poles, T-shaped at the end, and hung on a bamboo support to dry. After the exposure to the air has thoroughly dried it, the process of decoration begins. In its crude state the surface is spongy and absorbent, almost like blotting paper, and it is now admitted to several coatings of strong size, which renders the surface comparatively smooth and non-absorbent. The next process is to cover the paper with tinfoil, which is attached with a kind of mordant and then beaten into all the interstices of the pattern with soft-haired brushes. Here, again, women and girls find occupation, the work being light and such as is suited to the sensitive touch of a woman's hand.

... The metal would soon discolor and grow black were it not protected, and this is done by two or three coats of lacquer. ... It

is this lac which gives the gold look to the metal, and its exact color is at the discretion of the operator. Some of the wonderful deep bronze colors we have seen in these papers are due entirely to the rich coloring of the lac on the tinfoil, and the absolute exclusion from the air which the lacquer imparts effectually protects the metal from any discoloration, and ensures that permanency to the gold which is so important a feature in these decorations.

The paper is now embossed, sized, metallized and lacquered, the embossed pattern being one all-over gold effect, but it is rarely that the papers are sent out in this form, and the next process is the laying-in of the grounds. This is effected by stencils. Stencils are cut to fit the background, and girls ply the brush with wonderful dexterity, laying the ground with great rapidity. The constant use of these stencils makes the girls very expert, and they almost intuitively know if there is a little irregularity in the pattern, and guard against it accordingly. ... as they leave the parts done, another girl follows after, touching up the "ties" and wiping off any parts where the color has gone over.¹⁴

The Eldon House leather fits the above description. In addition, the highly embossed owl pattern contains extra stuffing in some areas, a detail recorded in an 1885 account of operations at the Imperial Works.¹⁵ Similar stuffing was noted by Richard Nylander in an embossed fruit and foliage pattern advertised by the Rottmann firm beginning in 1884 (see fig. 1).¹⁶

Like most Japanese leathers the Eldon House paper was adaptable as a dado or filler. Measuring 37 inches wide (or 35 3/4 inches of pattern after removing two selvages), its width and the orientation of the pattern made it appropriate for hanging either horizontally as a dado or over the entire wall. The Harris family chose to hang it vertically from floor-board to cornice in the upper front hall and as a filler from chair rail to cornice in the lower back hall. Durable and solid after installation, Japanese leathers were advertised for halls and staircases. Washability made them suitable for dining rooms but they were appropriately hung on any important room in houses, theatres and public buildings. They were used on ceilings as well as walls.

How long the Rottmann factories in Japan and London were the exclusive source¹⁷ of Japanese leathers in the West is uncertain. Leopold and Co. was apparently exporting in the 1890s, and the W.H.S. Lloyd Co. specialized in Japanese wallpaper as late as the First World War.¹⁸ Moreover numerous Japanese

Fig. 1

A paper with this pattern contained extra stuffing, similar to that noted in the owl-patterned paper now decorating Eldon House (with Leopold and Co. mark).

(Source: The Decorator and Furnisher, April 1886, p.4).

ROTTMANN, STROME & CO.'S

JAPANESE

Leather Paper Hangings

NON-ARSENICAL, DAMP-PROOF, WASHABLE.

More Durable than any other Material of a Similar Character.

OBTAINED GOLD MEDAL AT THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EXHIBITION, LONDON, 1884.

10 & 31 ST. MARY AXE, LONDON, E. C., ENGLAND.



YOKOHAMA, JAPAN.

A Permanent Stock of about 40,000 Rolls kept on this side.

APPLY TO

H. G. RAMSPERGER & CO.,

AGENTS,

180 PEARL STREET, NEW YORK.

factories existed, judging from the more than a dozen prizes won in 1889, 1900 and 1925 for wallpaper at Paris exhibitions alone.¹⁹ Tokyo, Gifu and the prefecture of Mie were locations given for three winning shops in 1900. The prize winners listed below (in romanized French) represent just a few of the Japanese firms exhibiting various types of wallpaper at Paris exhibitions from 1878 to 1925.²⁰

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Gold Medal | Horiki (Tchùtaro) à Miyé-kén in 1900 Oseki (Jishichi) in 1925 Suzuki (Toramatsu) in 1925 |
| Silver Medal | Horiki (Chiutaro) in 1889 Yamada (Jirobei) in 1889 Iro (Sôjïro) à Tokio in 1900 Také-I (Sukéyémon) à Guifu in 1900 Daisei-Shokai in 1925 Murase (Eikichi) in 1925 |
| Bronze Medal | Ikébé (K.) in 1878 Kinsenatsu Tsushi Kaisha in 1925 |
| Honourable Mention | Haïbara in 1878 Imaï in 1878 |
| Certificate of Merit | Teshigawara Goshi Kaisha in 1925 |

Research of Japanese sources needs to be done to determine the wallpaper made at the above shops. Available evidence indicates that a variety of wallpaper was exported to North America from the 1880s. In addition to the leathers previously described, there were grass cloths, grass papers, tea-box papers and small sheets. This account was written during a period of popularity in 1918:

Japanese grass-cloth consists of a vegetable fiber or "grass" woven with a warp of thread and backed with a thin, tough paper. . . .

Similar in appearance to grass-cloth . . . is the woven paper. It is of the same construction as grass-cloth, the warp consisting of threads, but the weft is composed of narrow strips of paper of uniform width woven in and out among the vertical warp threads. This paper has a metallic surface on one side. The interesting effects are produced by turning over the strip during the weaving so that sometimes the plain paper shows and at other times the metallic side is outward. . . . These papers, like grass-cloth, are mounted on a thin, tough backing paper. Upon this woven paper, patterns are printed as they are in the case of patterned grass-cloths.

A class of Japanese papers that are little used, but that are useful in producing distinctive interiors, are the "tea-box" papers. These papers come in sheets. They have a metallic surface upon which there is sometimes a small allover pattern in a single colour. They are excellent for ceilings, for the upper portion of the wall, for paneling, and have been used very successfully for the entire wall in some cases.

Other Japanese papers . . . come in small sheets. . . . One . . . shows a design of maple leaves and branches in a single tone of warm gray on a peculiar paper that is of a creamy white tint. Each of these small sheets contains one repeat of the design so that when they are properly joined an allover pattern is produced.²¹

With the exception of the tea-box papers and the small sheets of paper, the grass cloths, grass papers and leathers were well-documented in Canada.

The first mention of Japanese wallpaper in Canada noted by the author was in 1880 and referred to leather goods. An article titled "Paper Hangings" under the column "Ladies Department" in Toronto's *The Weekly Globe* reported:

There are the thick Japanese papers, where the black ground riots in fantastic assemblage of all rich colours, where a gold ground carries birds and butterflies and fans in charming profusion, and those of lighter less marked and less agreeable characteristics, at about the same price as leather papers . . . \$9.00 to \$12.00 a roll.²²

These were among the most expensive grades of wallpaper on the market and were shipped to Canada via Great Britain and the United States.

The first importer noted was M. Staunton and Co., Canada's major wallpaper manufacturer at the time. In March 1884 the Toronto company advertised "Japanese leather and lacquered gold papers," which it retailed with Canadian goods and other imported specialties. Like Haïbara and Imaï of Japan, the Staunton firm had been awarded an honourable mention for wallpaper at the 1878 Paris exhibition.²³ Exposure to Japanese decorative art then (indeed as early as the 1867 Paris exposition) may have led the firm to import Japanese papers before 1884.

Large decorating houses advertised embossed leather. In 1885 "Japanese Leather Paper in High and Low Relief, From Yokohama, Japan," was advertised by Castle and Son, a Montréal decorator and stained-glass manufacturer. The goods may have been those of Rottmann, Strome and Co. Also in Montréal DeZouche and Sons in 1886 reported "gold embracing English tapestry papers and Japanese designs." In 1891 the firm carried "a line of English, French and American paperhangings and decorations. . . . in all newest styles, including English tapestry and Japanese designs in rich, elegant, bright shades and tints and combinations of colours." In 1894 Japanese designs were in its large inventory.²⁴

In 1888, Toronto decorator Elliott and Son advertised Japanese leathers with other high quality goods in *Saturday Night*:

... shortly to arrive a magnificent line of high-class papers from one of Europe's most celebrated houses, whose goods are now shown for the first time in this city. Among them will be found some excellent facsimile reproductions of old tapestries, leathers and other materials in relief. Also Japanese leathers and French leathers in all the new ivory and gold effects.²⁵

The same magazine in 1893 reported Elliott and Son as having "Wall Hangings — silks, cretonnes, relief materials such as Japanese leather, Lincrusta, Anaglypta and wallpapers from \$.10 to \$10.00 per roll."²⁶

The Canadian Architect and Builder noted in 1888: "Contracts — of Japanese raised leather paper designs for fillup, dados, borders and friezes, there is this spring an endless variety."²⁷ A decade later the view was expressed that:

The skill displayed in the Japanese leather with metal and color, make them very popular, and they have been used in place and out of place until we are rather overdone with them.²⁸

Nevertheless, the popularity of Japanese leather continued into the twentieth century. From 1900 until 1908 they were the highest priced wallpaper advertised in catalogues of the T. Eaton Co.

Eaton's 1900 spring and summer catalogue announced that "the latest American, English, Canadian and Japanese Wall Papers are represented in our stock." This included: "The latest Japanese burlaps, wall papers and pebbled effects, and wall decorations. .50 — \$1.50 yd."²⁹ The pebbled effect described the type of embossing. The burlap may have referred to a woven textile, perhaps similar to Japanese matting or what later was called grass cloth. Until 1908 Eaton's advertised "the newest Japanese leather Wall Papers for walls, dados" at prices ranging from \$0.50 to \$1.50 per yard.³⁰

A variety of Japanese wallpaper is mentioned in *The Canadian Bookseller and Stationer* from 1910 to 1921: grass cloth, leathers (costing \$18 a roll in 1920), Tekko (resembling glossy silk, sometimes embellished with gold, silver and metallic effects), foliage designs, and papers patterned with Japanese landscapes and lanterns.³¹ Grass cloths were the most popular and sold by the square yard or roll of eight yards. Natural grass cloth was admired for its coolness and utility as a background for pictures. Plain colours in tan, gray, golden brown, yellow, soft dull reds,

blues and green retailed for \$0.85 per square yard. Woven papers with metallic effects were slightly more expensive; they were advised for libraries, dining rooms and living rooms, where they harmonized with dark woodwork.³² Even more costly were patterned grass cloths, some stencilled with high art designs by the noted British firm of Shand Kydd Ltd.³³

Official import records corroborate the existence of a variety of Japanese wallpaper in Canada. These begin to tally Japanese imports in the year 1884–85, coinciding with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway to Vancouver, despite the fact that some reached eastern Canada prior to this via the United States and Europe. Federal tables of trade and navigation first list \$338 worth of goods entering British Columbia directly from Japan. Lesser values were slated later for Quebec and Manitoba. Increasing imports in the 1890s amounted to seven times the value of the 1880s (see tables 1 and 2).³⁴

Table 1: Imports of Japanese Wallpaper, 1885–99

| Year | \$ Value | Remarks |
|--------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1884–85 | 338 | entered British Columbia |
| 1885–86 | 57 | entered Quebec |
| 1889–90 | 70 | entered Manitoba |
| 1890–91 | 379 | destination not specified |
| 1891–92 | 560 | " " " |
| 1892–93 | 216 | " " " |
| 1893–94 | 441 | " " " |
| 1894–95 | 551 | " " " |
| 1896–97 | 302 | " " " |
| 1897–98 | 241 | " " " |
| 1898–99 | 391 | " " " |
| Total | 3,546 | |

Table 2: Imports of Wallpaper from Japan and Other Nations (value vs. decade), 1880–1939

| Decade | Japan | | Great Britain | | | Germany | France |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|--------|
| | \$ | USA \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | \$ | |
| 1880s | 465 | 1.5 million | 635,000 | 19,000 | 9,000 | | |
| 1890s | 3,000 | 1.3 million | 91,000 | 1,000 | 5,000 | | |
| 1900s | n.a. | 1.5 million | 198,000 | 11,000 | 31,000 | | |
| 1910s | 16,000 | 2.4 million | 465,000 | 68,000 | 34,000 | | |
| 1920s | 34,000 | 3.7 million | 712,000 | 58,000 | 51,000 | | |
| 1930s | 3,000 | 1.1 million | 424,000 | 62,000 | 23,000 | | |
| Total | 56,465 | 11.5 million | 2.53 million | 219,000 | 153,000 | | |

The variety of wallpaper being imported is intimated by the classification system of various Customs Acts. In 1884–85 all wallpaper imports were classed under a single heading, "hangings or wall paper, and glazed, plated, marbled, enamelled or embossed paper, in rolls or sheets and cardboard similarly finished."³⁵ Glazed, plated, embossed and

enamelled describe Japanese leathers, although not exclusively. A second class of goods inserted in the act the following year to describe the great majority of imports did not apply to Japanese goods: "hangings or wall paper, in rolls, costing eight cents or under for rolls of eight yards in length and 18 inches wide."³⁶

A better view is gained from analysis of the 1888–89 act which specified tariffs for eight classes of wallpaper. Japanese imports entered under four of the higher grades described as "white papers, grounded papers and satins, not hand made," "single print bronzes and coloured bronzes," "embossed bronzes," and a general category "hangings or wall paper, all other."³⁷ Evidently more types than leather were being shipped: unembossed paper with and without bronze highlights as well as whites and satins. Under the general tariff of 1897, however, only two classes of goods, "hangings or wall paper" and "borders and bordering," were designated; all Japanese wallpaper came under the first. The following table indicates the value of each class of Japanese paper entering Canada from 1884 to 1899, with the years imported in parentheses:³⁸

| Class of Wallpaper | \$ |
|---|-------|
| All other hangings (1890–97) | 1,544 |
| Hangings or wallpaper (1897–99) | 632 |
| White grounded satins etc. (1894–95) | 462 |
| Single print and colour bronzes (1893–95) | 419 |
| Hangings or wallpaper, etc. (1884–86) | 395 |
| Embossed bronzes (1889–94) | 94 |
| Total value of imports | 3,546 |

In the twentieth century Japanese imports increased in value. A significant rise was noted during the decade of the First World War which can be attributed to the wartime decrease and/or the cessation of shipments from Great Britain, the United States, Germany and France. In the 1920s the largest value of wallpaper ever imported from Japan (to 1939) entered Canada. Despite the increase, however, the value was small compared with that from leading trading nations (see table 2 for a comparison by decade).³⁹

To summarize, wall coverings known as leather, relief, sanitary and pressed papers were among the highest grades of wallpaper manufactured in Great Britain, Continental Europe, the United States and Japan from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Made in varying thicknesses by a variety of patented methods, their diversity was equalled by the number of trade names they were given.

Tynecastle Tapestry, Lincrusta Walton, Anaglypta, Cordelova, Salamander, Cameoid, Leatherette were a few made in Great Britain from the late 1870s. Japanese leathers, in contrast to those manufactured in the West, were handmade specialties (at least at first) which gained a reputation for their rich colour and high style.

The variety and value of Japanese wallpaper on the Canadian market was small (but not the smallest) in comparison with goods of other trading nations and the value per roll was high. Nevertheless, its influence was significant. The exotic rarities ranged from ornate leathers to plain grass cloths, and they created a demand for less expensive imitations which Western manufacturers competitively

Fig. 2
The continuing interest in Japanese elements of decorative art is exemplified in this 1930 advertisement. (Source: Canadian Paint and Varnish Magazine, April 1930, p. 7.)

Canadian Paint and Varnish Magazine for April, 1930 7

Stylish Modernity is Exemplified in Wallpapers of Canadian Make

~ ~ ~

AT a cost that all can afford, rooms are quickly changed to present an atmosphere of perfect taste and restful refinement.

Sunworthy, the pioneer light-resisting wallpapers, bring lasting charm to these beautiful wallpapers from the Canadian Mills.

They represent all the newest types of pattern in both the 22 and 30 inch widths.

~ ~ ~



For sale by all leading dealers throughout Canada

The Reg. N. Boxer Co., Limited
New Toronto, Ont.

Stauntons Limited
Toronto, Ont.

The Watson, Foster Co., Limited
Montreal, Quebec

produced by machine. Like others, Canadian makers embossed grass-cloth effects, and such papers became best sellers during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Other imitations (less easy to attribute to Japan because they also had European precedents) were leatherettes and silks.

The decorative art of Japan was an endless source of inspiration for wallpaper designers long after the end of the Aesthetic Movement. Translated from textiles, furniture, ceramics, wallpaper and other artifacts made in both Japan and the West, Japanese styles were featured regularly on wallpaper after 1900. Although motifs from every nation were also part of designers' repertoire, the Japanese styles were prevalent enough to be mentioned

and displayed in advertisements. In 1927, Stauntons Limited in Toronto reported:

While the free decorative styles of the Orient [and others] may be clearly recognised in . . . the wide range of designs that are shown, these have been modulated so that without losing their characteristic charm they will form pleasing backgrounds for the modern accessories of our homes.⁴⁰

The evidence suggests that Western demand for leathers sparked the beginning of a wallpaper industry in Japan. The gold lacquered embossed paper in Eldon House is a rare reminder of the Meiji Era when international co-operation fostered one of several industries and brought Japanese artistry to the walls of the Western world in unprecedented amounts.

NOTES

The author is grateful to Brigitte Laforce of London Historical Museums, Martin Weaver of Heritage Canada, and Caroline Jonas of Steptoe and Wife Antiques, Toronto, for information about the owl-patterned leather paper in Eldon House. The article is based largely on data compiled for the author's omnibus study, Wallpaper in Canada: 1600s-1930s, Microfiche Report Series no. 208 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1983).

1. Documentation from Brigitte Laforce, Eldon House, states that members of the Harris family travelled around the world after the death of the grandmother in 1892. The Leopold Company is listed in an 1899 London (England) Directory, according to Elizabeth Miller, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England.
2. The most descriptive sources of those cited include Richard C. Nylander, Elizabeth Redmond, Penny J. Sander, *Wallpaper in New England* (Boston: Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1986), pp. 243-45 (five illustrations show Japanese leather papers); Richard C. Nylander, "Elegant Late Nineteenth-Century Wallpapers," *The Magazine Antiques*, August 1982, p. 286 (the author illustrates in colour two Japanese leather papers with British, American and Scottish embossed papers of the same period). See also Charles C. Oman and Jean Hamilton, *Wallpapers* (New York: Harry Abrams Inc., 1982), pp. 238-39, 393-95, 413.
3. "'Leather' Paper in Japan," *American Artisan*, 14 September 1870, p. 162. The article was reprinted from the *Journal of Applied Chemistry* of that time.
4. Dr. Christopher Dresser, *Japan, Its Architecture, Art and Art Manufactures* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1882), p. 163, 173-74.
5. Henri Clouzot and Ch. Follot, *Histoire du papier peint en France* (Paris: Éditions d'art Charles Moreau, 1935), p. 235.
6. Catherine Lynn, *Wallpaper in America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1980), p. 441.
7. "Japanese Leather Papers," *The Decorator and Furnisher*, July 1885, p. 114; Dresser, *Japan, Its Architecture*.
8. Alan V. Sugden and John L. Edmondson, *A History of English Wallpaper* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1914), p. 227. Rottmann also operated a wallpaper factory near London, England. C.J. Strome, believed to be the Strome in partnership with Rottmann, knew Christopher Dresser. Dresser's interest in imitation leather and in collecting patterns for British manufacturers suggests that he played a part in the establishment of Rottmann's enterprise. See Dresser, *Japan, Its Architecture*, pp. 41, 163, 175, 215.
9. See these articles in various issues of *The Decorator and Furnisher*: "Japanese Leather Papers and How They Are Made," February 1885, p. 163; "Japanese Leather Papers," July 1885, p. 114; Laura B. Starr, "Japanese Wall Paper," May 1894, pp. 61-63; "Japanese Wall Paper," June 1896, pp. 84-85. Also refer to Lynn, *Wallpaper in America*, p. 441; Sugden and Edmondson, *History of English Wallpaper*, p. 227; Oman and Hamilton, *Wallpapers*, pp. 64-65, 238-39, 413.
10. *The Decorator and Furnisher*, September 1885, p. 189.
11. Sugden and Edmondson, *History of English Wallpaper*, p. 227.
12. *The Decorator and Furnisher*, May 1886.
13. Catherine Lynn, *Wallpaper in America*, p. 441. Rottmann eliminated the use of oil to produce a leatherlike effect.
14. "Japanese Wall Paper," June 1896, pp. 84-85.
15. "Japanese Leather Papers," July 1885, p. 114.
16. Nylander et al, *Wallpaper in New England*, p. 243.
17. "Japanese Wall Paper." This 1896 article states that the "so-called leather paper is manufac-

- tured exclusively at the Imperial Factory of Yokohama."
18. "Japanese Wall-coverings," *Wall Paper and Interior Decorating News* (1918), vol. LI, pp. 19-21, 36.
 19. Available catalogues of the international exhibitions provide no information on Japanese wallpaper exhibits although other entries of Japan are described.
 20. Clouzot and Follet, *Histoire du papier peint*, pp. 235-46. The 1925 awards were exhibits in Class 14, "art et industrie du papier sans distinction."
 21. "Japanese Wall-coverings." This 1918 article includes an account on making leather paper that is the same as one published in the 1896 *The Decorator and Furnisher* (see endnote 9). The portion quoted also may have been reprinted from an earlier source.
 22. *The Weekly Globe* [Toronto], 27 February 1880, p. 139.
 23. *The Weekly Leader* [Toronto], 21 March 1884. By the 1920s Stauntons Limited was dealing with the Shima Trading Co. Ltd., Osaka, Japan.
 24. The following sources can be matched to information in the preceding paragraph by date. *Lovell's Montreal Directory for 1885-86* (Montréal: John Lovell, 1885), p. 303; *Industries of Canada, City of Montreal* (Toronto: M. G. Bixby & Co., 1886), p. 160; *Dominion Illustrated, 1891*, p. 143; *Montreal, the Metropolis of Canada, Illustrated* (Montréal: Montreal Consolidated Illustrating Co., 1894), p. 143. "Japanese designs" referred to wallpapers made in Japan as well as papers made elsewhere with Japanese designs.
 25. *Saturday Night* [Toronto], 17 March 1888, p. 4.
 26. *Ibid.*, 16 June 1893, p. 13.
 27. *The Canadian Architect and Builder*, 12 May 1888, p. 88.
 28. *Ibid.*, August 1898, L.A. Shuffrey, "Walls and Wall Papers," p. xi, from a paper read at "a recent meeting of the Architectural Association."
 29. *The 1900 Edition of the T. Eaton Co. Limited Catalogue for Spring and Summer*, no. 44, p. 261.
 30. *The 1900-1901 Edition of the T. Eaton Co. Limited Catalogue for Fall and Winter*, no. 45, pp. 275-76; *The 1904-1905 Edition of the T. Eaton Company Limited Catalogue for Fall and Winter*, no. 66, p. 275.
 31. *The Canadian Bookseller and Stationer*. Most of the available issues date from 1910 to 1921.
 32. Henry H. Saylor, *Distinctive Homes of Moderate Cost* (Toronto: Copp, Clarke Ltd., 1910), pp. 79-81.
 33. *The Canadian Bookseller and Stationer*, November 1910, see wallpaper section, n.p.
 34. Canada, *Sessional Papers*. See annual Tables of Trade and Navigation, 1885-99, (Ottawa, King's Printer).
 35. *Ibid.*, 1884-85. The class was levied with a tariff of 30% ad valorem.
 36. *Ibid.*, 1886. The class was levied with a tariff of \$0.02 per roll.
 37. *Ibid.*, 1889. The general category was levied with a tariff of 35% ad valorem.
 38. *Ibid.*, 1884-99. The number of rolls imported was included in the 1890s.
 39. Canada, *Sessional Papers*. See annual Tables of Trade and Navigation, 1900-39. In the 1920s the total value of wallpaper on the Canadian market including imports and home products reached a peak (for the period between 1850 and 1939).
 40. Stauntons Limited, *Gilt and Glimmer*, July 1927, p. 6.