



BORDER WALL STENCILS FROM VERMONT & NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Including
The Complete Dutton House Collection
at the Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont
and the Governor Benjamin Pierce Homestead
in Hillsborough, New Hampshire*

ILLUSTRATIONS OF 26 AUTHENTIC WALLS AND 1 CEILING

MB HISTORIC DÉCOR CATALOGUE NO. 1 \$4.00
*Polly Forcier * Member HSEAD*

THE “BORDERMEN”

Two distinct styles of wall stenciling arose in New England between the Revolutionary War and the turn of the 19th century. In one, stencils cover most of a wall's surface; in the other, presented in this catalogue, the stencils are more linear and are usually limited to the wall's borders. There are rarer examples where border-style motifs — urns with swags, for example — appear on the wall's interior. Still, they are used with the same linearity seen in the borders, and are considered border stencils.

Both styles were generally intended to be “paint in imitation of paper,” that is, an affordable way of simulating more expensive wallpaper. However, border stencils were more architectural, defining and outlining the walls of a room. Their patterns were often inspired by the wood and plaster borders of the Neoclassical period. These include swags of fruit, roses and drapery, scrolls, ribbons, and urns supporting garlands of flowers and leaves. As stated in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, it was “a graceful system of decoration... which attained a unique loveliness.”

We wish we could attribute this work to specific artisans, but much of that research remains to be done. In the meantime, we categorize this work as that of “The Borderman” or “The Bordermen” (all the known itinerant stencilers of that day were men). Almost 200 years ago The Borderman was at work in the Leavenworth-Dennison House in Hinesburg, Vermont (see pattern 105 on page 4). For the frieze in the front entry, stairwell and upper landing, he stenciled a swag of apples on a background of grey near the ceiling. Careful measuring assured that it fit in a pleasing manner left and right of the wide front door. Below the chair rail, on a yellow ochre background, he stenciled a geometric border surmounted by tricolored urns and garlands. The “lemons” served to outline the woodwork. On the upper wall between the apples and the lemons, he used delicate alternating vines. The overall effect was quite beautiful.

We know more of the methods than we do of their identities. The patterns were cut from opaque brown paper reinforced with shellac or oil to withstand repeated use. Brushes were made by hand, and paints formulated from pigments, many of which were ground with mortar and pestle. Some of the ingredients — lead, arsenic and cadmium, for example — are now recognized as highly toxic. The pigments were mixed with lead, lime, kaolin clay, or in a glue or oil concoction. Sometimes the mixtures were heated and allowed to settle before they were used.

In this catalogue, patterns are presented just as they were recorded from the original walls, complete with irregularities. Only the dots and dashes that define the outer margins of some of the stencils have been tried to assure proper alignment. (#146 is an exception since it came already adjusted.)

My purpose has been to provide an historically accurate basis for your own selection and creativity. Purists, in choosing stencils from this collection, will want to adhere closely to the original colors and arrangements; or you may prefer to mix and match patterns, and use or not use the contrasting borders in your work. Some of the colors may be too bright for today's decorating; picture the stenciling done on paler shades, or with colors that coordinate with your décor.






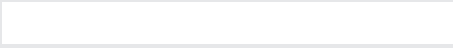


CONTRASTING BANDS IN IMITATION OF CARVED BAS-RELIEF MOLDING

For greater elegance, contrasting bands, as pictured below, were painted first and beneath the stenciling. They were seen in white, grey, salmon, rose, yellow ochre, buff and blue against a wall of a different color.

The stenciling was applied to within 1/2" - 1/4" of the highest point of the band's lower edge. The fancy borders were reserved for the frieze at the top of the wall. Straight bands framed the walls, doors and windows, with stenciling done over them.

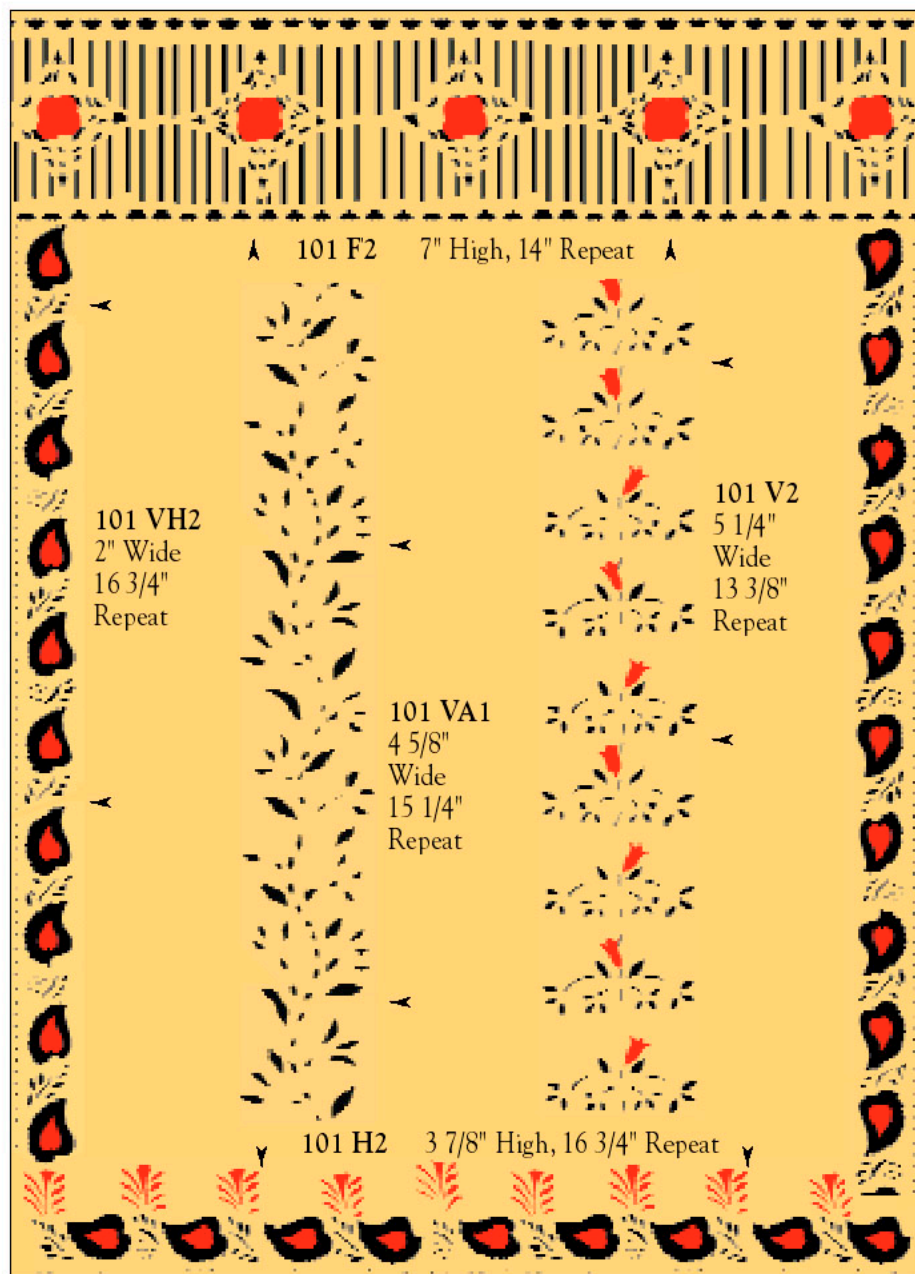
When using a straight band – no stencil is necessary – use painter's tape.

Dentil Molding		178 CB 3/4" Dentil 16" Repeat
Scalloped		175 CB 1 1/4" Scalloped 16" Repeat
Scalloped-Point		176 CB 1 1/4" Scalloped Point 16" Repeat
Serrated		177CB 1/2" Teeth 16" Repeat
Large Serrated		179 CB 1" Teeth 16" Repeat
Band		<i>Just use Painter's Tape</i>

In the following pages, the arrows (▲ ▲) indicate the length of the actual stencil.

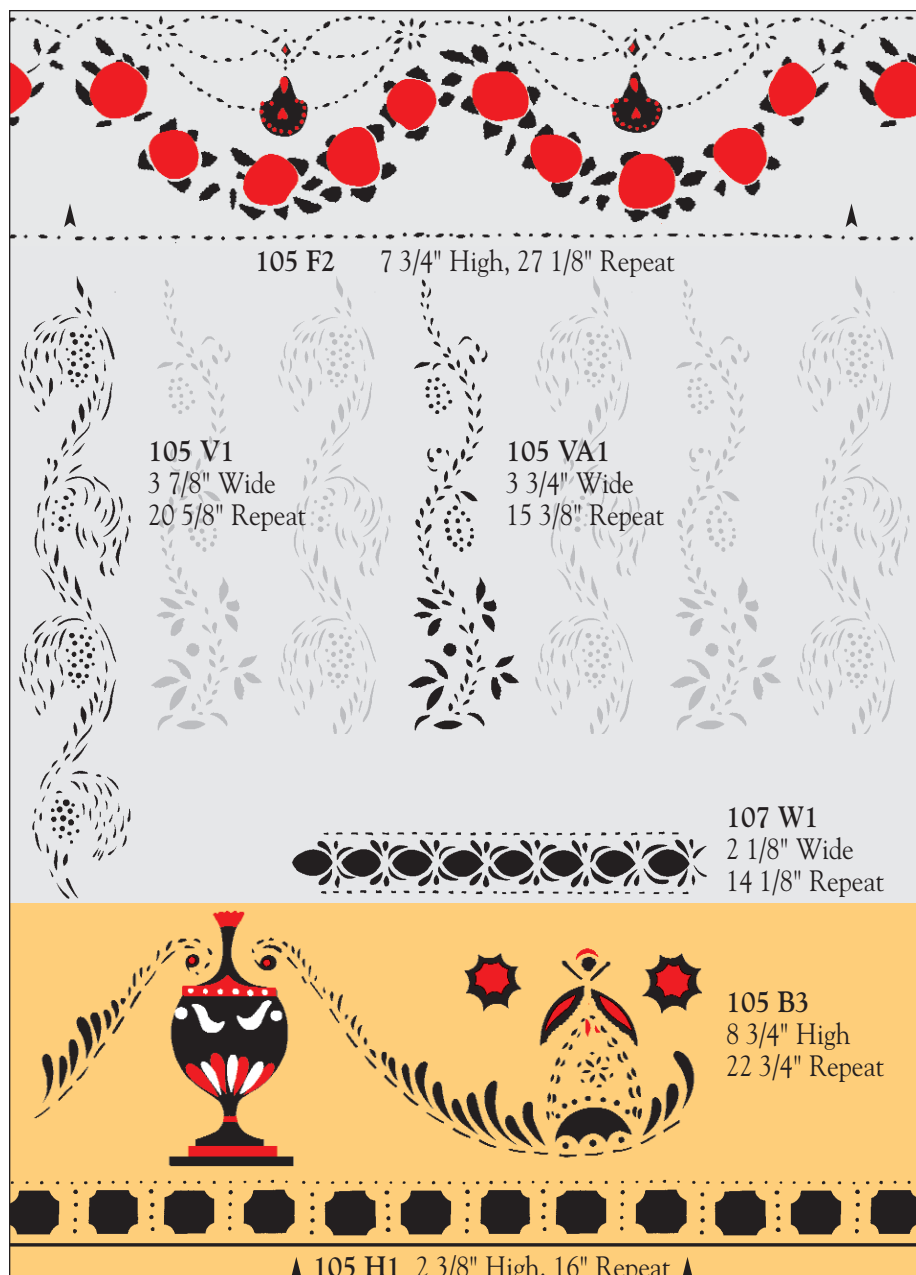
MARSHLAND FARM QUEECHEE, VERMONT

Original Colors: Black and red on yellow ochre walls.



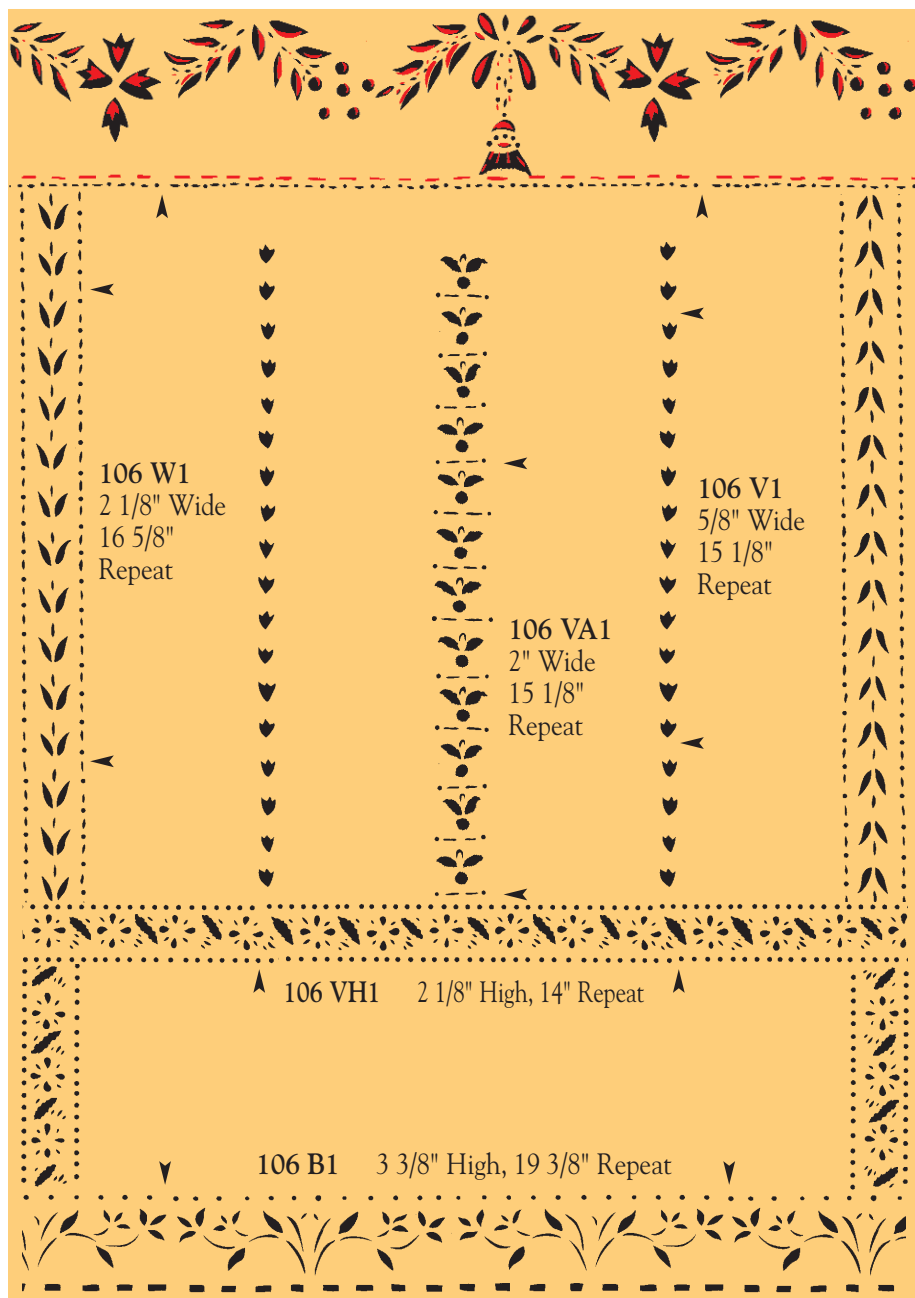
LEAVENWORTH-DENNISON HOUSE HINESBURG, VERMONT

Original Colors: Black, red, white on grey above chair rail, on yellow ochre below.



LEAVENWORTH-DENNISON HOUSE HINESBURG, VERMONT

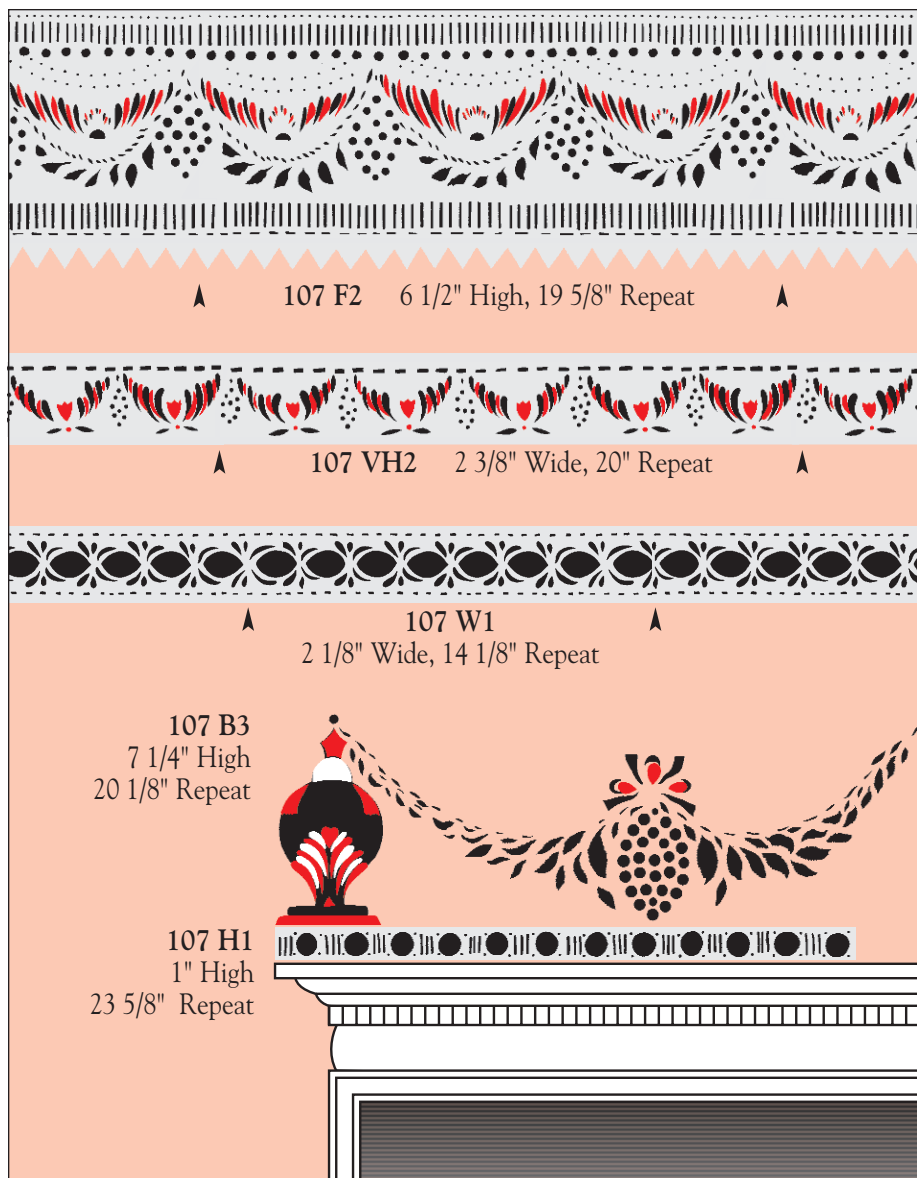
Original Colors: Black and red on yellow ochre walls.



LEAVENWORTH-DENNISON HOUSE HINESBURG, VERMONT

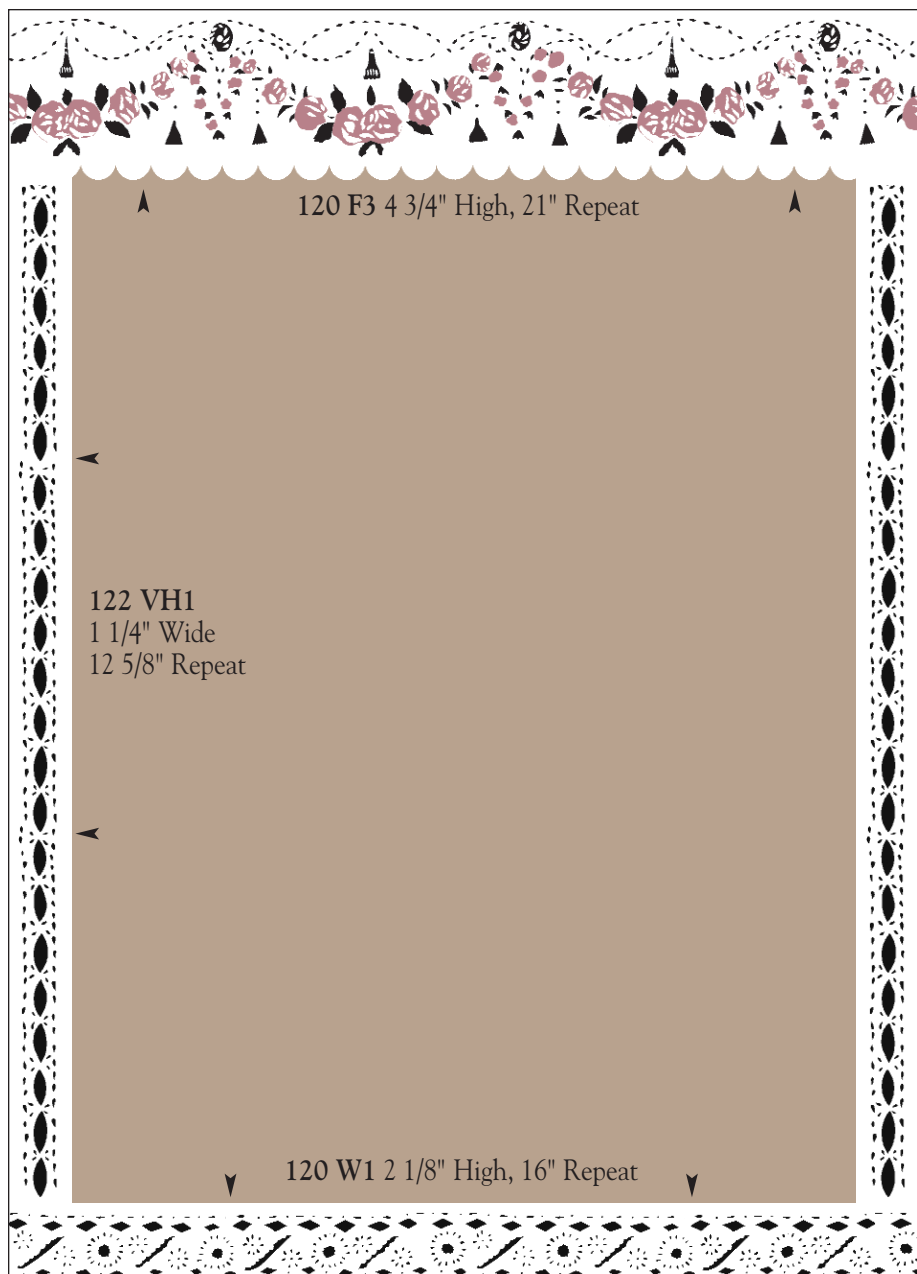
Northeast Parlor. Original Colors: Black and red on grey serrated band 179 CB at top, grey straight bands elsewhere, on salmon pink walls.

Urn at baseboard and also over mantel. When the urn is over the mantel, it is painted directly on the salmon pink wall.



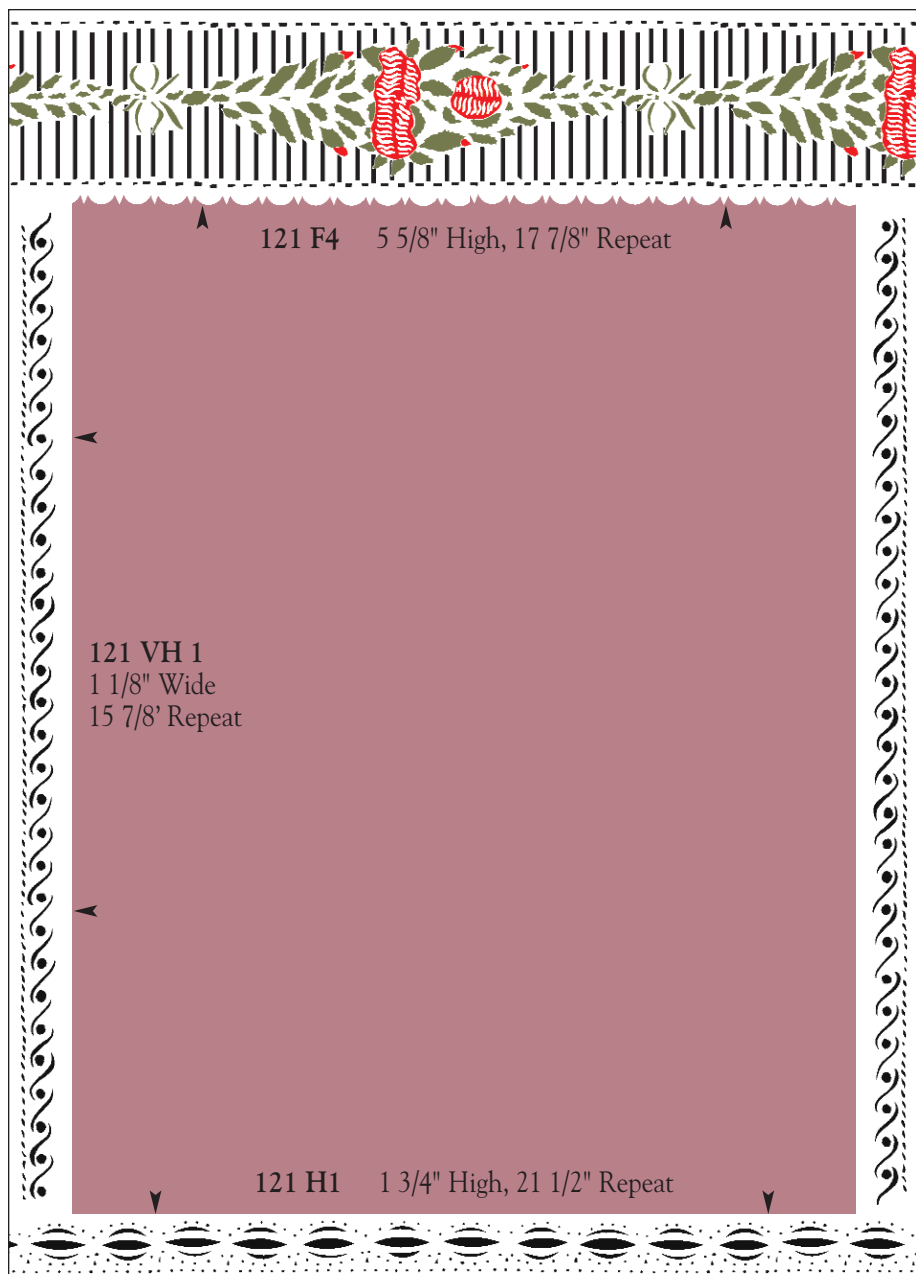
RICH HOLLOW TAVERN EAST MONTPELIER, VERMONT

Original Colors: Black, rose and white on white bands,
scalloped band 175 CB for frieze, straight bands elsewhere, on taupe walls.



RICH HOLLOW TAVERN EAST MONTPELIER, VERMONT

Original Colors: Black, red, green and white on white bands,
scallop-point band 176 CB for frieze, straight bands elsewhere, on rose walls.



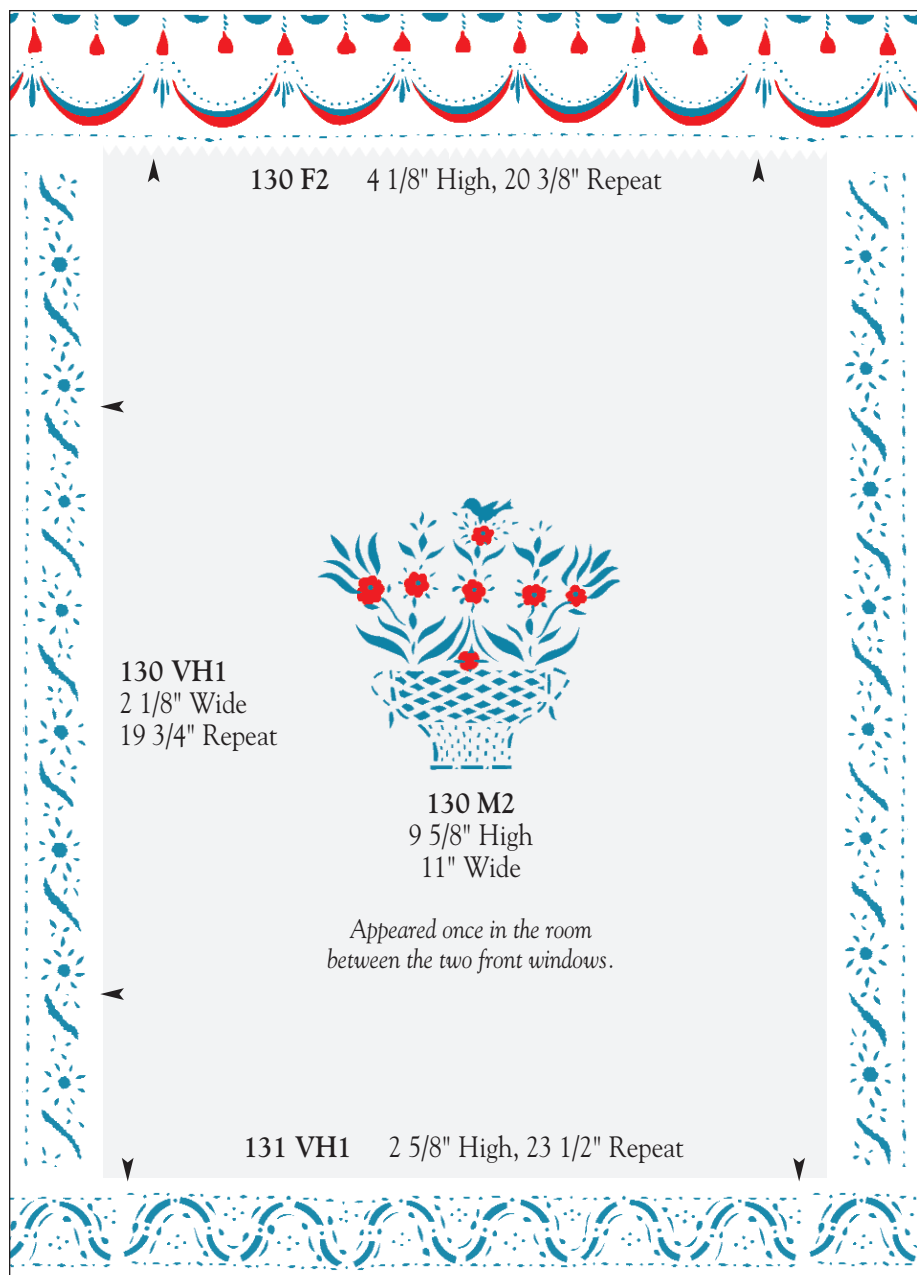
RICH HOLLOW TAVERN EAST MONTPELIER, VERMONT

Original Colors: Black, red and white on white bands,
scalloped band 175 CB for frieze, straight bands elsewhere, on salmon walls.



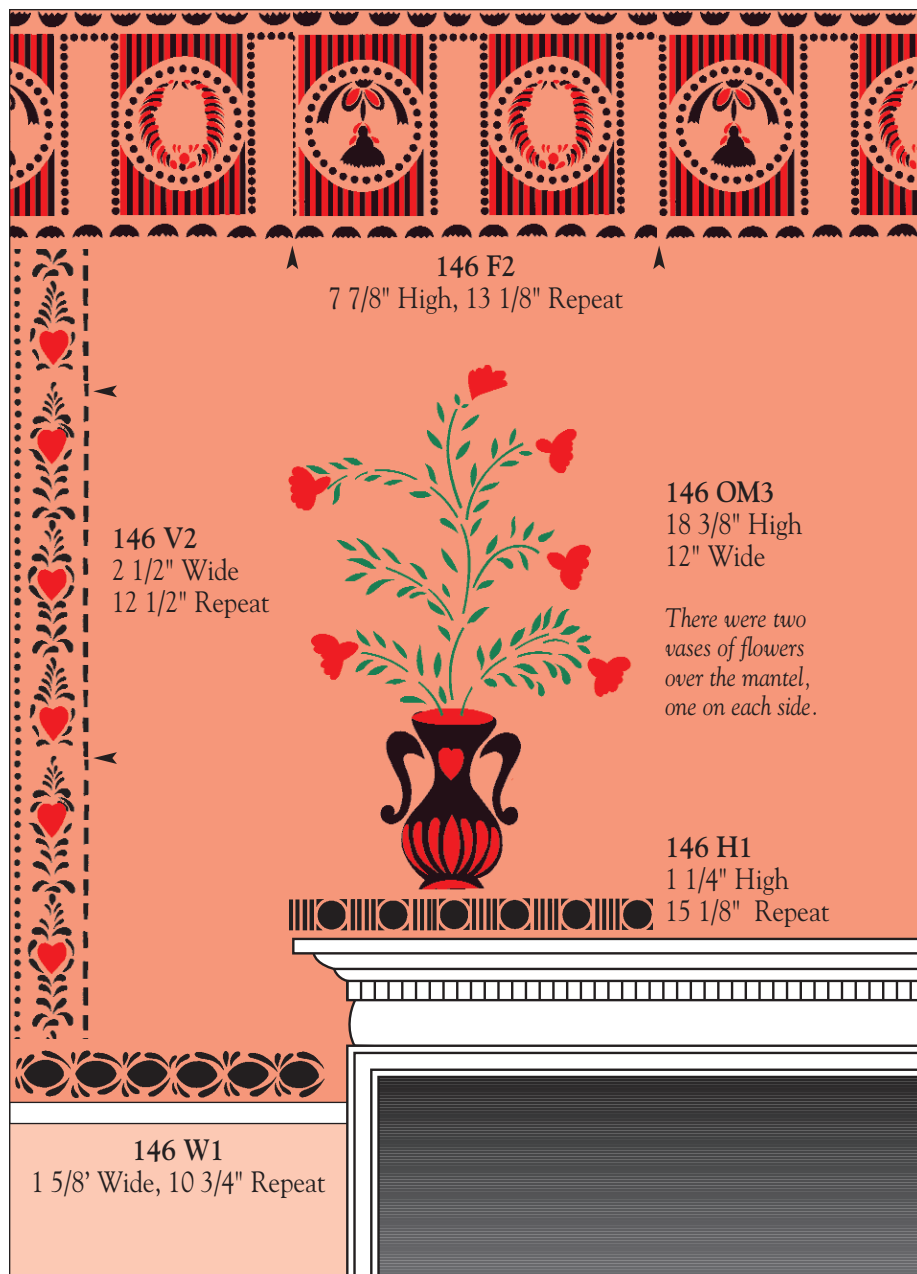
THE LEONARD WALKER TAVERN SPRINGFIELD, VERMONT

Original Colors: Blue and red on white bands,
serrated band 177 CB for frieze, straight bands elsewhere, on natural plaster wall.



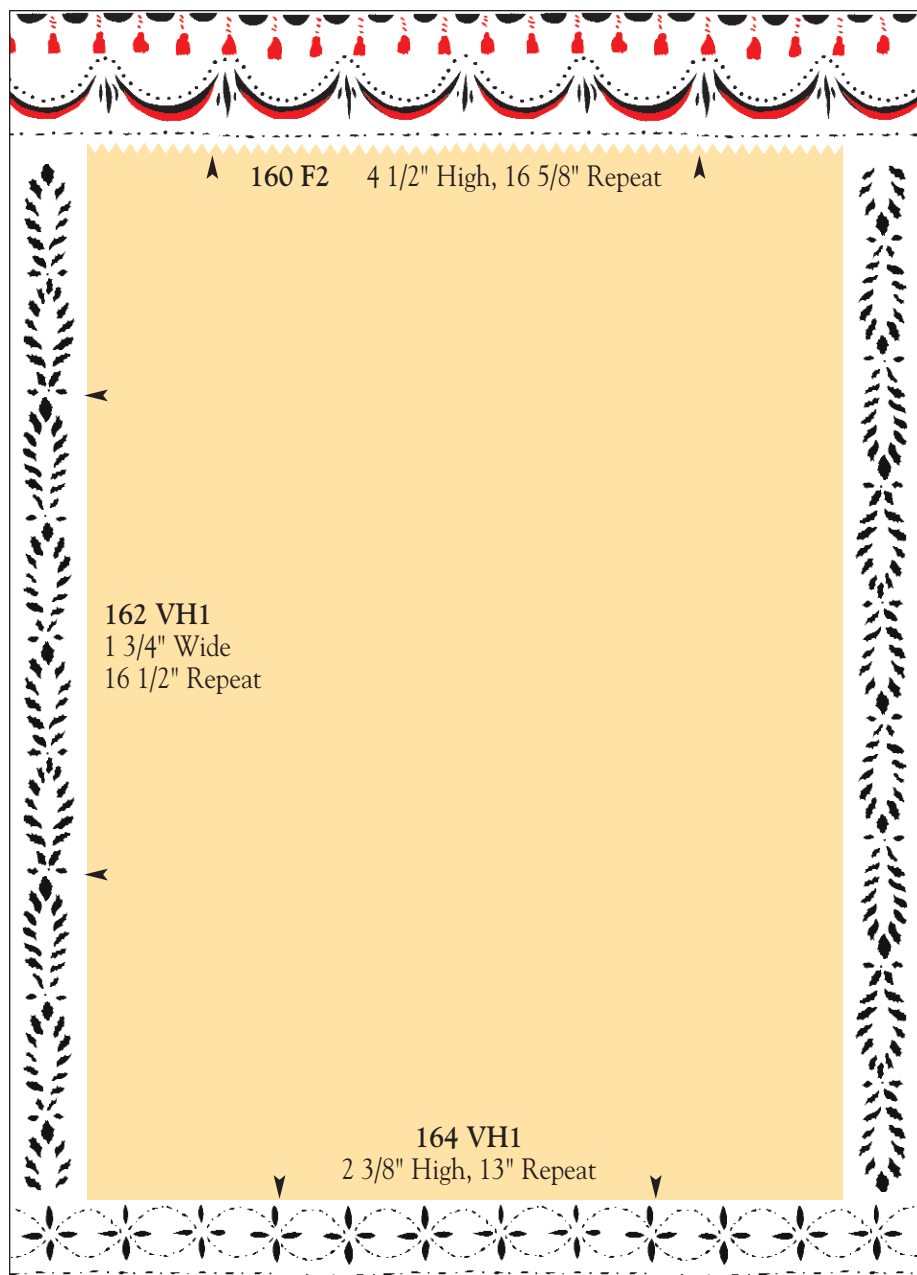
ELIHU EMERSON HOUSE NORWICH, VERMONT

Original Colors: Black, red and blue-green on deep salmon/ochre wall above chair rail, pale salmon ochre wall below.



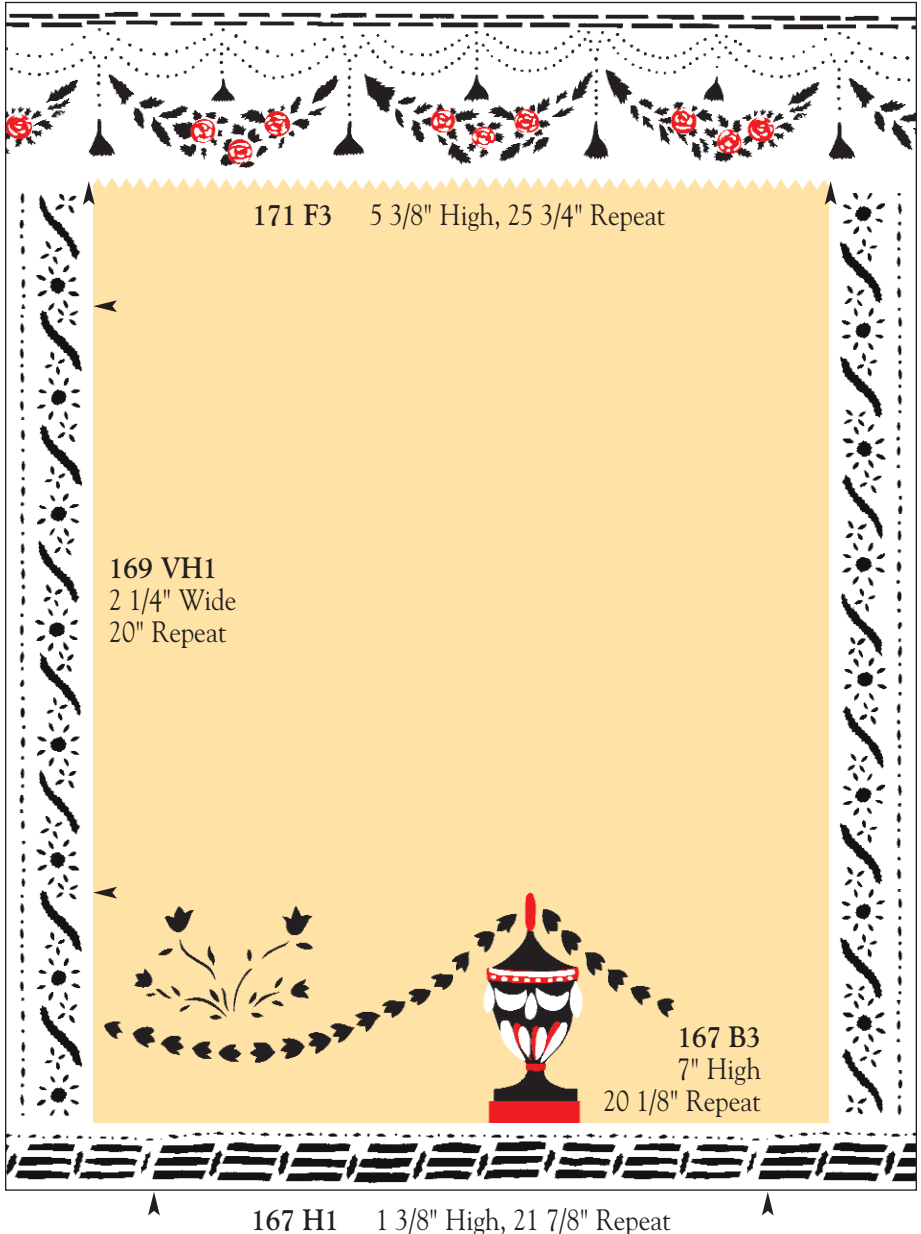
DUTTON HOUSE AT SHELBURNE MUSEUM SHELBURNE, VERMONT

Original Colors: Black and red on white bands,
serrated band 177 CB for the frieze, on a yellow wall.



DUTTON HOUSE AT SHELBURNE MUSEUM SHELBURNE, VERMONT

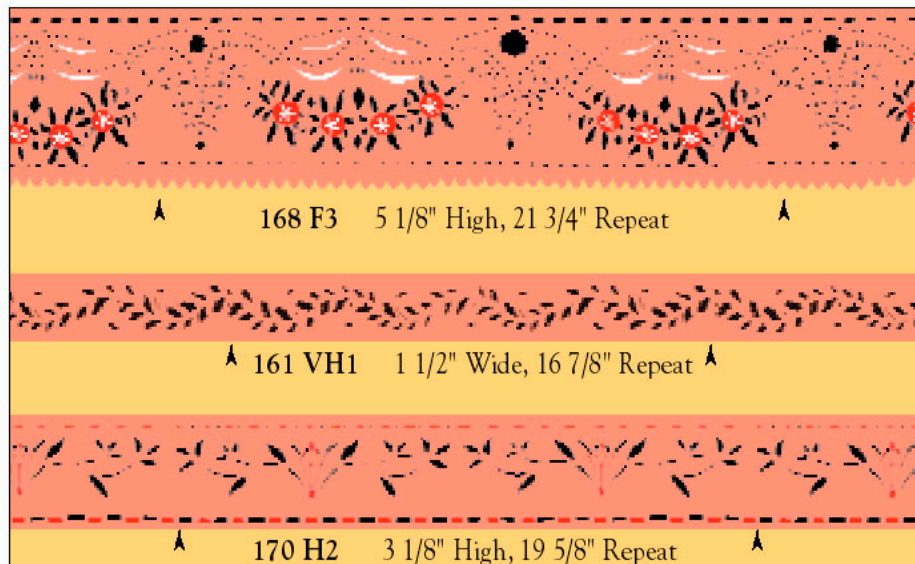
Original Colors: Black and red on white bands,
serrated band 177 CB for frieze, straight bands elsewhere
but not behind the urns, on buff yellow walls.



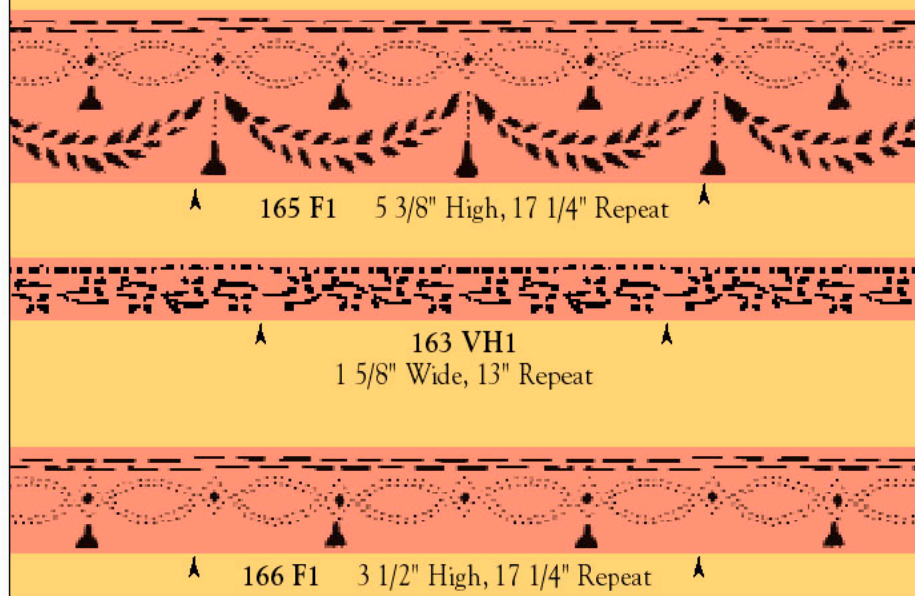
DUTTON HOUSE AT SHELBURNE MUSEUM SHELBURNE, VERMONT

Original Colors, front cover: Black, red, and white on salmon serrated bands
177CB for frieze, straight bands elsewhere, on yellow ochre walls.

On Our Front Cover

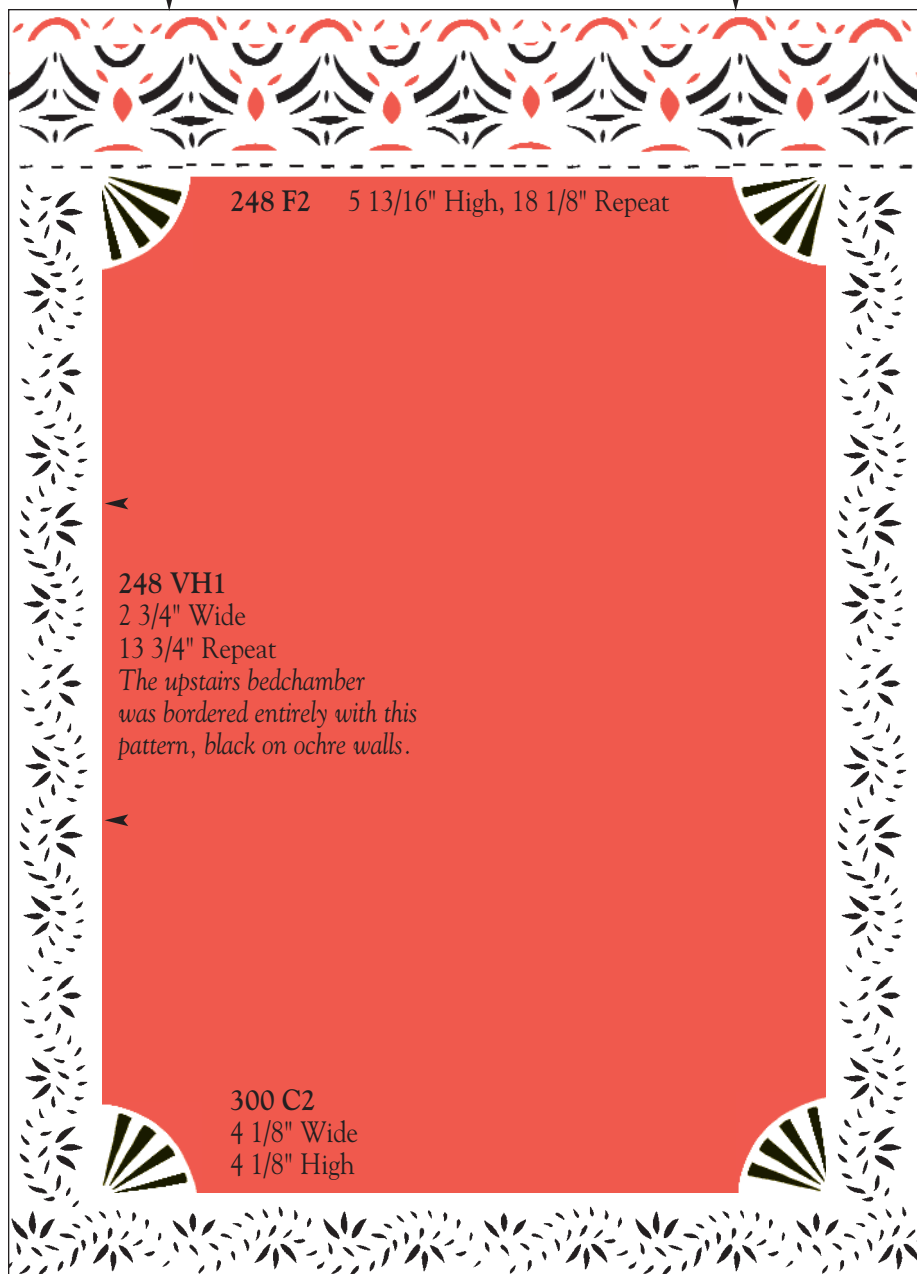


On Our Back Cover



GOVERNOR BENJAMIN PIERCE HOMESTEAD HILLSBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Kitchen. Original Colors: Dark grey or black and vermillion
on straight white bands, on a vermillion wall.



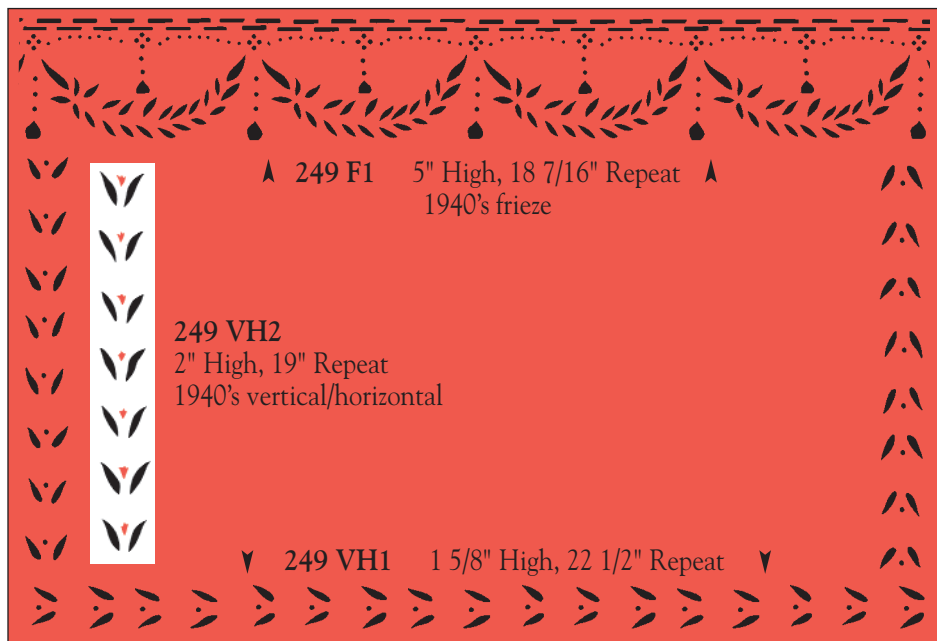
GOVERNOR BENJAMIN PIERCE HOMESTEAD HILLSBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Parlor. Original Colors: Blue, red and white on a buff wall.

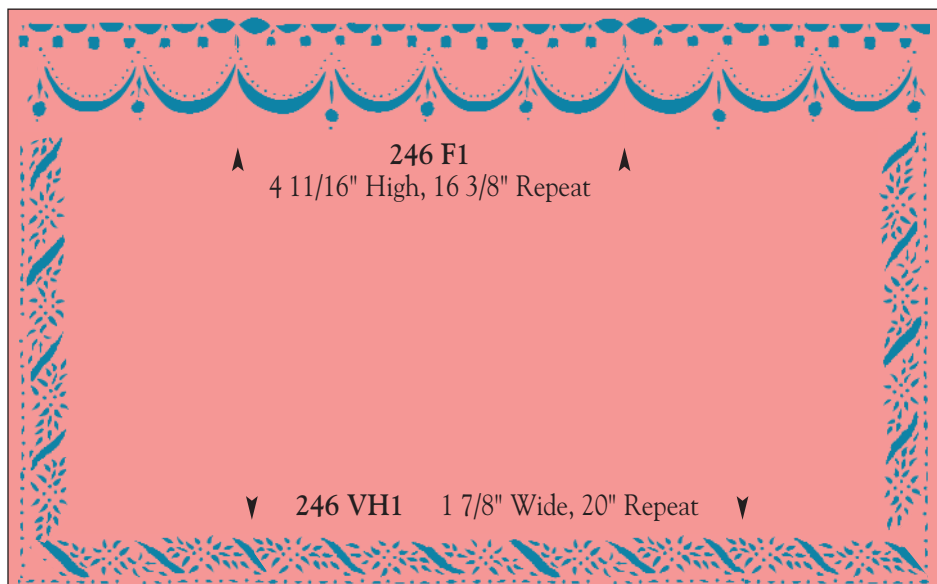


GOVERNOR BENJAMIN PIERCE HOMESTEAD HILLSBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Sitting Room. Original Colors: Black on vermillion wall.

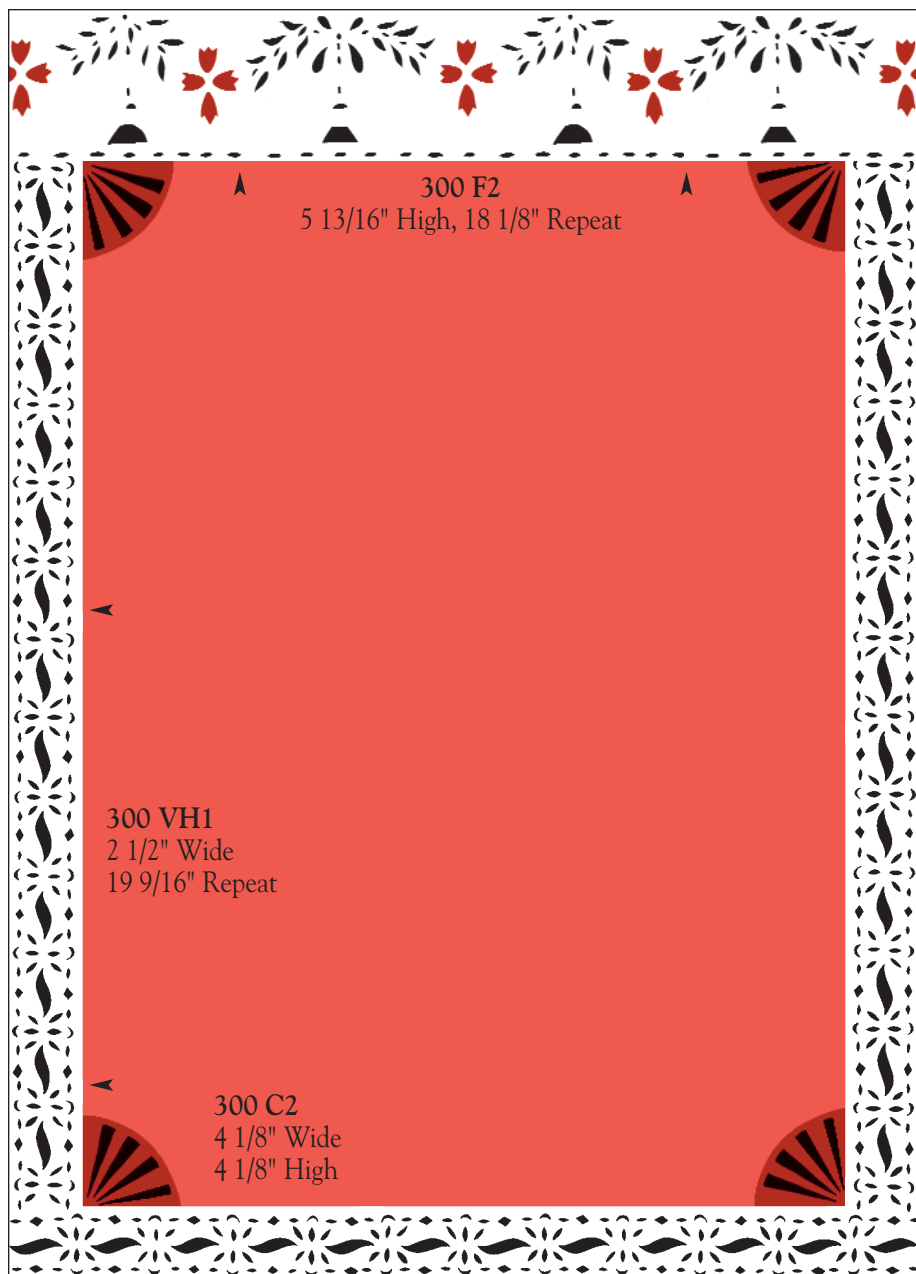


Dressing Room. Original Colors: Blue/grey on pink wall.



GOVERNOR BENJAMIN PIERCE HOMESTEAD HILLSBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Ballroom. Original Colors: Dark grey or black and red
on straight white bands on vermillion wall.



GOVERNOR BENJAMIN PIERCE HOMESTEAD HILLSBOROUGH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Entry. Original Colors: Prussian blue on yellow ochre wall.



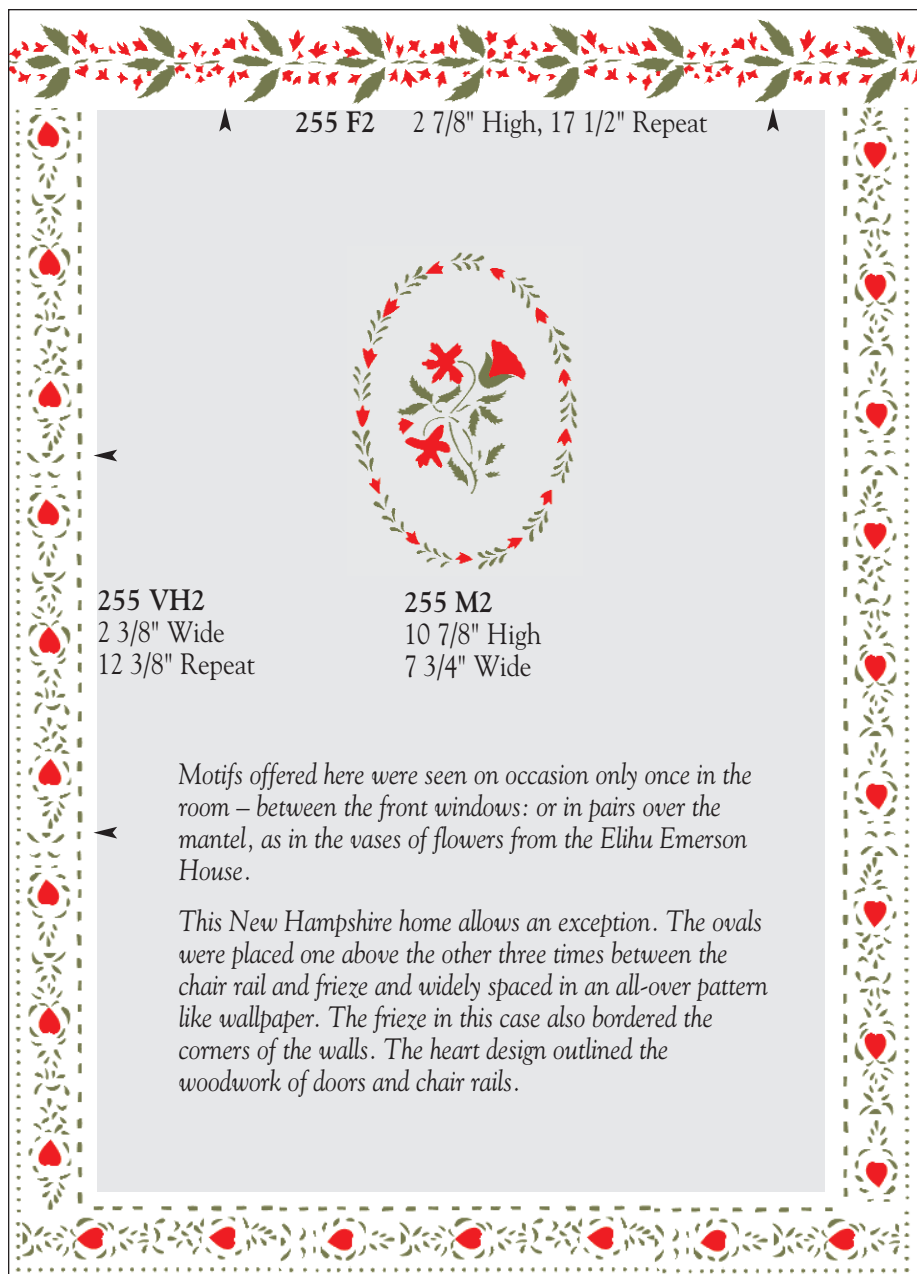
Sewing Room. Original Colors: Dark grey or black and red on straight white bands on plum or old rose wall. (Red detail from the Elizabeth Pierce McNeil house next door.)

This room had the same vertical/horizontal and fan treatment as the ballroom.



A NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE

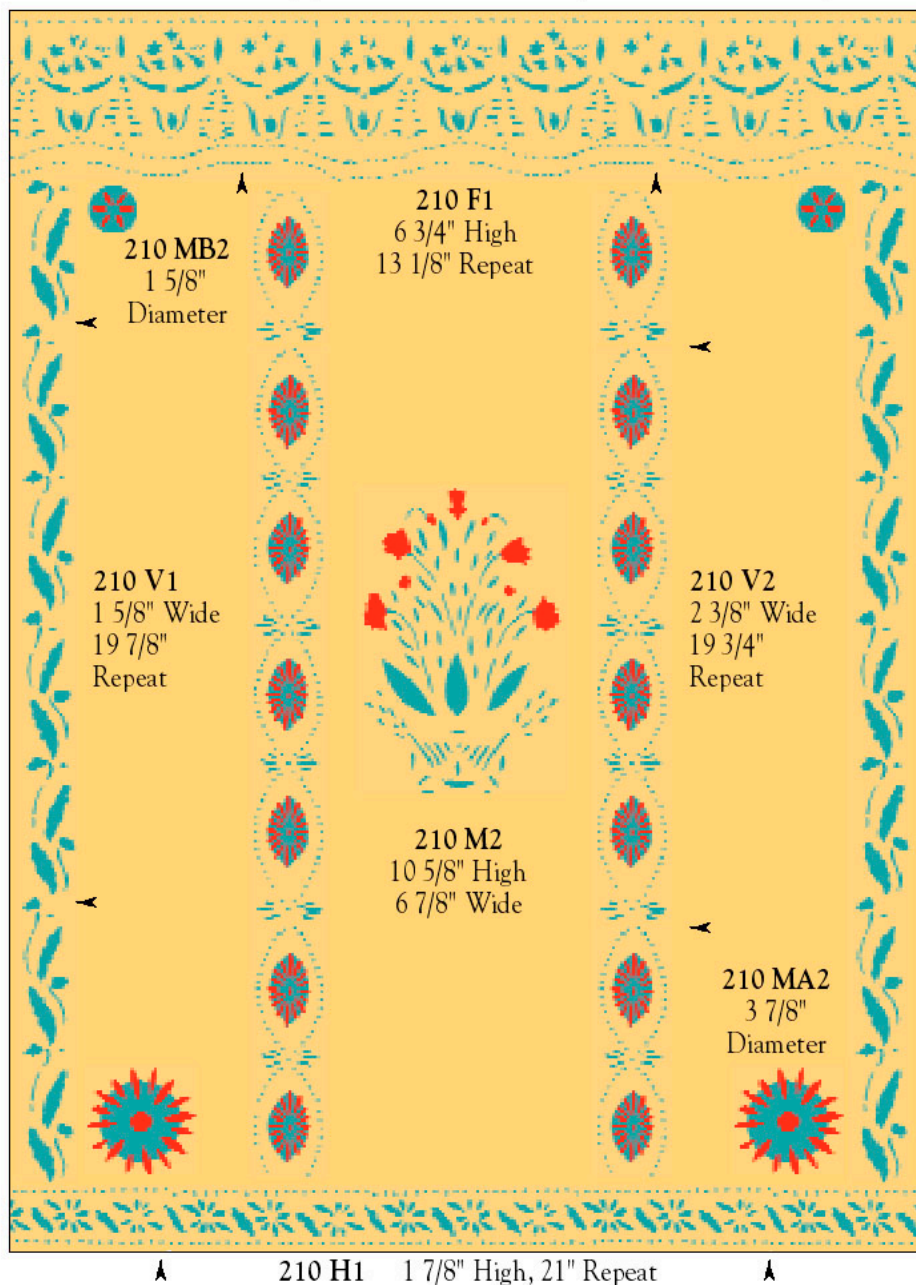
Original Colors: Green and red on straight white bands, on a grey wall.



THE PETER FARNUM HOUSE FRANCESTOWN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

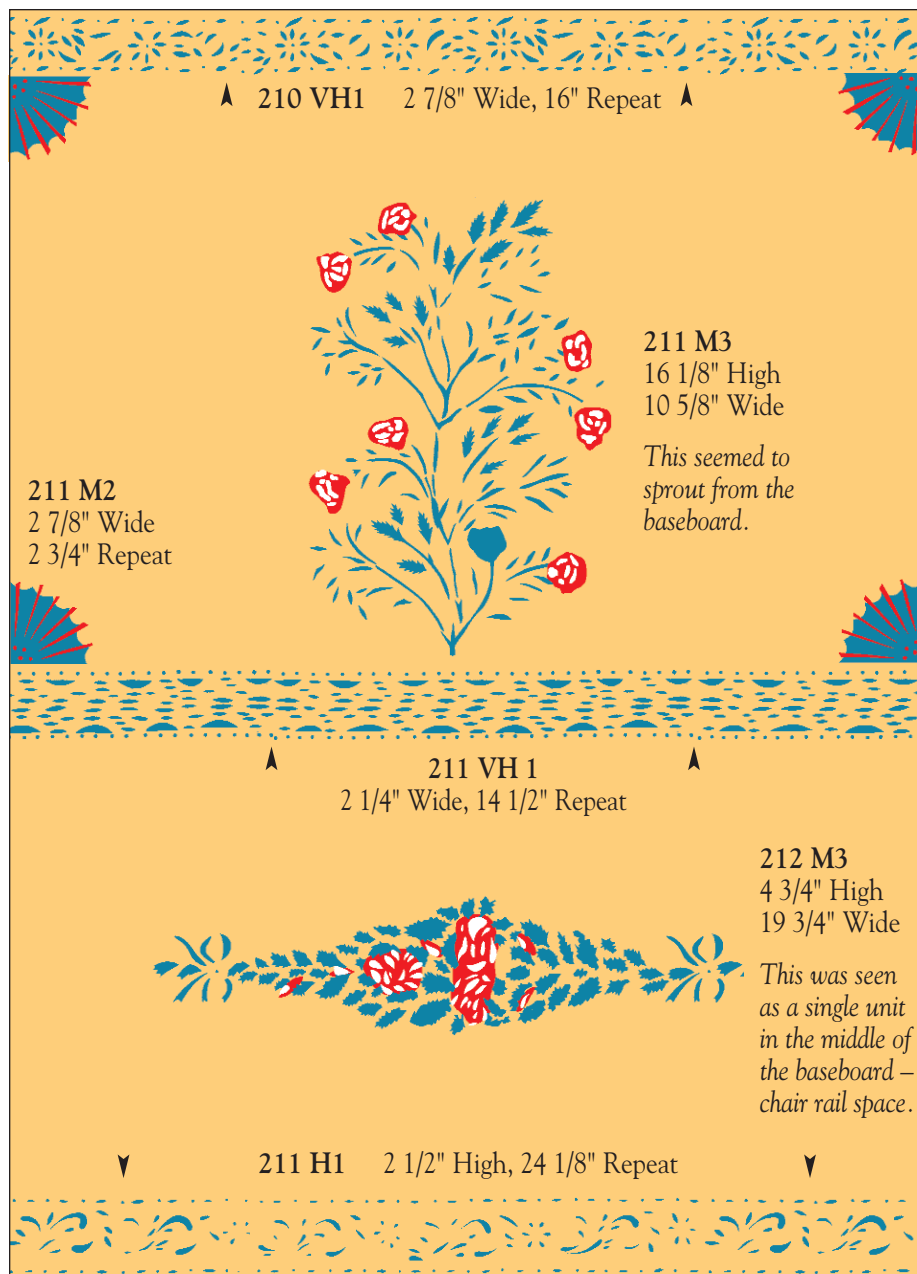
Blue and red on yellow ochre background.

The flower basket appeared three times in the panel, stacked vertically.



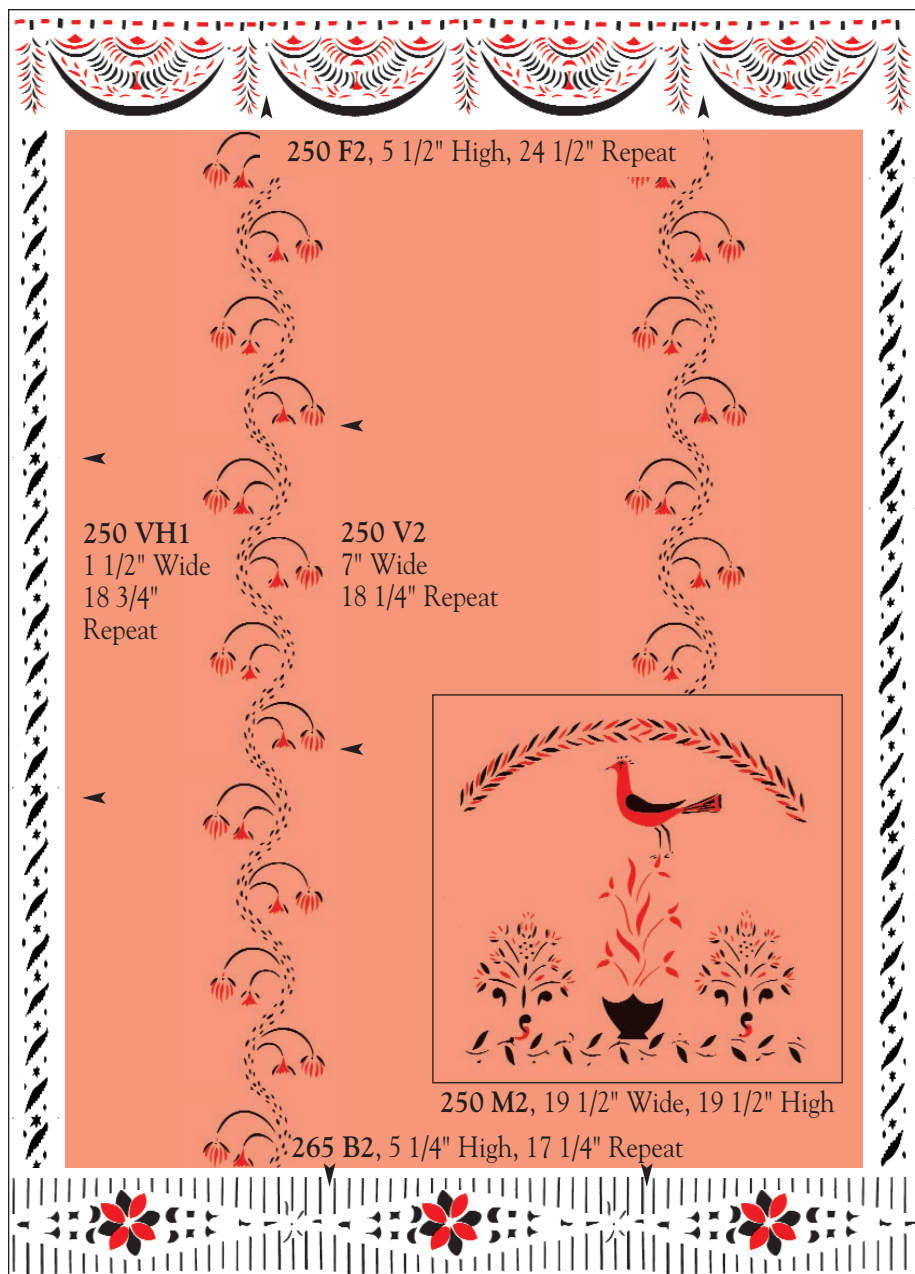
THE PETER FARNUM HOUSE FRANCESTOWN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Blue, red and white on yellow ochre background.



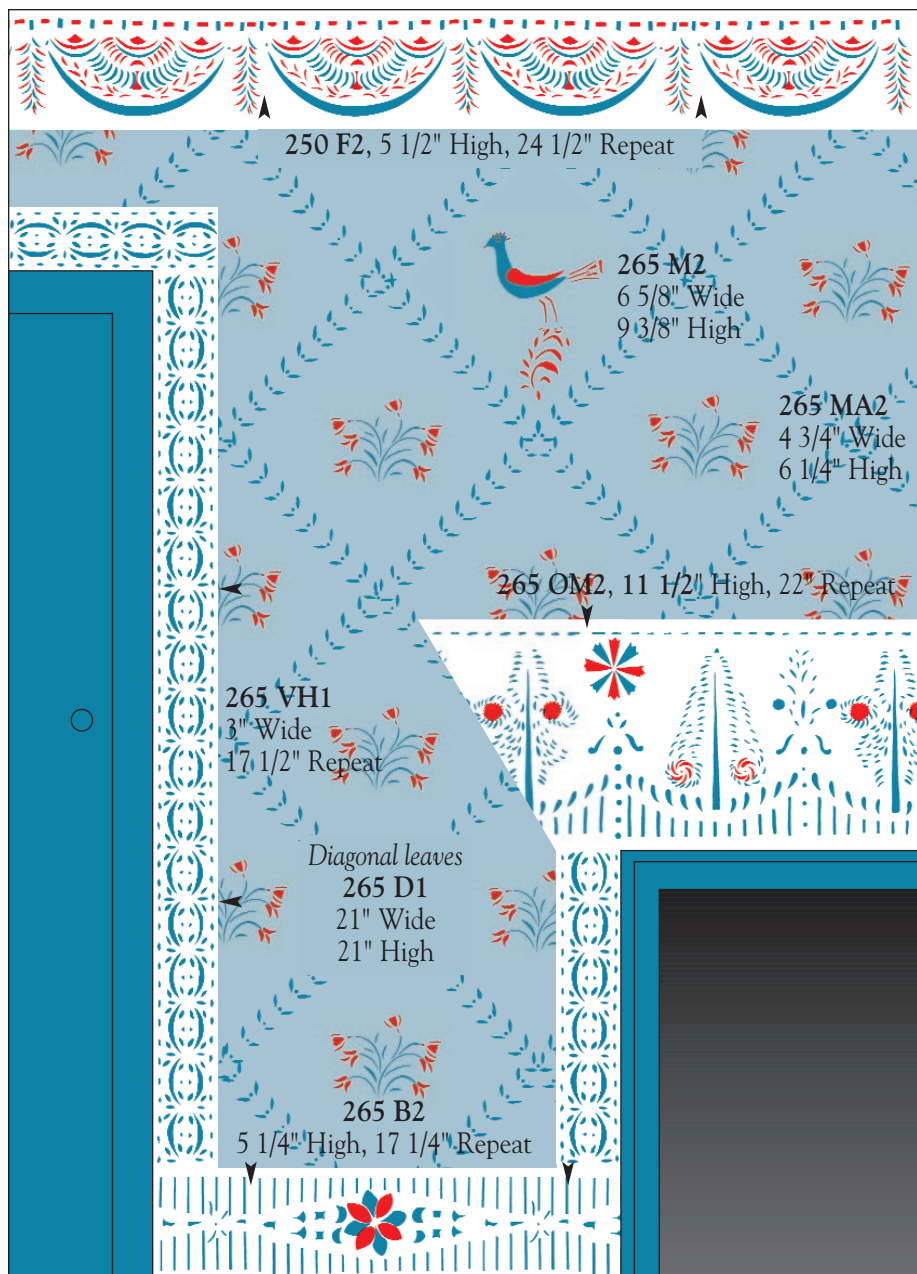
BENJAMIN THOMPSON HOUSE LOUDEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Upstairs bedchamber. Original Colors: Black and naphthol red light on white bands, salmon walls. Bird motif seen once in room between front windows.



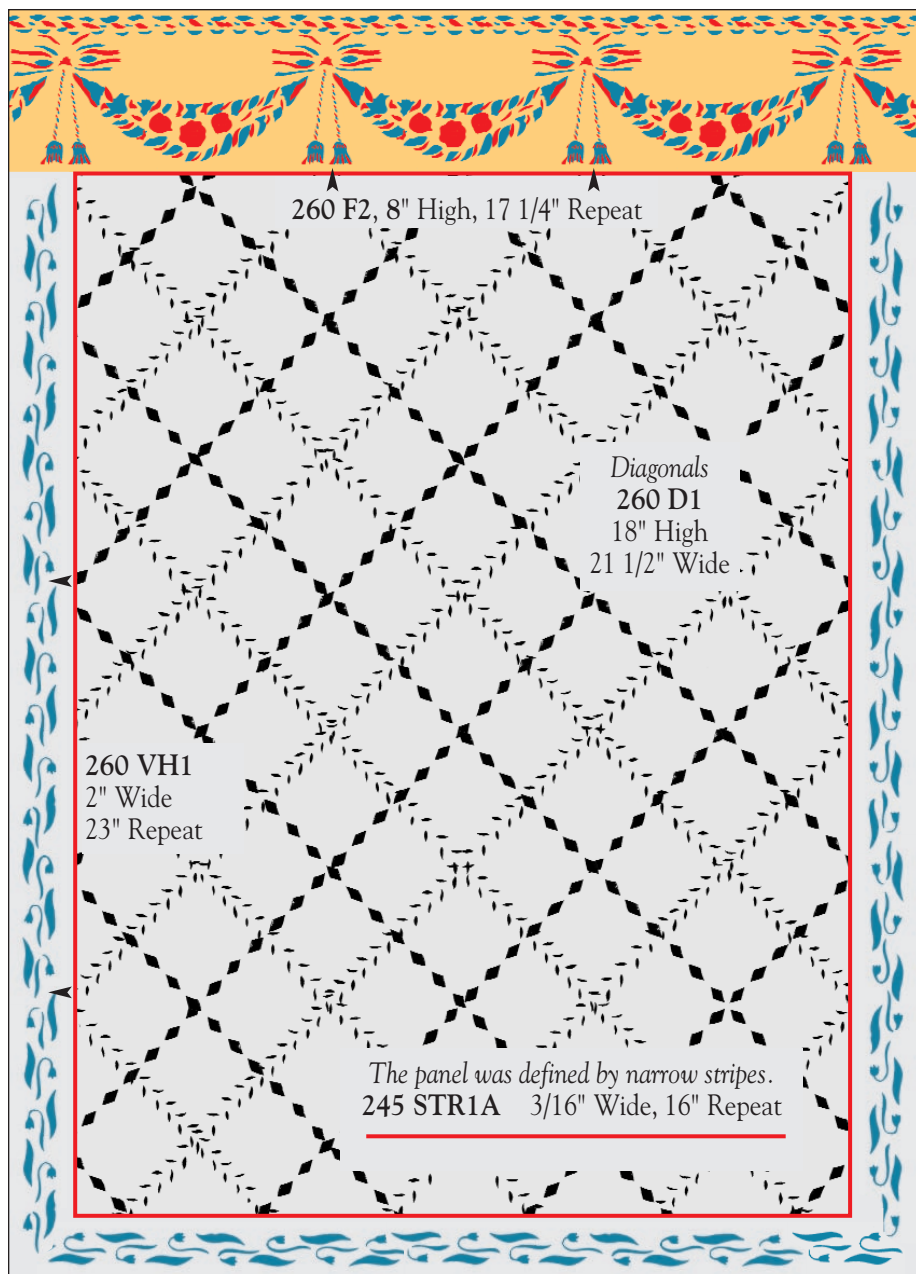
LOVEJOY FARM BED & BREAKFAST LOUDEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Sitting room. Original Colors: Blue and naphthol red light on white bands,
on blue grey walls. Bird motif seen once in room between front windows.



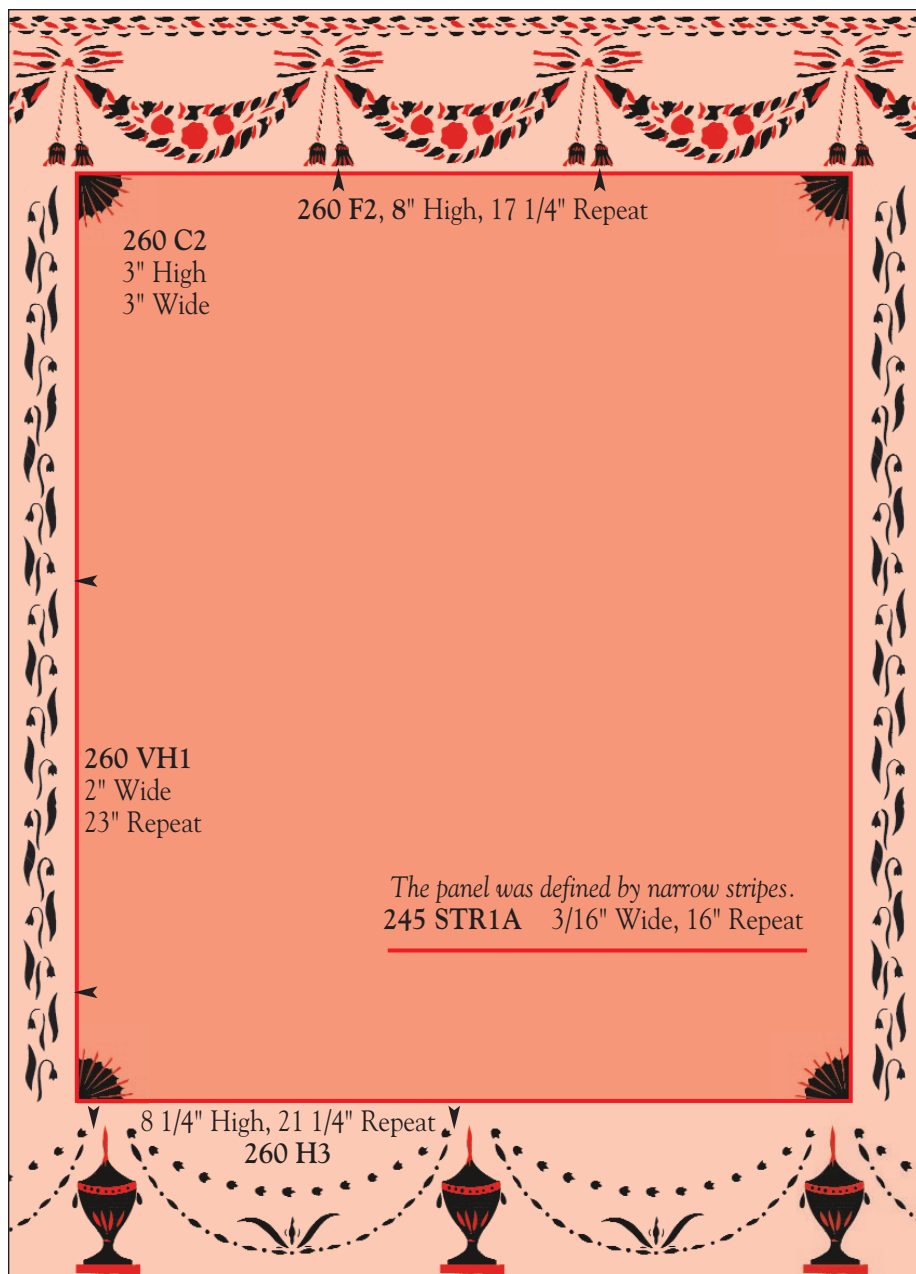
TEMPERANCE TAVERN GILMANTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Tavern room. Original Colors: Frieze blue and naphthol red light on yellow ochre band. Flowers in blue. Diagonals in black on light grey background, outlined in red.



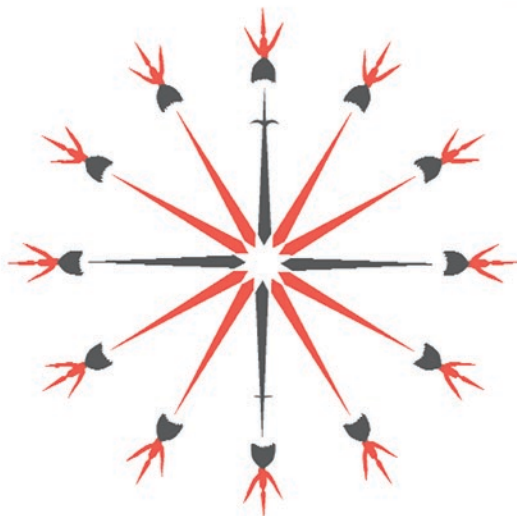
TEMPERANCE TAVERN GILMANTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Upstairs bedchamber. Original Colors: Black and naphthol red light on pale salmon bands, offset from deep salmon wall by red stripe.



LOVEJOY FARM BED & BREAKFAST LOUDEN, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Sitting Room ceiling. Original Colors: Red and black.
This was centered in the middle of the ceiling.



265 CC3
46" Diameter
finished size

"I have used these original stencils in the homes of my clients as well as my own. They also work in a contemporary setting and add a fresh, new decorator's touch to any room."

– Joanne Smith,
decorator Conant House Interiors

"A small amount of stenciling in the hallways added a big touch of class and elegance to our commercial building."

– Harry Holland

"Oh the fun of doing it! The warmth and historical atmosphere it creates completes the décor of our early American home."

– Carolyn Porter

"I like simplicity in the decorating of my home. Border stenciling is a perfect balance for my taste."

– Barbara Holland



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