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THE USE OF THE SALTED PAPER PRINT AS A COPYING TECHNIQUE FOR ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS AND MAPS

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Abstract

Photography has been used as a reproduction technique since its invention. Nicéphore Niépce's early experiments to reproduce engravings resulted in the invention of his heliogravure process, and William Henry Fox Talbot's *Pencil of Nature* sang the praises of using photography in reproducing rare works of art. By the turn of the century, there were many processes developed for the express purpose of reproducing line drawings and large format materials resulting in a booming industry catering to the architecture, engineering, and cartographic fields. However, from 1840 to the 1870's, the salted paper process was one of the main photographic methods used to reproduce architectural drawings and maps.

While used by early practitioners such as William Henry Fox Talbot, the copying of large format and rare line drawings using the salted paper process is most prevalent just prior and during the Civil War. Used as a means to supply updated information of important landmarks and troop locations, the production of maps via photography was a rapid and strategically essential undertaking on which tactical advantages depended. This talk charted the history of the use of the salted paper as a technique for reproducing line drawings. While all of the techniques described result in a salted paper print, the methods for achieving the print were varied, including several patented techniques.

Due to the nature of the materials being copied, these salted paper prints often pose challenging treatment issues. Often prints are colored and inscribed using a variety of materials from watercolors and graphite to iron gall ink. Many times, the reproductions are large and are composed of many small prints collaged together posing problems for treatment and storage. This paper discussed several treatments undertaken by the author in hopes of illustrating the complex issues one is confronted with when treating these types of materials.

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