

Parsons Paper Company Payroll & Employment Analysis - Stat 210

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Introduction

The Parsons Paper Register contains nearly 400 pages of employee, payroll, and financial records from January 1861 to April 1869 from Parsons Paper Company in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Founded in 1853 by Joseph Parsons, Parsons Paper Company was the oldest and largest manufacturer of cotton-based high quality writing papers in Holyoke until its liquidation in 2005. The original pages of the register, which is now property of the Holyoke Public Library, were scanned on January 10, 2023 as part of this class (STAT210: Mining the History of Holyoke) and screenshots are included in the analysis below. Pages contain information such as employee name and signature, role, days worked, daily pay, and total wages earned, and are organized by separate pay periods. We are focused mainly on the payroll, which is comprised by pages 1-316 of the register.

The goal of the following report is to further explore patterns in employment and different groups of employees over time by analyzing the payroll records in the 1861-1869 time period, both before and after the end of the Civil War. First, we aimed to quantify the length of a single pay period as well as the number of employees working at Parsons Paper Company

during the era spanning the register. The 1860s were a time of great growth for the company, and by the beginning of the Civil War in 1861 Parsons Paper Company had already become the largest manufacturer of writing and envelope paper in the United States. Secondly, we examined the distribution of different roles within the company, ranging from women who worked in the “rag room” where the raw material for paper was cut and processed, to men who worked in the engine room and repairs. Most paper mills in the North purchased rags from companies in the South, and Parsons’ rag room was considered an “[anomaly](#).” Finally, we are also interested in clarifying the meaning of the “Price” column of the payroll, which appears to denote the daily wage rate of the different employees in cents, although the exact meaning and calculation of the fractions remains unclear.

One of the central goals of this class is to make the information contained in the Parsons Paper Register and related materials more accessible and widely available to those interested in the rich history of Holyoke. A Shiny app is available to view individual scans of the register at r.amherst.edu/apps/nhorton/Parsons-Paper/. We hope that this report can provide some insight into the different day-to-day operations at Parsons Paper Company, as well as the individuals who worked there, many of whom stayed for several years.

In the illustrative analysis below, we used a transcribed copy of page 253 (Figure 1) of the register to compare the number of employees who were able to sign their own signatures to the number of employees who were not able to on a singular page, and examine whether there was a relationship between literacy and pay. Table 1 displays the transcript of page 253.

*Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum prefixed to our Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to February 1st 1867.*

NAMES.	No. POUNDS.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
William Johnson	242 1/2	6	6287	1737					Wm Johnson
John Johnson	24 1/2	6	3498	1167	3028				John Johnson
William Connor	25 1/2	6	6875	725	6150				William Connor
Martin Kennedy	28 1/2	6	8788			3738			Martin Kennedy
James Casey	28 1/2	6	5100			51			James Casey
John Gallivan	25 1/2	6	8780			3750			John Gallivan
John Vaughan	25 1/2	6	5000			50			John Vaughan
John Doyle	27 1/2	6	11050			1050			John Doyle
Sam'l J. Knight	25 1/2	6	5500	72000	4775				J. T. Knight
Philip Silday	28 1/2	6	5700			57			Philip Silday
John Conahan	28 1/2	6	5600	625		4975			John Conahan
Frank Russell	25 1/2	6	4812	900		3912			Frank Russell
Charles Johnson	25 1/2	6	3563			3563			Charles Johnson
William Conroy	27 1/2	6	9450			9450			William Conroy
John Flynn	28 1/2	6	6750			6750			John Flynn
E. V. Wellington	27 1/2	6	5775	625		5150			E. V. Wellington
Stephen Ward	27 1/2	6	14470			10070			Stephen Ward
John McKee	25 1/2	6	4831	933		3898			John McKee
Charles Shring	27 1/2	6	5850			5850			Charles Shring
J. A. Allen	27 1/2	6	4050	500		3550			J. A. Allen
John Doyle	31 1/2	6	5685			5685			John Doyle
John Silday	25 1/2	6	4650			4650			John Silday
John Flynn	29 1/2	6	5317			5317			John Flynn
Edward Kelly	25 1/2	6	4063			4063			Edward Kelly
Cat'ly Loyalty	28 1/2	6	4460	1167		3993			Cat'ly Loyalty
Cat'ly O'Caran	27 1/2	6	4888	574		3814			Cat'ly O'Caran
Joe Keane	6	1	975	500		475			Joe Keane
Joe Keane	25 1/2	6	4550			4550			Joe Keane
John Langdon	27 1/2	6	1725			1725			John Langdon
Eugene Healey	26 1/2	6	3910			3910			Eugene Healey
Curran W. Davis	26 1/2	6	3975			3975			Curran W. Davis
John Shea	18 1/2	6	2745			2745			John Shea
John Curran	2 1/2	6	75			75			John Curran
Mary Conley	11 1/2	6	1237			1237			Mary Conley
Kate Kilian	27 1/2	6	3037			3037			Kate Kilian
Kate Moran	3 1/2	6	27			27			Kate Moran
Kate Baldwin	23 1/2	6	2887			2887			Kate Baldwin
Philip Gilday			712			712			Philip Gilday
George Dungan			100			100			George Dungan
Repcans B.C.					17200	16197	110040		
Austin Ely	25 1/2	6	7650			4650			Austin Ely
Walter Buckley	20 1/2	6	6150			3650			Walter Buckley
J. M. Alden	25 1/2	6	6250			6250			J. M. Alden
Martin Kewell	23 1/2	6	6178	1400		4778			Martin Kewell
Pat. Casey	52 1/2	6	5282			5282			Pat. Casey
Austin Ely	27 1/2	6	8100			8100			Austin Ely
Walter Buckley	27 1/2	6	8100			8100			Walter Buckley
J. M. Alden	27 1/2	6	6750			6750			J. M. Alden
Martin Kewell	27 1/2	6	6075	400		5675			Martin Kewell
Pat. Casey	33 1/2	6	6362			5362			Pat. Casey
			3037	400		3097			
					6150	6150			
					4650	4650			
					3650	3650			
					4778	4778			
					5282	5282			

Figure 1: Ex. p. 253 of register - February 1st, 1867. Payroll of the Parsons Paper Company (Holyoke, MA)

William Connor	27 3/4	9450	9450	Wm J. Remeroy
John Flynn	87 1/2	6780	6780	John Flynn
E. W. Wellington	27 7/8	8775	625	E. W. Wellington
Stephen Ward	27 9/16	14470	4470	Stephen Ward
Wm McLean	38 4/16	4831	933	Wm McLean

Figure 2: Close-up of p. 253 of register from Figure 1. Signatures with an 'x' in the middle (like John Flynn above) indicate the worker was not able to sign their own name

Table 1: Example Portion of Parsons Paper Company Register P.253

lastname	firstname	number_days	price1	price2	total	rent_or_board	balance_due	signature_x	daily_pay
Johnson	William	24.50	16	6	67.37	NA	67.37	yes	2.750
O'Brien	John W.	21.50	9	9	34.95	4.67	30.28	yes	1.626
Connor	William	25.00	16	6	68.75	7.25	61.50	yes	2.750
Kennedy	Martin	23.00	9	9	37.38	0.00	37.38	no	1.625
Casey	James	25.50	12	0	51.00	0.00	51.00	no	2.000
Gallivan	Thos	25.00	9	0	37.50	0.00	37.50	no	1.500
Vaughn	John W.	25.00	12	0	50.00	0.00	50.00	no	2.000
Doyle	Pat K.	27.00	9	0	40.50	0.00	40.50	no	1.500
Knight	Samuel L.	27.50	12	0	55.00	7.25	47.75	no	2.000
Gilday	Phillip	28.50	12	0	57.00	0.00	57.00	yes	2.000
Couchon	John	28.00	12	0	56.00	6.25	49.75	yes	2.000
Russell	Frank	27.50	10	6	48.12	9.00	39.12	yes	1.750
Johnson	Chancy	28.50	7	6	35.63	0.00	35.63	no	1.250
Pomeroy	William	27.00	21	0	94.50	0.00	94.50	yes	3.500
Flynn	John	27.00	15	0	67.50	0.00	67.50	no	2.500
Willington	E.	27.00	19	6	87.75	6.25	81.50	yes	3.250
Moran	Martin	27.50	9	9	44.70	0.00	44.70	no	1.625
McKay	William	31.25	19	6	98.31	9.33	88.98	yes	3.146
Strong	Chester	27.00	13	0	58.50	0.00	58.50	yes	2.167
Allen	J.H.	27.00	9	0	40.50	5.00	35.50	no	1.500
Ryan	Mick	31.00	11	0	56.83	0.00	56.83	no	1.833
Bergin	Pat K.	31.00	9	0	46.50	0.00	46.50	no	1.500
Markham	Mick	29.00	11	0	53.17	0.00	53.17	no	1.833
Woolf	Edward	25.00	9	9	40.63	0.00	40.63	yes	1.625
Moriarty	Pat K.	25.50	10	6	44.62	4.67	39.95	no	1.750
O'Hare	Pat K.	27.00	9	9	43.88	5.00	38.88	yes	1.625
Beaudeax	Jos	6.00	9	9	9.75	5.00	4.75	no	1.625
Beaudeax	Jos Jr.	28.00	9	9	45.50	0.00	45.50	no	1.625
Naughton	John	27.00	10	6	47.25	0.00	47.25	no	1.750
Hurly	Eugene	26.00	9	0	39.00	0.00	39.00	no	1.500
Davis	Hiram	26.50	9	0	39.75	0.00	39.75	yes	1.500
Shea	John	18.50	9	0	27.75	0.00	27.75	no	1.500
Warren	John	0.50	9	0	0.75	0.00	0.75	yes	1.500
Donlan	Mary	11.00	6	9	12.37	0.00	12.37	no	1.125
William	Kate	27.00	6	9	30.37	0.00	30.37	no	1.125
Moran	Kate	24.00	6	9	27.00	0.00	27.00	no	1.125
Baldwin	Kate	23.00	6	9	25.87	0.00	25.87	no	1.125
Gilday	Phillip	NA	NA	NA	7.12	0.00	7.12	yes	NA
Flynn	John	NA	NA	NA	1.00	0.00	1.00	no	NA
Ely	Austin	27.00	18	0	81.00	0.00	81.00	yes	3.000
Buckley	Matteo	27.00	18	0	81.00	0.00	81.00	yes	3.000
Alden	J.M.	27.00	16	0	67.50	0.00	67.50	yes	2.500
Newell	Martin	27.00	13	6	60.75	4.00	56.75	yes	2.250
Casey	Pat K.	33.00	9	9	53.62	0.00	53.62	yes	1.625

55% (22/44) of the employees at Parsons Paper Company were illiterate, especially the women and immigrants, who largely lacked formal education. Additionally, employees who were literate received significantly higher wages compared to employees who were illiterate (see Figure 3).

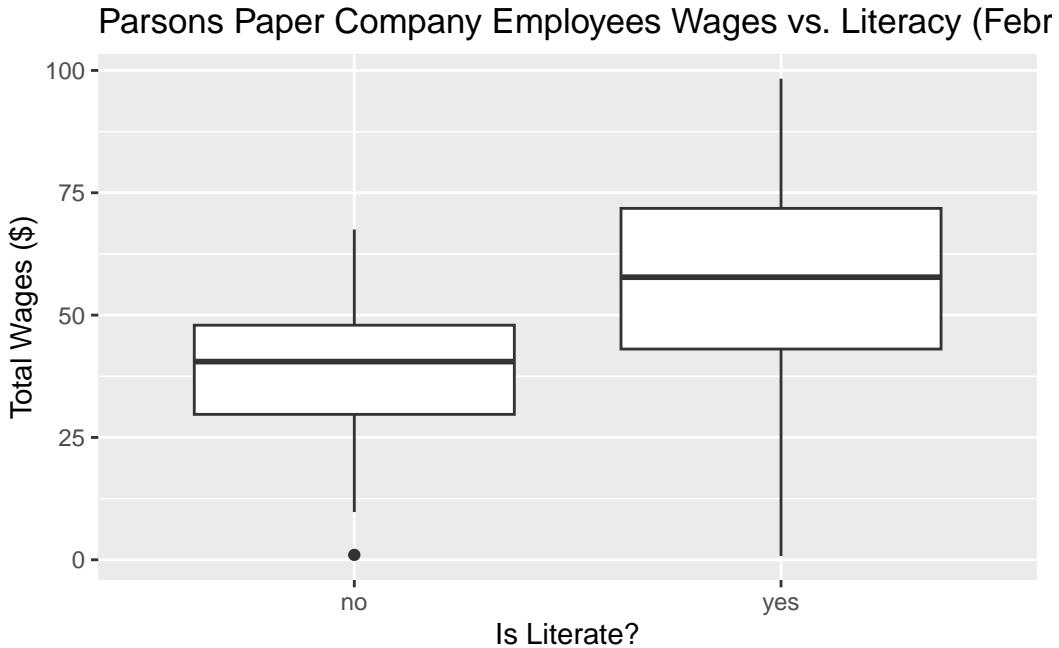


Figure 3: Distribution of total wages for 44 employees at Parsons Paper Company in February 1867. Data is taken from Table 1 from p.253 of the register. Literacy is measured by an employee's ability to sign their own name in the payroll.

How many days in a pay period?

As mentioned in the introduction, the Parsons Paper Company register stored in the Holyoke Public Library comprises monthly pay periods from January 1861-April 1869 (p.1-316 of the register). Pay periods appear to be a month long with employees typically getting paid on the 1st of the next month. Based off Table 1 from p. 253, most employees work between 20-30 days each pay period, with the average being around 27, so most employees work at least 6 days/week. In Chapter IV of Constance Green's *Holyoke, Massachusetts: A Case History of the Industrial Revolution in America* (Green 1939), it is reported that male Holyoke paper makers worked 58-72 hours a week. Working 11.25 hours five days a week in addition to 8.75 hours on Saturday was typical for Holyoke textile mills, while women tended to work slightly shorter hours.

Pgs. 223-225 (see Figure 4) appear to comprise an entire pay period for the month of April in 1868 (most pay periods span ~3 pages in the register)

*Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum prefixed to our Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to April 1st 1867.*

NAMES	NO. POUNDS.	NO. REAMS.	NO. DATE.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
George Papillion	2 ² / ₃	13		6187	61.87	Apr 15			George Papillion
James P. Dowd	24 ³ / ₄	9		3742	37.42				James P. Dowd
Walter F. Lord	28 ² / ₃	3		5600	6.25	4675	"		Walter F. Lord
George P. Day	26 ¹³ / ₁₆	5		5850	6.25	5225	"		Geo. A. Day
Olive Whalley	23 ¹ / ₂	11		4419	12	5219	"		Olive Whalley
P. Belmont Sales	26 ¹ / ₂	6		3467	13 1/4	2153	"		P. Belmont Sales
Lawrence Fairall	24 ¹ / ₂	6		4200	13 1/4	2886	"		Lawrence Fairall
Samuel Lawrence	16 ² / ₃	3		1925	12	725	"		Samuel Lawrence
Charles Morgan	15 ¹ / ₂	4		1000		10	"		Charles Morgan
Kay P. Dowd	26 ¹ / ₂	9		26		26	"		Kay P. Dowd
Mary Holland	26 ¹ / ₂	9		26		26			Mary Holland
Ellen Dowd	24 ² / ₃	4		2450		2450	"		Ellen Dowd
Olive Morgan	26 ¹ / ₂	9		26		26	"		Olive Morgan
Isabella Stock	26 ¹ / ₂	9		26		26	"		Isabella Stock
M. Casey (Worrell)	23 ⁵ / ₆	4		2350		2350	"		M. Casey (Worrell)
Mary Peigler	25 ¹ / ₂	4		2575		2575	"		Mary Peigler
Emilia Marsh	25 ¹ / ₂	4		2525	12	1325	"		Emilia Marsh
Malina Colby	26 ¹ / ₂	9		26		26	"		Malina Colby
Audina Colby	24 ² / ₃	4		2450	9 1/2	1550	"		Audina Colby
Res Smith	18 ² / ₃	6		1850		1850	"		Res Smith
Emily Strong	25 ¹ / ₂	9		25		25	"		Emily Strong
E. Tomlinson	26 ¹ / ₂	9		28	3	23	"		E. Tomlinson
Jennie Gill	25 ¹ / ₂	9		2550	12	1350	"		Jennie Gill
J. A. Reale	25 ¹ / ₂	9		25	6 85	1815	"		J. A. Reale
G. Whittemore	25 ¹ / ₂	9		25		25	"		G. Whittemore
Carrice Galance	25 ¹ / ₂	9		2575		2575	"		Carrice Galance
Alice J. Perry	25 ¹ / ₂	9		25		25	"		Alice J. Perry
Maria Bush	25 ¹ / ₂	9		2475	12	1275	"		Maria Bush
E. A. Barnes	25 ¹ / ₂	9		2050		2050	"		E. A. Barnes
Abby Allen	9 ³ / ₄	2		810		810	"		Abby Allen
Kay E. Kelt	18 ¹ / ₂	6		18	986	814	"		Kay E. Kelt
Mary Comin	26 ¹ / ₂	9		26		26	"		Mary Comin
Elizabeth Dowd	3 ¹ / ₂	3		3		3	"		Elizabeth Dowd
Margaret Kalan	17 ¹ / ₂	6		1150	6	550	"		Margaret Kalan
H. Brown	String 1567 46349			1864	12	664	"		H. Brown
Jeffanna Dowd	C. S. 1227 52 53			3045	6.25	2420	"		Jeffanna Dowd
Suey Allen	12351								Suey Allen
J. Cormac	1174 582 53			3574		3374	"		J. Cormac
Sarah Francis	829 46 53			2687	9 00	1797	"		Sarah Francis
E. A. Allen	118 123 53			789	258	576	"		E. A. Allen
John Brown	Seton 1550	2		26		26	"		John Brown
H. Brown	" 757	2		1514		1514	"		H. Brown
Margaret Dowd	" 724	2		1448		1448	"		Margaret Dowd
E. M. Seitz	" 1118	2		2236		2236	"		E. M. Seitz
Martha Wright	" 939	2		1878	700	1178	"		Martha Wright
Julia Cormac	" 421	2		842	59	792	"		Julia Cormac
O. R. Miller					10702	17052	97620		
L. Farrell									L. Farrell
R. P. Sykes									R. P. Sykes
Sam. J. Lawrence									Sam. J. Lawrence

Figure 4: p. 223 of register (April 1st, 1867), see p.224-225 in 'Appendix'

Pgs. 223-225 and Pgs. 261-263 (see Figure 5) are exactly one year apart in the register (April 1st 1867 vs. April 1st 1868).

Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum prefixed to our Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to April 1st 1868.

NAMES.	NO. POUNDS.	NO. REAMS.	NO. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
Geo Papillion	24	18	4	64.32	64.32				George Papillion
Jenny P. Davis	22	10	1	3.98	3.98				Jenny P. Davis
J. T. Lord	23	18		63.75	7.25	56.50			Haller Lord
Elo A. Day	24	15		60.63	7.25	53.38			Elo A. Day
O. S. Whaler	21	14		5.01	17.71	32.66			O. S. Whaler
A. L. P. Sykes	26	18		45.50	17.71	27.79			A. L. P. Sykes
J. F. Daniels	21	15		5.25		5.25			J. F. Daniels
Chas. Robertson	26	16		82.50	17.71	14.79			Chas. Robertson
Cho. A. Morgan	26	5		2.16		2.16			Cho. A. Morgan
Ellen Donline	25	6		2.50		2.50			Ellen Donline
Jos. A. Shattuck	26			3.03		3.03			Jos. A. Shattuck
R. Casey	25	6		2.50		2.50			R. Casey
Anna Brown	20			2.05		2.05			Anna Brown
Elo A. Whittemore	26			26.00	13.29	12.71			Elo A. Whittemore
Sarah Storer	25			23.50	13.29	10.21			Sarah Storer
Cara Wadsworth	24			24.00	13.29	10.71			Cara Wadsworth
Eliza Burley	26			26.00		26			Eliza Burley
Mary Burley	26			26.00		26			Mary Burley
Felicia Moton	29			21.50	13.29	8.21			Felicia Moton
J. Buckland	18			18.00	9.86	8.14			J. Buckland
E. Carlton	13			1.00		1.00			E. Carlton
Lizzie Dawson	26			26.00	13.29	12.71			Lizzie Dawson
S. Mandeville	26			26.00		26.00			S. Mandeville
Julia Dart	26			26.00	13.29	12.71			Julia Dart
Maria Brown	13			1.35		1.35			Maria Brown
Meredith Dart	25			25.00	13.29	11.71			Meredith Dart
Louisa Heath	25			2.50		2.50			Louisa Heath
Sarah Camp	24	6		2.00		2.00			Sarah Camp
Yours Gould	26	6		26.00	13.29	12.71			Yours Gould
L. A. Smith	21	20	3	27.64		27.64			L. A. Smith
Lucy Allen	25	2	13	2.97		2.97			Lucy Allen
M. Brown	27	2	40	20.09	13.29	6.80			M. Brown
Mary Davis	21	20	40	28.71		28.71			Mary Davis
E. A. Allen	11	1	2	2.34		2.34			E. A. Allen
Mary Conford	780			15.60	15.60	0.00			Mary Conford
G. A. Lord	906			1.81		1.81			G. A. Lord
Matthew Wright	756			1.51	7.00	8.12			Matthew Wright
E. Conford	1069			2.13	13.29	8.09			E. Conford
S. Conford	915			1.83		1.83			S. Conford
D. Conford	7	6		7.00		7			D. Conford
Adie Conner	279	25	58	14.64		14.64			Adie Conner
M. Brown	200	25	58	5.51		5.51			M. Brown
S. Hackeloff	235	9	2	5.51		5.51			S. Hackeloff
Julia Conner	214	2		4.25		4.25			Julia Conner
M. Brown	168	2		3.36		3.36			M. Brown
S. Conford	12	6		4.50		4.50			S. Conford
Mary Davis	680	2		13.60	6.25	7.35			Mary Davis
"	240	2		6.00		6			"
260	3			7.50		7.50			260
Mary Holland	702	2		14.04		14.04			Mary Holland
"	496	3		14.85		14.85			"
Mary Conford	400	2		8.00	5.83	2.17			Mary Conford
					101.960	145.07	97.462		

Figure 5: p. 261 of register (April 1st, 1868), see p.262-263 in 'Appendix'

Table 2: Number of Parsons Paper Company Employees by Year

Year	Number of Employees	Subset Page Numbers
April 1861	92	8-10
April 1862	122	43-45
April 1863	141	79-81
April 1864	128	115-117
April 1865	159	151-153
April 1866	144	187-189
April 1867	131	223-225
April 1868	153	261-263
April 1869	153	314-316

How many employees during this era?

To quantify this, we counted the number of employees throughout each of the following pay periods by hand by going through the pages of the register one by one. We found that the average number of workers employed at Parsons Paper Company across the measured 9 years spanning the register is **136 employees between 1861-1869**. From Table 2, we can see that the number of employees generally increased over the years, with a noticeable boom in employment towards the end of the Civil War in 1865. In Chapter IV of *Holyoke, Massachusetts*, Green mentions that these paper mills had abnormally high employee retention rates compared to other industries. From *Burt's Illustrated Guide of the Connecticut Valley* ([page 79](#)), we also know that at the end of 1867, Parsons employed 150 people and had “nineteen engines for grinding rags,” turning out “800 tons of paper yearly.”

What types of jobs are there?

In *History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts: History of Franklin County. History of Hampden County* (1879), accessed [here](#) via Google Books, L.H Everts provides more information about the layout of the two Parsons Paper Company mills and the different departments of employment, which helped us determine job names that we could not originally decipher (i.e. “jobber”). Everts writes that,

“The buildings of this company are situated on the river-bank near the dam, and were built in 1853. They are two in number, the **main mill**, where the paper is made, and what is known as the **finishing-mill**, where it is finished. The former is a structure three stories and a basement high. The upper floor and attic are devoted to drying purposes, while the second story contains the storehouse and **rag-rooms**. About 175 persons are employed on the two floors. On the ground-floor is the **engine-room**, which contains sixteen 450-pound and fourteen 250-pound engines. The mill has three Fourdrinier machines, two of them are 62-inch and the other 72-inch. It has two bleach-boilers, of 3 1/2 and 2 1/2 tons respectively, and 4 sheet calendars and a web calendar and 2 hydraulic presses. The finishing-mill is also situated on the bank of the river, a short distance from the other mill, and, like that, is a

brick structure three stories high. The attic and third floor are used for **packing**, and on the second floor the paper is **reeled** and **jogged**. On the first floor are eight 6-roll calendars and three powerful hydraulic presses, and in the basement is a box-factory and plating-machines” (919).

Tracking employment by job type for first 6 months of the register (Jan-Jun 1861)

[Link to full spreadsheet](#)

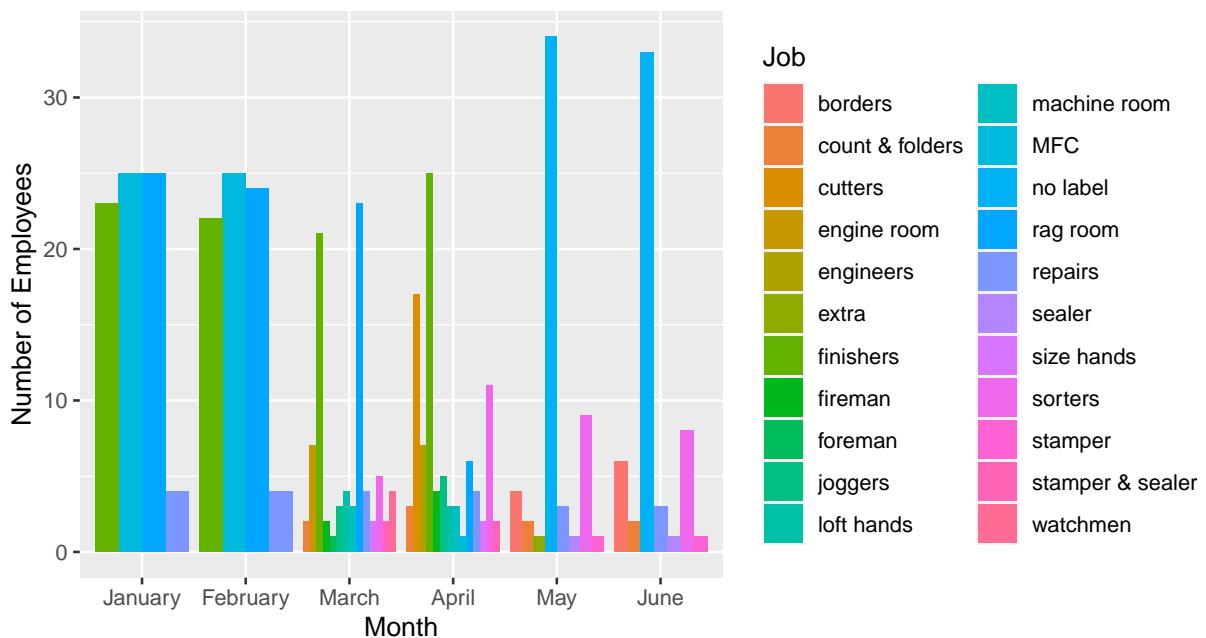
Table 3 displays the different roles recorded for the first six months of the register, from January to June of 1861. The role labels on the register become very sporadic and difficult to track after 1861, however, ‘Repairs’ and ‘Repairs and Watchmen’ remain in their own section at the bottom of the register pages throughout all of the pay periods. There were 5 people under “Repairs” for April 1st, 1867 (see Figure 7 in ‘Appendix’) and 8 people under April 1st, 1868 (see Figure 8 in ‘Appendix’).

The first pages of each pay period are typically comprised of unlabeled laborers (presumably the majority worked in the engine and machine rooms), in addition to Repairs and Watchmen, who are all males. The sorters, stampers, sealers, count and folders, and rag room/cutter roles all appear to remain throughout 1861-1869, although there are much fewer of them compared to the unlabeled male laborers. These roles are largely held by women, and their wages tend to be significantly lower than male workers, which can be seen in the next section.

Table 3: Parsons Paper Company Employment by Job Type (January-June 1861)

Month	Year	Page Number	Job	Count	Monthly Total Workers
January	1861	1	MFC	25	77
January	1861	1	repairs	4	77
January	1861	2	rag room	25	77
January	1861	2	finishers	23	77
February	1861	3	MFC	25	75
February	1861	3	repairs	4	75
February	1861	4	rag room	24	75
February	1861	4	finishers	22	75
March	1861	5	foreman	1	85
March	1861	5	machine room	3	85
March	1861	5	engine room	7	85
March	1861	5	loft hands	4	85
March	1861	5	fireman	2	85
March	1861	5	size hands	2	85
March	1861	5	joggers	3	85
March	1861	5	watchmen	4	85
March	1861	6	rag room	23	85
March	1861	6	repairs	4	85
March	1861	7	finishers	21	85
March	1861	7	sorters	5	85
March	1861	7	stamper & sealer	2	85
March	1861	7	count & folders	2	85
March	1861	7	sorters	2	85
April	1861	8	rag room	6	93
April	1861	8	cutters	17	93
April	1861	8	repairs	4	93
April	1861	9	MFC	1	93
April	1861	9	machine room	3	93
April	1861	9	engineers	7	93
April	1861	9	loft hands	3	93
April	1861	9	size hands	2	93
April	1861	9	joggers	5	93
April	1861	9	fireman	4	93
April	1861	10	finishers	25	93
April	1861	10	stamper & sealer	2	93
April	1861	10	count & folders	3	93
April	1861	10	sorters	11	93
May	1861	11	no label	25	105
May	1861	11	stamper	1	105
May	1861	11	sealer	1	105
May	1861	11	count & folders	2	105
May	1861	11	sorters	9	105
May	1861	11	extra	1	105
May	1861	12	no label	34	105
May	1861	12	repairs	3	105
May	1861	13	no label	25	105
May	1861	13	borders	4	NA
June	1861	14	no label	17	95
June	1861	14	repairs	3	95
June	1861	14	borders	6	95
June	1861	15	no label	24	95
June	1861	15	sorters	8	95
June	1861	15	count & folders	2	95
June	1861	15	stamper	1	95
June	1861	15	sealer	1	95
June	1861	16	no label	33	95

Parsons Paper Company Employment by Job Type in 1861



The plot above shows the distribution of different roles within the paper company during the first six months of 1861. The unlabeled male laborers, MFC mill workers, finishers, and rag room workers appear to be the most popular roles.

How do Parsons wages compare to the Massachusetts state averages?

Table 4 and the plot below are adapted from page 314 of Judith McGaw's *Most Wonderful Machine: Mechanization and Social Change in Berkshire Paper Making, 1801-1885*, which used data from page 74 of the *Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Statistics of Labor* (Boston, 1879).

Table 4: Weekly Wages of Massachusetts Paper Workmen, 1860-78

Job	1860 Weekly Wages (\$)	1872 Weekly Wages (\$)	1878 Weekly Wages (\$)
Foreman	16.63	16.00	26.49
Millwright	9.86	16.00	15.21
Paper-machine tender	10.00	16.00	15.25
Mechanic	9.75	NA	13.20
Finisher	7.70	11.33	10.20
Rag-engine tender	7.90	14.67	10.41
Engineer/fireman	6.64	10.52	8.77
Finisher's helper	5.80	NA	7.27
Cutter	6.90	8.89	7.95
Bleacher	6.70	8.89	7.56
Men on stock	5.88	9.33	6.57
Laborers	5.50	9.33	6.55

Weekly Wages of Massachusetts Paper Workmen, 1860–78

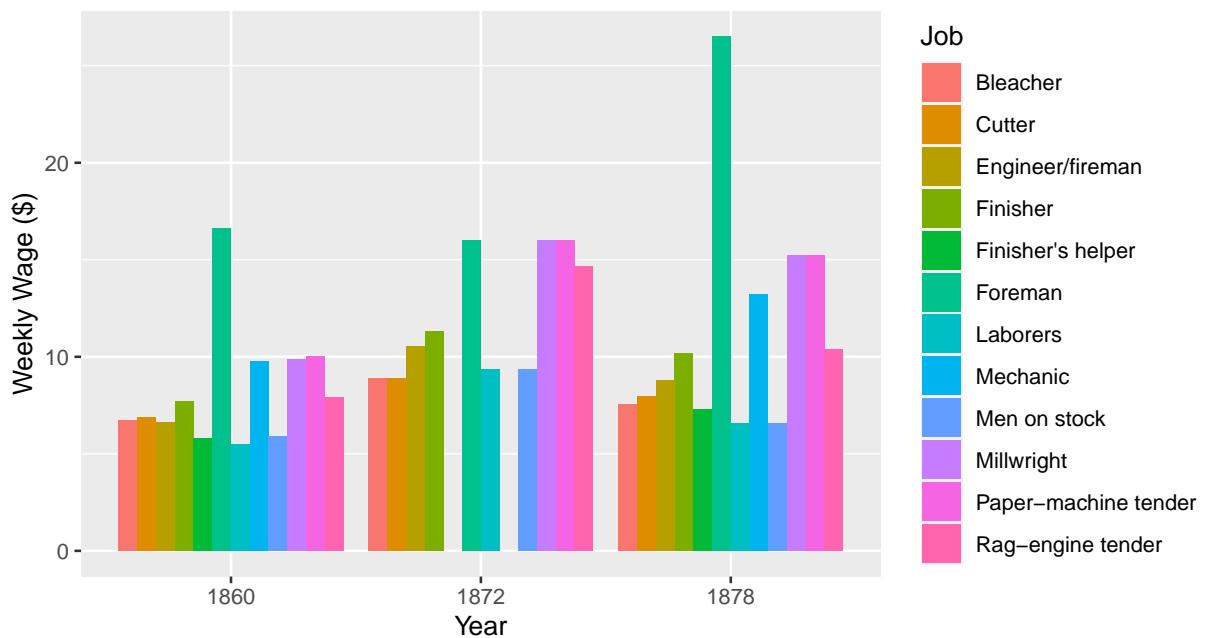
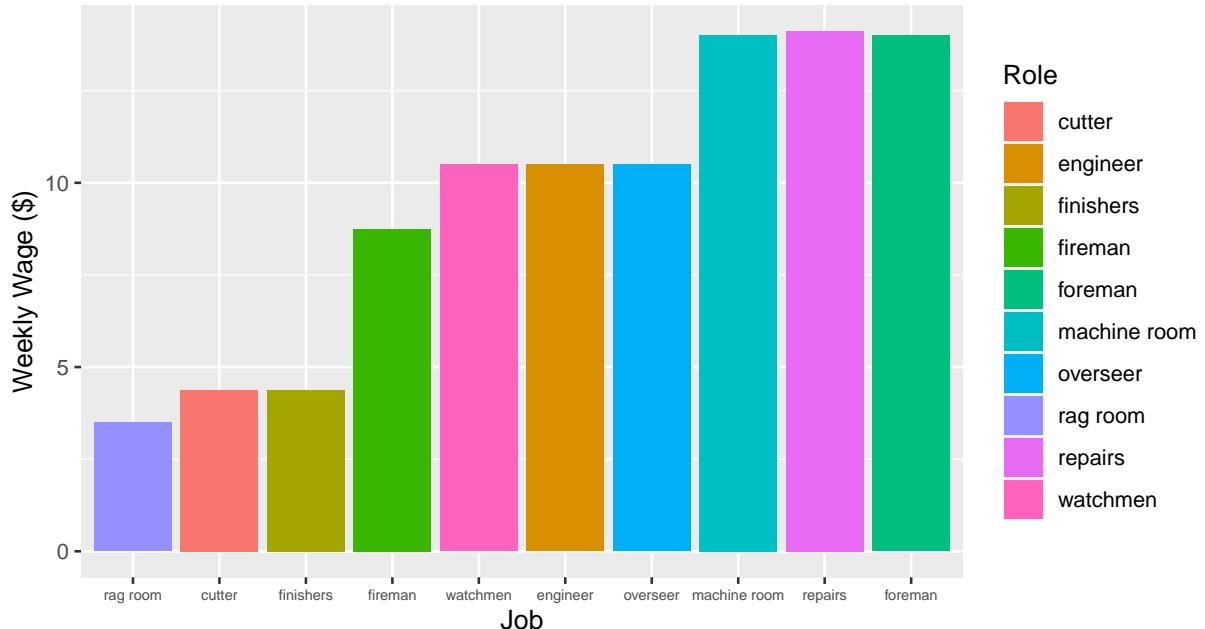


Table 5: Parsons Weekly Wages - 1861

Job	Weekly Wages (\$)
repairs	14.12
foreman	14.00
machine room	14.00
repairs	12.25
machine room	11.79
engineer	10.50
overseer	10.50
watchmen	10.50
fireman	8.75
watchmen	7.00
finishers	4.38
cutter	4.38
rag room	3.50
rag room	3.50

From Table 5, we can see that Parsons Paper Company employees were, for the most part, paid at comparable rates to other Massachusetts paper factory workers across the state, although the pay for several common roles, especially those held by women (finisher, cutter), is noticeably lower compared to the state average, while other more “important” roles such as engineer and mechanic tended to be paid more at Parsons compared to other Massachusetts paper mills. It may be beneficial to compare the Parsons Paper Company wages to those of other paper mills in Holyoke, as opposed to the entire state, to get a better understanding of how the Parsons Paper Company paid relative to its direct competitors.

Weekly Wages of Parsons Paper Company Workers – 1861



From this graph, we can see that the top paying roles at Parsons Paper Company in 1861 were the foreman, followed by repairs and machine room workers, who each made nearly 15 dollars a week. From John P. Hickey's 1954 University of Massachusetts thesis *The Holyoke Area Paper Industry*, we know that repairs were undertaken on Sundays, typically the only day off for many paper workers: "In replacing a wire on a Fourdrinier paper machine, workers in the Holyoke mills receive half a day's pay besides their regular pay during the hours they work on the replacement. This acts as an incentive to the workers to get the machine back in operation as soon as possible" (94).

In contrast, female laborers who worked in the rag room and as cutters and finishers were paid much lower wages, with almost all women being paid less than 5 dollars a week.

From Hickey's thesis, we also found the following quote:

In 1861, after a period of severe readjustment just prior to the Civil War, twenty-one of the thirty-six manufactures of fine papers met at Pittsfield...to organize a protective association. They desired to raise prices which had fallen drastically as the result of a decrease in demand. They agreed to reduce output by about one-third for about three months. This was the first trade association established in the paper industry of the United States....The Parsons Paper Company and the Carew Manufacturing Company were charter members of this organization" (108).

This agreed upon reduce in output in 1861 is important because it may indicate that at the start of the register, employee wages were lower than they would have been under normal circumstance. Any subsequent change in payment patterns throughout the rest of the 19th century is important for future analysis, as it can indicate both local and domestic economic shocks and sector-specific economic factors.

References

- Green, Constance McLaughlin. 1939. *Holyoke, Massachusetts: A Case History of the Industrial Revolution in America*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT. https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/12/archival_objects/1572349.

Appendix

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*Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum perfoiced to our Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to April 1st 1867.*

NAMES.	No. Pounds.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
William Kelly	26	18	75	8 34	69 66	Sp 05	9 35	Sp 05	William Kelly
Samuel S. Knight	26	12	52	6 25	45 75	"	"	"	Samuel S. Knight
Michael Ryan	26	9	42 25	5 00	37 25	"	"	"	Michael Ryan
Catharine Brady	25	7	29 17	"	29 17	"	"	"	Catharine Brady
Ellen Conroy	25	7	29 17	"	29 17	"	"	"	Ellen Conroy
Bridget McNamee	4177	90	37 59	"	37 59	"	"	"	Bridget McNamee
Louisa Exner	2929	"	20 56	2 00	24 36	"	"	"	Louisa Exner
Catharine O'Hare	5703	"	53 55	"	53 55	"	"	"	Catharine O'Hare
Mary Murphy	3765	"	58 49	"	58 49	"	"	"	Mary Murphy
Rebecca Gould	3659	"	52 03	"	52 03	"	"	"	Rebecca Gould
Ellen Stone	3614	"	52 53	"	52 53	"	"	"	Ellen Stone
Mary Daugherty	3836	"	39 52	"	39 52	"	"	"	Mary Daugherty
O'Leary - O'Sullivan	3216	"	29 21	"	29 21	"	"	"	O'Leary - O'Sullivan
Margaret Fitzgerald	3135	"	39 52	"	39 52	"	"	"	Margaret Fitzgerald
Julia Head	3647	"	53 27	"	53 27	"	"	"	Julia Head
Mary Quinlan	2085	"	19 87	"	19 87	"	"	"	Mary Quinlan
Ella O'Keefe	2352	"	26 98	7	13 49	"	"	"	Ella O'Keefe
Patrick Maloney	3911	"	35 20	"	35 20	"	"	"	Patrick Maloney
Margaret Kelly	3675	"	31 92	"	31 92	"	"	"	Margaret Kelly
Margaret Haffey	1822	"	31 90	"	31 90	"	"	"	Margaret Haffey
annah Scallan	3434	"	50 91	"	50 91	"	"	"	annah Scallan
Catharine Stevelson	3434	"	51 09	700	2109	"	"	"	Catharine Stevelson
Ezra Davis	2760	"	29 14	"	24 87	"	"	"	Ezra Davis
Jeanne McCarley	3738	"	53 82	"	53 82	"	"	"	Jeanne McCarley
Mary Gaughan	3103	"	29 93	"	29 93	"	"	"	Mary Gaughan
Rosa McNamee	2169	"	19 52	"	19 52	"	"	"	Rosa McNamee
Oliver Stock	3230	"	29 55	"	29 55	"	"	"	Oliver Stock
Tom Kennedy	4224	"	58 38	"	58 38	"	"	"	Tom Kennedy
Mary McNamee	1863	"	16 77	"	16 77	"	"	"	Mary McNamee
Margaret Vaughan	3949	"	55 54	"	55 54	"	"	"	Margaret Vaughan
Julia Sullivan	4753	"	57 56	"	57 56	"	"	"	Julia Sullivan
James Torney	3108	"	27 97	"	27 97	"	"	"	James Torney
Ezra Rogers	3666	"	27 60	"	27 60	"	"	"	Ezra Rogers
Mary Dalton	3442	"	30 88	"	30 88	"	"	"	Mary Dalton
Mary Mahaney	2957	"	26 61	"	26 61	"	"	"	Mary Mahaney
Mary McGeough	1714	"	15 42	"	15 42	"	"	"	Mary McGeough
Johnna Lee	3169	"	28 52	"	28 52	"	"	"	Johnna Lee
Johnna Leekan	4244	"	58 16	"	58 16	"	"	"	Johnna Leekan
Mary O'Hare	2086	"	18 77	"	18 77	"	"	"	Mary O'Hare
	11231		125 10	55 59	120 56				




Figure 6: p. 224 of register - April 1st, 1867

Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum prefixed to said Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to April 1st 1867.

NAMES	NO. POUNDS.	NO. YEARS.	NO. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
William J. Pomroy	26 325	84 50			84 50 Apr 15				Wm. J. Pomroy
E. H. Wellington	27 375	74 25	6 25	68	"				E. H. Wellington
John Duffy	26 250	66 25	6 25	60	"				John Duffy
John Flynn	22 225	49 50			49 50 "				John Flynn
P. O. Harr	26 75	52 25			52 25 "				P. O. Harr
Charles Strong	26 12	52 00			52 "				Charles Strong
Joh G. Allen	26 91	59 00	5		54 "				J. G. Allen
Michael Ryan	17 75	29 75			29 75 "				Michael Ryan
John Carroll	37 25	63 62			63 62 "				John Carroll
John Slaughter	22 99	55 75			55 75 "				John Slaughter
Richard Marshall	26 14	45 50			45 50 "				Richard Marshall
Kate Baldwin	26 57	21 67			21 67 "				Kate Baldwin
Martin Moran	26 91	59 00			59 "				Martin Moran
James Moran	23 9	54 50			54 50 "				James Moran
Jefferson Powell	26 29	59 75			59 75 "				Jefferson Powell
William Johnson	25 15	63 12	8 54		54 54 "				William Johnson
Pat Donahue	26 9	54 00	4 00		35 "				Pat Donahue
Wm. Corry	26 39	66 87	8 34		58 63 "				Wm. Corry
Patrick Kennedy	26 9	59 00			59 "				Patrick Kennedy
James Casey	29 22	55 00			55 "				James Casey
John Gangar	26 3	52 00			52 "				John Gangar
Patrick Higgins	39 9	51 00			51 "				Patrick Higgins
J. D. A. Ballou	26 136	58 50	8 34		50 16 "				J. D. A. Ballou
Wm. C. O'Leary	25 84	47 20			47 20 "				Wm. C. O'Leary
Frank Russell	25 29	55 25			55 25 "				Frank Russell
Nich. Valley	24 9	36			36 "				Nich. Valley
Joseph Bordeau	25 99	44 13	10		30 63 "				Joseph Bordeau
E. A. Chapman	23 7	40 30	10		30 30 "				E. A. Chapman
Frank Cummings	23 9	35 25			35 25 "				Frank Cummings
Edmund Cain	36 9	39			39 "				Edmund Cain
Patrick Ryan	27 9	43 88	11		32 88 "				Patrick Ryan
" in April	72	81			81 "				
Frank Cummings	44 9	6 00			6 00 "				Frank Cummings
Morris L. Sammons	12 9	18			18 "				Morris L. Sammons
" Mar	28 9	42 75			42 75 "				Morris L. Sammons
Thomas Jepson	25 9	25			25 "				Thomas Jepson
John Conchon in Apr	94 4	16 93			16 93 "				John Conchon in Apr
	150 078	77 52	1495 26						

Repairs &c

Austin Ely	26 15	65 00	65	"	Austin Ely
J. M. Allen	26 15	65 00	65	"	J. M. Allen
H. C. Walter	26 250	65 00	8 34	56 66	H. C. Walter
Patrick Casey	32 75	52 00	52	"	Patrick Casey
Martin Neilly	18 225	44 50	40 50	"	Martin Neilly
	287 50	134	279 16		



Figure 7: p. 225 of register - April 1st, 1867

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*Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum specified to our Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to April 1st, 1868.*

NAMES, &c.	No. POUNDS.	No. REAMS.	No. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
William Johnson	26 164	9 150			71 80				Wm Johnson
John O'Brien	26 90	3 910		488	488				John O'Brien
William Connor	26 166	7 100			725	6425			Wm Connor
Matthew Kennedy	26 99	6 50			4550				Matthew Kennedy
James Casey	26 121	5 350			5350				James Casey
John Gallagher	26 97	3 9			39				John Gallagher
John Vaughan	26 124	4 9			49				John Vaughan
John Shea	26 97	4 360			4360				John Shea
John E. Knight	26 12	5 200			725	4825			John E. Knight
Philip Cudahy	26 136	6 010			6010				Philip Cudahy
John Conchan	26 121	5 3			625	4675			John Conchan
Frank Russell	25 106	4 975			7000	3675			Frank Russell
Chas. C. Johnson	26 76	8 250			8250				Wm Johnson
Wm. McNamee	26 97	3 187			3187				Wm. McNamee
William Conroy	26 21	9 100			9100				William Conroy
John Flynn	27 15	6 750			6750				John Flynn
E. W. Wellington	26 192	8 450			625	7425			E. W. Wellington
Martin Moran	26 99	4 307			4307				Martin Moran
Mr. McCay	26 96	8 400			933	7517			Mr. McCay
Charles Strong	26 131	5 638			5638				Charles Strong
John H. Allen	26 91	39			500	34			John H. Allen
Mark Ryan	26 111	5 957			5957				Mark Ryan
Pat Quinn	15 111	3 750			2750				Pat Quinn
Mark Marshall	28 11	5 224			5224				Mark Marshall
John Wolf	26 106	4 687			4687				John Wolf
Pat McCarthy	26 106	1 594			467	4121			Pat McCarthy
Pat O'Kane	27 96	0 388			500	5888			Pat O'Kane
Joseph Beaucheaix Jr.	25 70	4 963			500	3563			Joseph Beaucheaix Jr.
John Naughton	26 106	4 550			4550				John Naughton
George Kunkel	21 97	3 150			3150				George Kunkel
Pat Doyle	26 11	3 987			3987				Pat Doyle
Michael O'Brien	25 1	3 750			3750				Michael O'Brien
Thomas Sherry	26 1	3 937			3937				Thomas Sherry
Mary Donlon	26 69	2 925			2925				Mary Donlon
Kate Lillian	26 "	2 925			2925				Kate Lillian
Kate Moran	26 "	2 925			2925				Kate Moran
Kate Baldwin	24 "	2 700			2700				Kate Baldwin
Jessie Keefe	7 9	1 050			1050	1050			Jessie Keefe
John Flynn	24	1 00			100	100			John Flynn
					17,300	13,000			
Rehans &c.									
Aspinwall	26 18	7800			78				Aspinwall
John Buckley	21 18	6300			63				John Buckley
J. M. Allen	23 18	6437			6437				J. M. Allen
Matthew Kennedy	22 18	4957			4957				Matthew Kennedy
Pat Casey	8 12	6120			5728				Pat Casey
John Sullivan	7 106	1225			1225				John Sullivan
Edgar Downer	8 99	1300			1300				Edgar Downer
Henry Blackmore	7 121	1400			400	10			Henry Blackmore
					34,832	3,000			

Figure 8: p. 262 of register - April 1st, 1868

Received of the PARSONS PAPER COMPANY, by their Agent, the sum prefixed to our Signatures,
being in full of all demands up to April 1st 1868.

NAMES.	NO. POUNDS.	NO. REAMS.	NO. DAYS.	PRICE.	TOTAL AMOUNT.	RENT, OR BOARD.	BALANCE DUE.	DATE.	SIGNATURES.
William Kelly	26181	7800	953	6867	6867				William Kelly
Michael Ryan	2839	4032	500	4132	4132				Michael Ryan
Ellen Cavanaugh	2671	3033			3033				Ellen Cavanaugh
Kate Sheridan	2641	8033	700	2333	2333				Kate Sheridan
Anna Cavanagh	2671	8033			3033				Anna Cavanagh
Mary Davenport	2369	2587			3587				Mary X Davenport
John McCarley	2094	2280			2280				John L McCarley
Catharine Payay	12476	80			1980				Cath X Payay
Katherine Shulian	2193				746				H + Shulian
Mary Morgan	22784				2203				Mary Morgan
Bridget Kilkenny	42215				1772				Bridget Kilkenny
Anna Emerson	52003				1602	300	1402		Anna Emerson
Mary Erdman	62771				2210		2216		Mary X Erdman
Kate O'Han	72777				2205		2205		Kate X O'Han
Bridget Kilian	83527				2821		2821		Bridget Kilian
Bridget Cleary	92057				1640		1640		Bridget Cleary
Ann Firmy	10500				400		4		Ann Firmy
Alice Finnerty	112422				1937		1937		Alice X Finnerty
Agnes Lynch	122250				1800	500	1300		Agnes X Lynch
Bridget Flynn	131850				1480		1480		Bridget Flynn
Ellen Shinn	148050				2440		2440		Ellen X Shinn
Mary Powers	152457				1965		1965		Mary X Powers
Mary Donohue	162013				2822		2822		Mary X Donohue
Mary Shahan	152587				2031		2031		Mary X Shahan
John O'Sullivan	192670				2130		2156		John O'Sullivan
Mary Mahoney	202158				1726		1726		Mary Mahoney
Julia Shay	21826				660		660		Julia X Shay
Ellen Shahan	222871				2296		2296		Ellen X Shahan
Mary Shahan	238129				2503		2503		Mary X Shahan
Kathleen Somes	242862				2289		2289		Kathleen Somes
Mary Shay	252571				2056		2056		Mary X Shay
Bridget Mulroy	260380				2704		2704		Bridget Mulroy
Edgar Burke	273188				2550		2550		Edgar Burke
Bridget Linton	283244				2563		2563		Bridget Linton
Mary Sullivan	291754				1403		1403		Mary X Sullivan
Bridget Kennedy	307703				3018		3018		Bridget Kennedy
John O'Brien	311924				1539		1539		John O'Brien
Eliza Powers	321798				1566		1566		Eliza Powers
Horace Martin	362659				2120		2120		Horace Martin
Ellen Stack	372532				2025		2025		Ellen Stack
Ann Kennedy	383624				2907		2907		Ann Kennedy
Bridget Kennedy	408448				2734		2734		Bridget Kennedy
John Sullivan	412880				2304		2304		John Sullivan
Julia Sullivan	428751				3160		3160		Julia Sullivan
Mary Duckford	432099				1679		1679		Mary Duckford
Eliza Powers	442703				2210		2210		Eliza Powers
Horatio Brinkman	452106				1684		1684		Horatio Brinkman
Julia Powers	462839				2811		2811		Julia Powers
Margaret Gilmour	482803				2242		2242		Margaret Gilmour
Mary Powers	483149				2512		2512		Mary Powers
John O'Sullivan	482832				2276		2276		John O'Sullivan
Mammie Culkin	513380				2664		2664		Mammie Culkin
Isabel Johnson	51421				336		336		Isabel X Johnson
Margot Burns	531448				1158		1158		Margot Burns
Kate Brady	59892				713		713		Kate Brady
					121972	2033	110139		

Figure 9: p. 263 of register - April 1st, 1868