



Dark Blue Davenport

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Database Discoveries – Contribution # 19

Transferware Collectors Club

June, 2015



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The Davenport pottery was first documented in a 1974 book by Terry Lockett¹ then later by Terry Lockett and Geoffrey Godden² (1989). The authors tell much about the ninety-three years of operation and the wide range of ceramics and glass produced. The pottery became a limited company on 23rd April 1881, trading as Davenport's Ltd but ceased manufacturing and declared bankruptcy in March six years later. The land, buildings, equipment, molds and copper plates were all sold and Davenport's pattern books have not been seen since. Auction notices reproduced by Lockett and Godden³ mention eleven tons of copper plates for auction, representing more than 300 of the most salable patterns, of which Lockett and Godden name nearly 100. Whilst some of the pattern names have extant examples, many do not and without the pattern books it is difficult to match new finds to the original pattern names.

One pattern offered at auction was for a series named *Cornucopia*, which probably had questionable salability some sixty years after its introduction. The name *Cornucopia* probably derives from the floral border with pairs of horns (of plenty) surmounted by a flower or seed head supporting a stylized scallop shell with crown (Fig. 1).



The series is printed in a rich dark blue which completely covers the surface and has only been found on earthenware dinner services.

Cornucopia features rural (English?) views with TCC attributed names. Figures 2 and 3 show two examples, *The Watermill* and *The Riders*.

Fig. 1: *Cornucopia* rim.



Fig. 2: *The Watermill* (*Cornucopia* series). Fig. 3: *The Riders* (*Cornucopia* series).

The *Dictionary of Blue and White*⁴ mentions the *Cornucopia* pattern, which is seldom found in Britain and was probably produced specifically for the American market. The large underplate in Fig. 4 is decorated with *Overlooking the Church*, the matching serving bowl or tureen must have been a beauty to behold. The actual number of patterns in this series is not known but is likely twelve or more.



Fig. 4: *Overlooking the Church* (*Cornucopia* series).

Searching the TCC Pattern and Source Print Database (DB) for Davenport's *Cornucopia* reveals a series of eight different scenes. The scenes are stylistically similar with a mid ground separated by a water course with people close by, overhanging trees and buildings in the background. No source prints have been identified and it is likely that the scenes are Romantic constructs. All extant examples are impressed, with DAVENPORT in an arc above an anchor as in Fig. 5, which Charles Duckworth⁵ identifies as E5. Dating the series is difficult, the impressed earthenware mark was introduced in about 1815 with usage peaking in the 1830s; however, in 1836 a successor mark E6a appeared which included the date, also shown in Fig. 5. In TCC Bulletin 13, Pat Halfpenny⁶ discusses dark blue printed pottery, and by analysis of importers invoices deduces a date range of 1817 – 1831, but cautions that the analysis also revealed that the bulk of the orders were for less costly ceramics than dark blue printed earthenware.



Fig. 5: Davenport Marks E5 and E6a.

Fig. 6 (below): Importer *Hill & Henderson*” mark.



The Davenport potting concern established a relationship with the importer Hill and Henderson some time after 1831⁷ but before 1834 when the name changed to Henderson & Walton⁸. No examples of *Cornucopia* are known with the Hill and Henderson mark, or that of any importer. However, Davenport’s *Franklins Morals No pains without gains* (DB ID#6270) is marked Hill and Henderson (Fig. 6), suggesting that the *Cornucopia* series was probably imported before the relationship with Hill and Henderson and hence dates from the mid to late 1820s. A ninth *Cornucopia*

variation is known which is a platter depicting people watching a sailboat with a church in the background. The platter was sold at the auction of Elizabeth Collard’s collection; however, the current location is unknown.

In 1996 the Brazosport Archaeological Society (BAS) published a catalogue⁹ describing transfer printed sherds gathered from a site in Old Velasco Texas. In excess of 35,000 sherds were recovered, painstakingly sorted and assembled for identification. One assemblage formed the base of a dark blue printed sugar box (Fig 7) with the underside bearing an impressed mark E5 and printed makers name DAVENPORT (Fig 8).

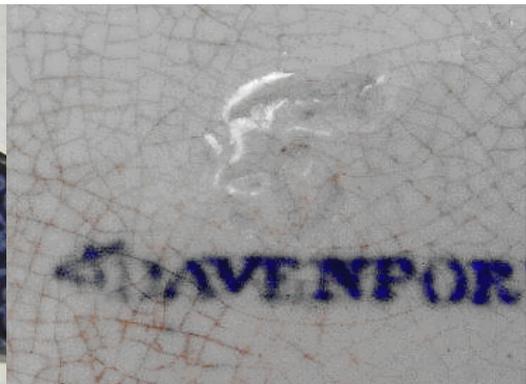


Fig. 7: *Quebec* sugar box shards, excavated at Old Velasco site, Texas.

Fig. 8: *Quebec* sugar box base, showing Davenport impressed mark E5 and printed mark.

Further research by BAS revealed the printed fragments were from one of three known, but slightly different patterns named *Quebec*. Elizabeth Collard¹⁰ discusses the *Quebec* pattern and shows the source to be a sketch by Richard Short published in 1761. The published sketch was adapted by three potters who each produced their own dark blue version. Prior to the BAS discovery the three makers were, E. Wood & Sons (DB ID#3402); maker unknown, who produced the so called *Cities Series*, attributed to J&R Clews (DB ID#6165); and a further maker unknown, but now identified by BAS as Davenport (DB ID#3450).



The sugar box in Fig 9 is an extant example of the Fig. 7 and 8 assemblage and is patriotically decorated with American eagles and a scrolled edged view of *Quebec*. This sugar box formed part of an anonymous dark blue tea service almost certainly manufactured for the American market.

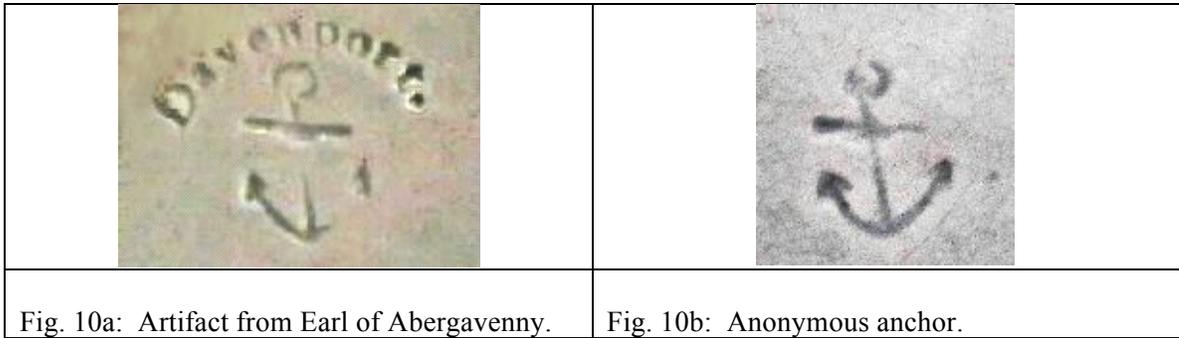
Fig. 9: *Quebec* sugar box.

Enoch Wood & Sons marked their version of the *Quebec* pattern, unlike Davenport and Clews whose wares were largely anonymous. However, the anonymous *Cities Series* potter, thought to be Clews, included a cartouche naming the scene and occasionally adding an importers mark, of which five are known. A platter marked *Louisville* includes an importers mark for Hill and Henderson of New Orleans and somewhat incongruously a plate depicting *Quebec* bears the name of a Cincinnati importer Robert Lawrence. However, the Hill and Henderson mark is thought to offer little help in identifying the maker of the *Cities Series* because during the Hill and Henderson period (1822-34) the Davenport relationship existed for no more than three years prior to Hill leaving the partnership. Furthermore, Hill and Henderson¹¹ imported and sold wares from Enoch Wood, R. Stevenson & Williams, and James & Ralph Clews, probably prior to dealing in Davenport. Although marks from Hill and Henderson and successor companies are often found on Davenport wares, it is quite likely that Hill and Henderson provided their back stamp (copper plate) and die to the companies they traded with prior to Davenport. The BAS catalogue, page 54, shows *Millennium* pattern sherds, believed to have been potted by Ralph Stevenson, marked *Hill and Henderson*, just as Davenport's *Franklins Morals* in Fig 6, further illustrating yet another potter's use of the same importers mark.

Hypothetically, it seems unlikely that Davenport would have produced both a patriotic version of *Quebec* and a significantly different, non-patriotic interpretation for the *Cities Series*. Finally, in support of the *Cities Series* attribution to J. & R. Clews, Collard reports that the *Cities Series* pattern named *Near Fishkill* also appears in a marked Clews series named *Picturesque Views*. Clearly not the BAS "smoking gun" proof, but a credible attribution.

The 1996 Brazosport Archaeological Society catalogue was reviewed and the Davenport *Quebec* discovery announced, but alas the revelation inevitably ended up in a dusty corner because the Database (DB) would not be available to share the discovery for another nine years.

Duckworth shows that Davenport used a different series of marks for each of their three major ceramic bodies, and indicates the body type by prefixes. The earthenware series E used a number of different impressed marks between 1794 and about 1820 but Duckworth comments that although five marks are known, misalignment of the name relative to the anchor suggest that separate dies were used, one impressing the anchor and a second bearing the name. Furthermore, examples exist showing that, perhaps erroneously, only one of the two dies were used giving rise to an arched name but no anchor or conversely an anonymous anchor. However, artifacts recovered from the February 1805 wreck of the East India Company ship *Earl of Abergavenny* suggests that Davenports' marking policy was probably not in place before 1805. Richard Coleman¹² discusses the artifacts and shows the impressed mark in Fig. 10a, which was previously thought to have been exclusively used on porcelain (Duckworth mark P3), but was also used on creamware, caneware and blue printed earthenware.

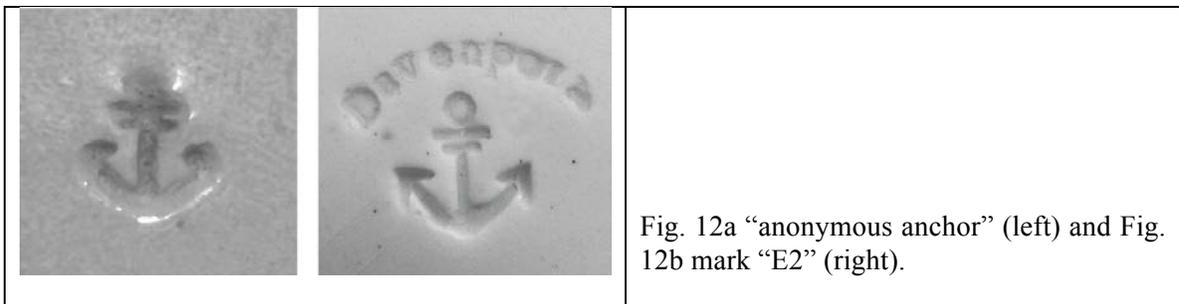


In addition, earthenware mark E2 (shown in Fig. 12b) was also found on other recovered artifacts establishing an introduction date of 1804 or earlier. Underwater archaeology from the *Earl of Abergavenny* provides a firm date of 1804 for the marks, which together with Duckworth's observation, offer a credible explanation for the apparent anomalies in early Davenport marks.



A dark blue tea service decorated with a patriotic scene known as *Eagle Over Panel* (Fig. 11 DB ID#3848) was initially listed in the Database as maker unknown despite attributions to Davenport in several vintage publications.

Fig. 11: *Eagle Over Panel* sugar box



However, close inspection of the service revealed a single saucer impressed with an anonymous Davenport anchor (Fig. 12a), part of earthenware mark E2 (Fig. 12b). Another curiously marked piece is known, printed in blue with Davenport's *Chinoiserie Ruins* pattern (DB ID#2137). This dinner plate was previously thought to have been erroneously marked with an anonymous porcelain anchor (Fig. 10b). Artifacts from the *Earl of Abergavenny* provided a valuable snapshot of Davenport's marks, but when considered in context it seems likely that pieces were mismarked, partially marked or not marked at all since the potters were undoubtedly paid by the piece and worked under the practice of Good From Kiln. For once the vintage publications were right.

The TCC Database has allowed more than 370 Davenport printed patterns to be recorded and shared. Many of patterns were previously unknown or unattributed. Currently the Database contains over 12,000 patterns from more than 380 British potteries, and to state the obvious, provides a continuously updated reference source. Why not search the Database to see if your anonymous pieces can find their maker?

End Notes

- 1) *Davenport Pottery and Porcelain - 1794-1887*, Lockett Terrence A. David & Charles, Newton Abbot, 1972.
- 2) *Davenport China, Earthenware & Glass, 1794-1887*, Lockett, Terrence A. and Godden, Geoffrey A. London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1989.
- 3) *Davenport China*, op. cit. pp. 294, 295.
- 4) *The Dictionary of Blue and White Printed Pottery 1780-1880 Vol. I*, Coysh, A. W. and Henrywood, R. K. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Baron Publishing, 1982, vol. 1 pg. 94.
- 5) *Davenport Ceramic Marks 1794-1887*, Duckworth, Charles. Great Britain: Charles Duckworth, 2006, <http://www.duckworth.eu>.
- 6) *Dating Dark Blue American Themed Prints on Pottery*, by Halfpenny, Pat, TCC Bulletin XIII-1, pg. 11.
- 7) *Davenport China*, op. cit. pp 38, 39.
- 8) *Henderson & Gaines, New Orleans Ceramics Importers*, Art Black and Cynthia Brandimarte, Research Notes Historic Sites and Materials, Number 2, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Austin, Texas, November 1987.
- 9) *Nineteenth-century Transfer-Printed Ceramics from the Townsite of Old Velasco (41BO125), Brazoria, Texas: An Illustrated Catalogue*, Pollan Sandra D., Gross, W. Sue, Earls, Amy C., Pollan, Johnney T., Smith, James L. Galveston, Texas: Prewitt and Associates, 1996. Contributors: United States. Army, Corps of Engineers, Galveston District (Catalog) pg. 19.
- 10) *The Potters' View of Canada*, Collard, Elizabeth, Montreal: McGill University Press, 1983, pg. 82 & plates 137,138.
- 11) *Importers, Retailers, Wholesalers and Auctioneers etc... Part 1* China and Glass Quarterly October November 1997, Kolwalsky, Arnold, pg. 7.
- 12) *The Earl of Abergavenny and Davenport Factory Marks*, The Northern Ceramic Society Newsletter vol. 173, March 2014, Richard Coleman, pg. 35

Credits

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If you have a suggestion for or would like to contribute to the TCC Database Discoveries series, please contact us at webadmin@transcollectorsclub.org.



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