

James, Ralph & Andrew Stevenson Potters of Cobridge



This article is adapted from a presentation given at an NCS meeting in March 2019. New information arising following the meeting has been included.

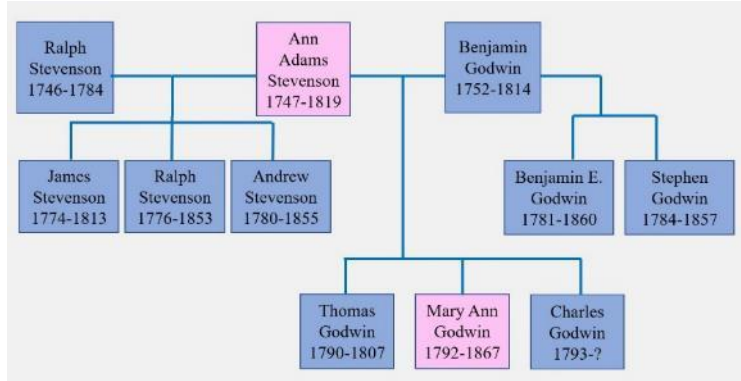
Pat Halfpenny
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Early life

This is the story of the life and work of three brothers, James, Ralph & Andrew Stevenson. Their father Ralph Stevenson died when they were young and six years later their mother Ann Adams Stevenson married Benjamin Godwin a Cobridge potter who had two sons of his own. Benjamin and Ann went on to have three children together, Thomas, Mary Ann, and Charles.

This was a complicated blended family with eight surviving children. At some point, the three oldest boys, that is, James, Ralph & Andrew Stevenson went to Scotland to live with their uncle John Adams a pottery merchant in Glasgow.

Towards the end of the 18th century they began in business, both in Cobridge as potters and in Scotland as retailers. The Staffordshire Advertiser, 20 July 1799 published a "NOTICE" of the dissolution of their partnerships. It read



1 Stevenson Godwin family tree

The Concerns carried on under the Firms of J. R. and A. Stevensons, Glasgow and Ralph Stevenson & Co. Cobridge, were this day dissolved by mutual consent. The business in future, will be carried on in Glasgow, by Ralph and Andrew Stevenson, who are authorised to pay and receive all Debts due to and by said Concerns.

(Signed)

*1799, Edinburgh, 5th July,
Glasgow*

*James Stevenson.
Ralph Stevenson.
Andrew Stevenson*

N.B. JAMES STEVENSON carries on Business in Edinburgh on his own account

The Glasgow business of Ralph and Andrew was listed in the 1799 Glasgow directory as *Stevenson, Ralph, stone warehouse, Wilson street¹*. And that same year in a newspaper advertisement for his newly opened shop in Edinburgh, James introduces himself as *J. Stevenson, Stone-ware Manufacturer from Staffordshire* and he concludes the adverts saying that *Dealers in the country, who retail Mess. Stevenson's Goods will please address their orders to J. Stevenson, (third shop above Mr Gilchrist's, haberdasher) High Street, Edinburgh, as he is still engaged in the Manufactory with his friends in Staffordshire.*² The kind of pottery the brothers were likely to have been making in Cobridge may include dry bodied stonewares in the neoclassical style. One black basalt example has been recorded with the impressed mark STEVENSON. It was first discussed by John Adeney in NCS Newsletter 162, June 2011. At this time nothing more is known about their Cobridge factory.



2. Black basalt jug impressed STEVENSON. Adeney Collection

James & Andrew Stevenson

From 1799 James regularly advertised his Edinburgh warehouse. A notice in the *Caledonian Mercury* on 21 November 1801 makes reference to his recent stay in Staffordshire and among his wares are the previously unrecorded “Shades new improved Table and Tea China” which is a great illustration of why you can’t believe everything you read in a newspaper, for the very next edition carried a revised version. Shades was a typographical error for “Spode’s new improved Table and Tea China”. The only other pottery singled out in James advertisements is Wedgwood (sic) & Byerley’s Queensware. By 1806 James had given up the Edinburgh business and was succeeded by Elijah Cotton, nephew of James’ stepfather Benjamin Godwin.

James moved to Staffordshire, where he and Andrew entered into a partnership in a pottery leased from the Bucknall family³. It is usually said that J & A Stevenson were in business from 1808. This is likely based on their entry in the 1808 Holden’s Triennial Directory, but the pottery was up and running before then. The business of J & A Stevenson is recorded in several newspaper sources by April 1807⁴. In Staffordshire, property leases were traditionally agreed at Martinmas, which is 11 November, therefore it is likely that the brothers had been in business from at least November 1806, if not earlier. In addition to the pottery, by 1810 James and Andrew established their own retail business in Edinburgh where James’ successor Elijah Cotton was struggling in bankruptcy.

Records for this period are not very plentiful, and no marks are currently attributed to James & Andrew’s partnership. But some information may be gleaned from Ann Eatwell and Alex Werner’s paper *A London Staffordshire Warehouse*⁵. This features the order books of London dealer John Wyllie and includes a few orders supplied to Wyllie by J & A Stevenson between 1809-1811.

The total value of the orders was £124 and included in 1809, 48 doz. Willow plates at 4/- a dozen, the rest of the orders appear to contain no detailed descriptions. The Willow plates may have looked something like fig. 3 which has the impressed mark STEVENSON. the full stop following the name is an important characteristic. At this time, it is unlikely that Willow meant what we now think of as the standard willow pattern. Josiah Bateman, Wedgwood’s London retail manager sent an order to the Etruria factory in June 1824 stipulating “it must be blue willow in any pattern”, indicating the term meant any Chinoiserie design. The 1814 price list in fig. 4 shows that blue printed wares were the most expensive of the standard earthenware productions, although Willow was cheaper than other printed patterns.

At some point in 1811 Robert Bucknall, the factory landlord, joined James and Andrew in both their pottery-making business and the Edinburgh china & glass warehouse. There are no land tax records for Burslem 1810-1811, but the 1812 land tax records show that Stevenson & Bucknall operated out of two factories, the one owned by Bucknall, and another owned by Robert Blackwell. And in addition, the Holden trade directory published in 1811 also lists not only Stevenson & Bucknall as potters but also Andrew Stevenson working on his own account.



3. Underglaze blue printed plate with a bridgeless willow pattern. Impressed mark **STEVENSON.** Collection Brian Allaker

PRICE CURRENT OF EARTHENWARE,

AS AGREED TO

At a General Meeting of the Staffordshire Manufacturers,

HELD AT HANLEY, ON THE 8TH MARCH, 1814.

	PRINTED					PRINTED				
	Cream Coloured	Edged.	Under Glaze Lined.	Willow.	Other patterns	Cream Coloured	Edged.	Under Glaze Lined.	Willow.	Other patterns
	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.	PER DOZ.
Inches.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	No.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Table Plates 10	1 6	2 0	2 6	4 0	5 0	Sauce Boats largest, . . . 1	3 0	4 0	5 0	4 0 7 0
Supper ditto 9	1 6	2 0	2 6	4 0	5 0	Ditto 2	2 6	3 6	4 6	5 6 6 0
Twisler ditto 8	1 2	1 6	2 0	3 6	4 0	Ditto 3	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0 5 6
Muffin ditto 7	1 0	1 4	1 8	3 0	3 6	Ditto 4	1 9	2 6	3 0	4 6 5 0

4. Detail of a printed pricelist 1814. The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent


There are no marks attributed to the Stevenson & Bucknall partnership, and again the only reference we have to what they made, is in the Wyllie business records showing Stevenson & Bucknall supplied 10 doz. porringer landscape teas 5 shillings. (see fig.5 for porringer shape) This Wyllie order is likely to refer to printed tea bowls and saucers. The 1808 price list for blue printed goods shows that printed teas of the best class cost 5 shillings a dozen, which was the price Wyllie paid. (see fig.6) Price lists never seem to have saucers as a separate item suggesting *teas* refers to cups or bowls with saucers. It is likely that this reference is to tea bowls because handled teas were a shilling more at 6 shillings a doz.

Unfortunately, not long after this partnership was established, James fell ill. On 21 March 1813 he drew up his will and he died 6 days later. Often wills are pretty standard affairs, but James's will had some nice personal touches and showed his fondness for his half siblings as well as his brothers Andrew and Ralph. He left his gold watch to his half-sister Mary Ann Godwin and his double-barrelled gun to his half-brother Charles Godwin. To his friend Jesse Breeze of Tunstall, he left a mourning ring, and to his cousin Maria Adams, daughter of John Adams late of Glasgow he left an annuity of £10 per annum for her natural life. To his brother Andrew he left his favourite black setter dog called Dido. He left the residue of his estate to be divided equally between Ralph and Andrew. The will was proved in 1815 at a value of £3,500.

Following James Stevenson's death, Robert Bucknall stayed in business with Andrew Stevenson at both the Cobridge pottery and the

*Same Shape & Size
Saucers go to these
as to the new shape*

Porringer Shapes

	High	Willow
		
Saucers	3 ³ / ₈	3 ⁵ / ₈
Breakfast	3 ³ / ₈	4 ¹ / ₈
Half Bowl	3 ³ / ₈	4 ¹ / ₈
Tea Saucers	1 ¹ / ₄	6 ³ / ₈
Breakfast d.	1 ⁷ / ₈	6 ⁷ / ₈
Bowl d.	2	7 ³ / ₈

5. Porringer shape in Spode shape book c. 1820
The Joseph Downs Collection, Winterthur Museum Gardens & Library

	Lowest Class.	Second Class.	Best Class.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Fruit Plates	5 0	5 6	6 0
Cheese Stands, 12 inch each	3 6	4 0	4 6
11	3 0	3 6	4 0
10	2 6	3 0	3 6
Baskets and Stands, 12 inch.			
each	5 0	5 6	6 0
11	4 6	5 0	5 6
10	3 6	4 6	5 0
9	3 0	4 0	4 6
Cream Bowls	3 0	3 6	4 0
Ewers and Basins	8 0	9 0	10 0
Sandwiches with Covers	18 0	20 0	22 0
Centre Pieces	4 0	4 6	5 0
Teas per doz.	4 6	4 9	5 0
Ditto topped	5 0	5 3	5 6
Handled Teas	5 6	5 9	6 0

6. Details for list of Prices for "Blue Printed Goods"
agreed by manufacturers 1 March 1808

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent

Edinburgh retail shop. Andrew seems to have been a solitary person, no record of any marriage has been found, and, compared with his brother Ralph, he had few interactions in the North Staffordshire community. In August 1816, the partnership with Bucknall was dissolved. Andrew Stevenson purchased one factory, maybe using funds realised from his inheritance from his brother James' estate, and the Edinburgh shop was placed in the hands of John Bucknall, ending Andrew's Scottish connections.

Andrew continued in business on his own account and continued to be listed as an earthenware manufacturer in directories until 1828. A major part of Andrew Stevenson's market was the United States. To develop the transatlantic trade, while still maintaining his Cobridge pottery business, Andrew sailed from Liverpool to New York leaving on 1 January 1823 as a passenger on the packet ship *James Cropper*, where his occupation is listed as Manufacturer, the ship also carried a consignment of earthenware among its cargo.

Andrew set up shop at 58 Broadway in New York City, where Wall Street is now. His advertisements in May and June 1823 tell us that he had received the first 500 crates, of 1000 crates of pottery see fig.7. From various detailed invoices of the early 19th century we can estimate that each crate held on average about 750 pieces of pottery, more if they were muffins, fewer if they were bowls, so on average 500 crates held about 375,00 pieces. Although some adverts say that he was selling goods manufactured at his own factory it seems unlikely that he had not supplemented his stock with work from other producers. He also noted that he was willing to take orders to be supplied by his Cobridge Works. A close look at the main advert shows he was selling typical earthenwares produced widely through the Staffordshire Potteries.

The advert begins with *100 crates of best blue printed Willow and other patterns of blue printed, Plates, Twiflers, Muffs, Dishes &c*".

EARTHENWARE & GLASS, 58 Broadway, corner of Garden-st. New-York.—
The first 500 crates of 1000 are arrived and are now being imported from the manufactory of Mr. Andrew Stevenson, of Co Bridge, in the Staffordshire potteries. These goods are well worthy the attention of Country Dealers, as they will bear inspection in point of quality, and are offered for sale not only on reasonable terms, but will be repacked in assortments so as to suit their convenience, or if preferred sold in the original packages, in which case a liberal allowance will be made to extensive purchasers. The packages already arrived are—
100 crates best blue printed Willow and other patterns of blue printed, Plates, Twiflers, Muffs, Dishes, &c.
100 crates assorted dark blue printed Tea Ware, with oval and new square Tea Pots, with parapet Cups
100 crates dipt and mocho green banded Mugs, Jugs and Bowls; these are very large sizes
100 crates cream coloured Plates, Twiflers, Muffins, Dishes, Threens, Bowls, Basins, Ewers and Jugs
70 crates blue & green edged Plates, & Soups
40 do blue and green edged Twiflers and Muffins
30 do enamelled Cups and Saucers, Mugs and Jugs
120 hhds and tierces of superior Glass, well assorted
Wanted, an experienced Store-keeper; also a young Boy, of respectable connexions and good morals, as an Apprentice. Apply as above to ANDREW STEVENSON. m20

7. New York Gazette & Advertiser, 21 May 1823



8. Underglaze blue printed plates, chinoiserie patterns, the ubiquitous "willow" pattern and Chinese Traders, both with the Stevenson ship mark

There are several chinoiserie patterns known with Andrew Stevenson marks including an impressed mark of Stevenson above a 3-masted ship. Although there are no initials, the mark is generally attributed to Andrew Stevenson because it is occasionally found on wares with printed patterns that are also found with a more definitive Andrew mark. For example, pieces with a printed scene depicting Netley Abbey are recorded with the ship mark and with a circular impressed mark that reads *A Stevenson Warranted Staffordshire* around a crown. fig.9



9. *Netley Abbey printed bowl with impressed ship mark from the collection of Historic Deerfield and Netley Abbey printed meat plate, with impressed circular mark from a private collection*

The Netley Abbey design is one of the few blue printed patterns made by the Masons and examples are known with the blue printed marked *W Mason* or *SEMI CHINA WARRANTED*. They were the work of William & Miles Mason and it seems likely that when their business ceased in 1822 the copper plates were sold, and they consequently ended up in the hands of Andrew Stevenson.

The 1823 New York advertisement goes on to list *100 crates of assorted dark blue printed Tea Ware with oval and new square Tea Pots with parapet cups*. Perhaps the new square shape is that seen in fig.10 with the pattern known as *Children with Dog in a basket or crib*. The teapot has Andrew's impressed circle mark.

There are variations of square shaped teawares made by Andrew Stevenson. The sugar box in fig.11 is a different square shape and has the impressed circle mark along with



10. *Square shaped tea ware, the teapot with impressed circular mark of Andrew Stevenson*



11. Sugar box with Basket, Brick and Vase pattern with Andrew Stevenson marks. Transferware Collectors Club data base



12. Cup and saucer with Basket, Brick and Vase pattern, the cup with Andrew Stevenson's mark, the saucer marked by Clews. courtesy Frank Davenport

another of Andrew's marks *Stevenson's Stone China* printed in blue. The teacups described in the advertisement as *parapet* are yet to be identified.

Caution should be exercised attributing these printed patterns on unmarked examples as they are also found on marked Clews pieces. James & Ralph Clews worked for, and then succeeded, Andrew in business obviously taking over the factory lock stock and barrel. This produced the interesting pairing from the marine excavation of the 1827 wreck of the sailing packet *Aurora* seen in fig.12 the cup is marked Stevenson the saucer is marked Clews.

Teawares that can be identified as Andrew Stevenson productions are not common, and the illustrated examples are useful not only for the printed patterns but also because the shapes may occur with other decorative finishes. If you have any marked teawares or wares identical to these, please let us know.

13. Saucer with Andrew Stevenson impressed ship mark. Cup and saucer courtesy Cuno Koopstra, unmarked teapot of same border and central print courtesy Wytze Stellingwerf





14. Saucer with Andrew Stevenson impressed ship mark, pattern depicting Frogmore House with other unmarked examples of similar pattern, collection of Ed Rigoulot

The New York advertisement continues with 100 crates of dipt and mocho green banded Mugs Jugs and Bowls and 100 crates of cream coloured Plates, Twiflers, Muffins Dishes, Tureens Bowls Basins Ewers and jugs ... 70 crates of blue and green edged Plates ... 40 crates of blue and green edged Twiflers and Muffins. No mocha or green banded wares are known that can be attributed to Stevenson, but there are a few rare examples of creamware and green and blue edged wares with Andrew Stevenson marks.



15. Creamware with Andrew Stevenson impressed ship mark
basket & stand courtesy NorthEast Auctions, and stand © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



16. Blue and green edged ware with Andrew Stevenson impressed circular mark
Green edge courtesy NorthEast Auctions, blue edge collection of Winterthur Museum

And lastly in the advertisement, perhaps the 30 dozen *enamelled Cups and Saucers, Mugs and Jugs* included wares that were printed and enamelled. There is a marked example in the Victoria & Albert Museum, printed in red and enamelled in colours, in the pattern known as Big Blossom Tree. Small plates and a handled cup and saucer with Andrew Stevenson's ship mark are also recorded



17. tea bowl and saucer, saucer with Andrew Stevenson's circular impressed mark. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



18. Teacup and saucer and plate in Big Blossom Tree pattern, Plate and saucer impressed with Andrew Stevenson's ship mark. Collection of Jaap Otte and a private collection



19. Underglaze printed and painted saucer with the impressed ship mark used by Andrew Stevenson. Private collection

It seems the second half of this large consignment of wares arrived sometime in late August or early September. The New-York Spectator, published on 12 September 1823 and a few subsequent dates, advertised more goods. Many have the same descriptions as the wares offered a couple of months earlier including cream colour, blue and green edged plates and blue printed ware. But there were some additions, and many more kinds of tea services. There were 200 tea services in plain white with burnished gold and 500 enamelled painted and variously decorated. In addition, there were 300 tea services in china with blue Canton patterns. No china of any description is attributed to Andrew Stevenson, although he was listed as a china manufacturer in 1822, the year before these adverts were published. This matter is complicated by the fact that his brother Ralph is known to have made china about this time in partnership with Samuel Alcock and Augustus Aldeborough Lloyd Williams, (their Canton china is discussed below) so was Andrew selling their wares?

We also see that he was advertising 12 hogsheads of gold lustre and 6 hogsheads of silver lustre tea services of square form. We are familiar with the term silver lustre, but the description gold lustre is rarely used and probably means copper lustre which is produced by using pink lustre over a red earthenware or red slip coating. Pink Lustre is made from purple of Cassius which in turn ultimately derives from gold, so the term gold lustre is not inappropriate.

There are no lustrewares that can be definitively attributed to any of the Stevenson brothers, in fact lustrewares in general are rarely marked. The illustrations are just typical examples of the kind of things advertised.

58 BROADWAY,
Corner of Garden-street, New-York.

THE following goods have been received within the last six weeks by the Coriinthian, William Thompson, and other vessels, and are now offered for sale in the original packages, or to be re-packed so as to suit purchasers:

100	crates of blue and green edge plates
20	do do do twiflers
20	do do do muffins, 5, 4 & 7 ins.
20	do do do dishes from 9 to 18
50	do cream colour plates, 1-4 soups
20	do do do twiflers
20	do do do muffins, 5, 6 and 7 ins.
10	do do do dishes from 9 to 18 ins.
100	do blue printed plates, twiflers, muffins, dishes, tureens, sauce tureens, cover dishes, &c. &c.
300	tea service blue Canton China
200	do do burnished white & gold China
500	do do enamelled, painted and variously decorated
21	hds. gold lustre and 6 hds. silver lustre; these consist of tea sets, each set containing square teapots, sugar box, and cream ewer, vase, coffee urns, pitcher, 4, 6, 12, 24, chimney piece ornaments, &c. &c.

FOR FAMILIES;
A few blanching and jelly moulds of different sizes
Also, some elegantly burnished gold China Grecian shape pitchers beautifully embossed with lilac coloured flowers. Apply to
ANDREW STEVENSON,
As per address above.
N. B. Import orders, please address.
ANDREW STEVENSON,
Cobridge, Staffordshire, (per packet.)
re.15

20. New York Evening Post 16 October 1823



21 & 22. Silver lustre and "gold" lustre teawares. Unmarked and unattributed. Larry Wilson collection



On opening his store, Andrew was quickly established in New York and he lived directly across the East River from Manhattan in the affluent neighbourhood of Brooklyn Heights. It was a new residential area advertised as “elevated and perfectly healthy at all seasons ... a select neighbourhood and circle of society.”

In 1823, Spooner’s *Brooklyn Village Directory*, listed *Andrew Stevenson, China & earthenware Manufacturer/Address Mansion House, Brooklyn Heights/Store 58, Broadway New York*. From Brooklyn Heights Andrew Stevenson would have had a view of New York city similar to that depicted in a watercolour painting by William Guy Wall. Wall’s painting was made into a colour aquatint in 1823 and it seems likely that Andrew purchased a copy for inspiration as it ended up as one of his printed patterns with the printed title *NEW YORK FROM HEIGHTS NEAR BROOKLYN*, and also it has the circular impressed mark.



23. New York from the Heights near Brooklyn, watercolour
William Guy Wall 1820–23.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

24 New York from the Heights Near Brooklyn, aquatint,
John Hill after William Guy Wall, 1823



25. Blue printed meat plate, with a pattern titled *NEW YORK FROM THE HEIGHTS N°BROOKLYN* and with the impressed mark of Andrew Stevenson. Courtesy NorthEast Auctions

Andrew made many designs specifically for the American market, a few are illustrated below.



26. group of Andrew Stevenson printed designs, from left, plate, with pattern titled "Junction of the Sacandaga and Hudson Rivers"; jug, with "A View of the Late Protestant Dutch Church in the city of Albany"; plate, with a view of "Church & Buildings Adjoining Murray St., New York." For more details see Transferware Collectors Club online exhibition at www.americanhistoricalstaffordshire.com

It may have been that Andrew's New York business was on a short lease or that it did not go well, for after several upbeat newspaper advertisements in the summer months, a final notice appears in the New York Gazette and General Advertiser of November 24, 1823. It gives details of a sale at 58 Broadway, on the corner of Garden-street, to close a concern, an extensive and valuable assortment of China Glass and Earthenware—there follows brief descriptions of hundreds of services of tea, dinner and dessert ware, as well as figures, flowerpots, and toilet sets. Bone china tea sets figure prominently particularly in white and gold, but 70 dozen sets were described as *very elegant burnished gold china tea sets, decorated with paintings in groups and flowers*. And there were 30 complete tea sets, 57 pieces ea. richly japan'd Chinese figures.

The advert includes a brief mention of *pitchers and basins; toilet sets to match* which may have included bidets as an example is known in the Winterthur collection (fig 28) where it is built into a New York mahogany dressing table dating to about 1825. The complex shape suggests that it must have been in the hands of the cabinet maker when he built the piece of furniture. The well for the washbowl at the top is just a circular shape and currently holds a bowl from Stubbs spread eagle border series of American views. It seems likely that the cabinet maker bought a matching bidet and bowl from Andrew's store at 58 Broadway, the bowl perhaps met with an accident and the Stubbs bowl is a

X o'clock, at 58 Broadway, corner of Garden-street, to close a concern, an extensive and valuable assortment of China, Glass and Earthenware, at 4 months, in lots to suit purchasers, viz.—300 china tea service, variously decorated, embossed and enamelled; 100 do gilt with rich borders; 200 do very dark blue Canton china, in services and dozens; 100 sets burnished white and gold tea services, with and without coffers; 70 do very elegant burnished gold china tea sets, decorated with paintings in groups and flowers.

Porcelain—About 130 sets very dark blue, six different patterns; 2 elegant dessert services, white china and burnished gold, the plates elegantly embossed leafage; a variety of chimney-piece ornaments, in sets of 2, 3 and 5 pieces; flowerpots and stands in pairs or sets; a few dozen fruit baskets and stands, same shape as those used in Holland; 24 dessert services, dark blue Liverpool ware, 3 different patterns; 30 complete tea sets, 57 pieces ea. richly japan'd Chinese figures; a complete and general assortment Liverpool earthenware, for the trade or family use, consisting of plates, twifflers, muffins, dishes, tureens, sauce do. boats, cover dishes, baking do. gravy do. fish drainers, pitchers of all sizes and patterns; pitchers and basins; toilet sets to match; milk pans, different sizes, for the dairy; black-mange; moulds; preserve pots in sizes; jelly pots; bowls; foot pails and dessert services. Also, a few superbly cut, round and oval glass dishes; salad bowls, stands and water pitchers. The above articles have all been imported within the last six months by a manufacturer.—The public may not soon have another opportunity of furnishing themselves with goods of so choice a quality, patterns and shapes.

27. New York Gazette and General Advertiser 24 November 1823

replacement found by a dealer wanting to sell a complete piece. The bidet is from Andrew Stevenson's rose border series, the interior with a scene depicting Walsingham Priory, Norfolk the exterior with a scene depicting Haughton Hall, Norfolk, both scenes taken from Thomas Kitson Cromwell's *Excursions in the County of Norfolk*, published in 1818 in two volumes.⁶



28. Dressing table, New York c. 1825 with blue printed bidet with impressed mark of Andrew Stevenson and blue printed pattern title "Walsingham Priory Norfolk". Collection of Winterthur Museum.

In addition to underglaze blue printed pottery, Andrew also made other wares that catered for the American taste, which was often very different from that of England. Marked examples of these wares are rarely seen and even fewer examples in the English taste are known.



29. Marked Andrew Stevenson wares, above are examples found in American collections, below are examples found in British Collections



Although he might have sold up at 58 Broadway, by March 1824, Andrew was once again arriving in New York from Liverpool. On this occasion he seems to have placed no advertisements for the sale of his pottery, but in 1826 a Philadelphia auction house announced that it had received 60 crates of earthenware from Andrew Stevenson's manufactory by the ship Montezuma lately arrived from Liverpool⁷.

The most under researched of Andrew Stevenson products are those with marks that suggest he made stone china. Two such marks have been recorded, however as they appear to be on earthenware pieces, it still cannot be confirmed that he actually made stone china. The first, more common mark, is a blue printed rectangle with the words 'STEVENSON'S Stone China' and it sometimes occurs alongside Andrew's circular impressed mark. (see figs 11 & 12). So far this has only been found on underglaze blue printed earthenwares. The second mark is much rarer and seems to have been adapted from a well-known Mason mark. When Miles Mason died in 1822, his business closed and the manufactory was advertised for sale, lock stock and barrel⁸. It seems likely that at this time Andrew acquired some Mason copper plates which he subsequently used. A dish decorated with a printed scene of Netley Abbey (fig.30) has two marks: in addition to the mock-Mason mark it also carries Andrew Stevenson's circular impressed mark confirming that the mock-Mason was used by Andrew. Finding the two marks together has helped identify a plate made by Andrew which carries only the mock Mason mark. The plate in fig.31 is decorated with a printed and enamelled stone china pattern, but it is known only from an image and therefore it is impossible to say conclusively whether it is stone china or earthenware. If you know of more examples, of Stevenson's stone china marked wares, please let us know.



30. Netley Abbey printed dish with Andrew Stevenson impressed mark and mock-Mason mark



31 Andrew Stevenson plate with a mock-Mason mark and decorated with a printed and enamelled pattern of the kind often found on stone china

It seems there might have been a slowdown in his business in the mid-1820s as all indications are that Andrew Stevenson had decided to retire. In 1825 he disposed of leased coal mines in Cobridge and began to look for a potential renter for his potworks. He continued to operate his pottery until 1827 when he leased the Cobridge Works to James and Ralph Clews who, as mentioned earlier, had started out working for him more than a decade before and subsequently gone into business themselves in a nearby factory in about 1813.

Following the Great Reform Act of 1832, we find Andrew registered as a voter in Burslem qualifying by virtue of "Freehold Manufactory and Land" in Cobridge leased to the Clews brothers. The few electoral registers that survive for Burslem date to the 1830s, none appear to be any later, and some of them are paired with Poll books, listing who had voted for which candidates. Some years Andrew voted, some years he didn't. Was that because he was not supportive of any candidates, or because he was out of the country at election time?

PIREHILL, NORTH.—PARISH OF BURSLEM (Continued.)				55
Christian and Surname of each Voter.	Place of Abode	Nature of Qualification.	Street, Lane, or other like place; Parish where the Property is situate; Or, Name of the Property; Or, Name of the Tenant.	
Stevenson, Andrew	Cobridge	Freehold manufactory and land	Cobridge, occupied by Messrs. Ralph James Clews	

32 1833 Poll Book, Burslem

As for his American venture, after the 1823 directory and his sailing out to New York again in 1825 there appear to be no more details of his time there until 1850. The American census of that year records Andrew Stevenson of England living in Westchester, New York. Stevenson was living in the home of Hannah Valentine who owned property valued at \$7000. He is one of many people in the house which suggests it is a lodging house.

1850 United States Federal Census for Andrews Stevenson									
New York > Westchester > Westchester									
Dweller No.	Family No.	Name	Age	Sex	Race	Occupation	Real Estate	Birthplace	Married? Attended School? Cannot Read?
15	54	Hannah Valentine	57	F			7000	New York	
		Mary P.	21	F				"	
		Sarah A.	16	F				"	
		Eustasia	18	F				"	
		Eustasia Briggs	14	F				"	
		Andrew Stevenson	24	M		None		England?	
		William Biddle	27	M		Labourer		New York	1
		George Hume	38	M				Ireland?	
		John Stuart	20	M		Painter		New York	

That this is our Andrew Stevenson is confirmed by the last newspaper references. When in 1855 his death was announced in the New York Evening Post and in the Staffordshire Advertiser, the latter recording the details - "At the village of Westchester, near New York, United States on the 28 February 1855, Andrew Stevenson Esq., formerly earthenware manufacturer at Cobridge in this county." There appears to be no will, no other evidence of what kind of life Andrew was leading after he gave up his pottery business.

Deaths.
At South Bank House, Leek, on Tuesday last, Mr. John Squire, aged 46 years.
At the village of Westchester, near New York, United States, on the 28th ult., Andrew Stevenson, Esq., formerly earthenware manufacturer, at Cobridge, in this county.

Problem Stevenson Marks

So far, we have been looking at wares made by Andrew Stevenson with a range of identifiable marks. There may be another mark that any of the Stevenson brother might have used alone or in partnership. It is STEVENSON impressed with uppercase letters in a line. This is perhaps the most problematical of all the Stevenson marks as it tells us so much and so little. It is after all the name of all the brothers, and all of them would be entitled to use it. This is a problem because there are 5 subtly different impressed STEVENSON marks.



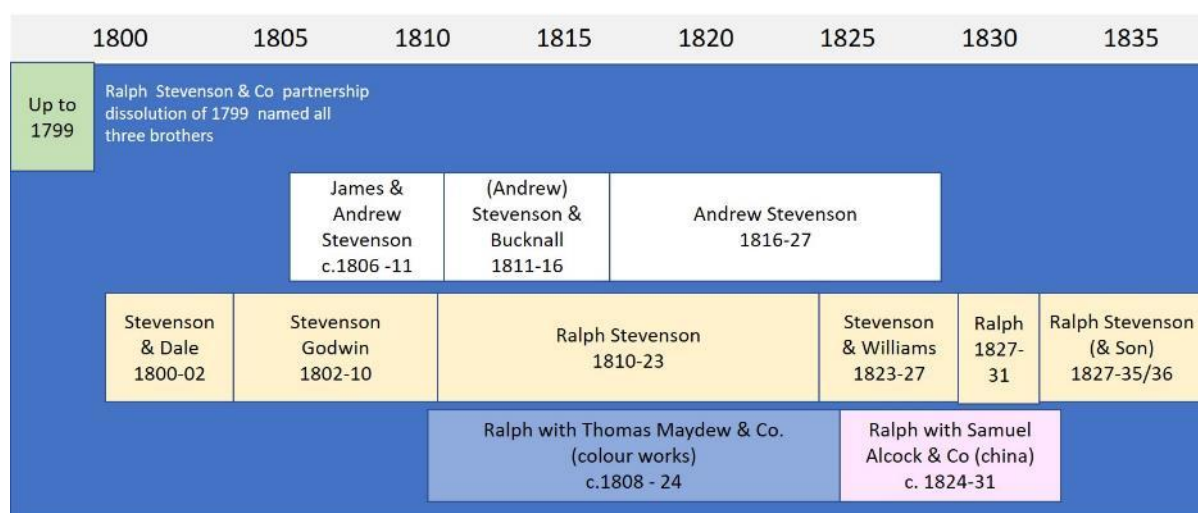
33. Five linear impressed STEVENSON marks



1. STEVENSON with letters all the same size and no full stop. This appears to be Ralph's mark and is often seen together with a printed mark with Ralph's name or initials.
2. STEVENSON. with letters all the same size and with a full stop. This mark has only been seen on early 19th century chinoiseries.
3. STEVENSON. with letters all the same size in a curved line with a full stop. A very rare mark and difficult to photograph. It is also only found on early Chinoiseries.
4. STEVENSON. with a larger first letter and a full stop. Seen on early chinoiseries and some early 19th century creamware.
5. STEVENSON with a larger first letter and no full stop. Seen on early chinoiseries and some early 19th century creamware.

Interestingly, all five marks are found on earlyish Chinoiserie patterns. (fig.33) Can the differences in these marks be dismissed as just the differently made stamps of one company? Or could one or more of these marks be from different Stevenson brothers' companies? The brothers were all entitled

to use the name Stevenson and were all definitely in business, without other named partners at various times in the early 19th century.



34 Timeline of the various Stevenson pottery businesses

These questions cannot be answered with our current level of information. It seems certain that these marks need more thought, but we also need more evidence – more pieces with the mark to examine. If you have marked pieces in your collection, please let us know, perhaps together we can make some headway into sorting them out.

Ralph Stevenson

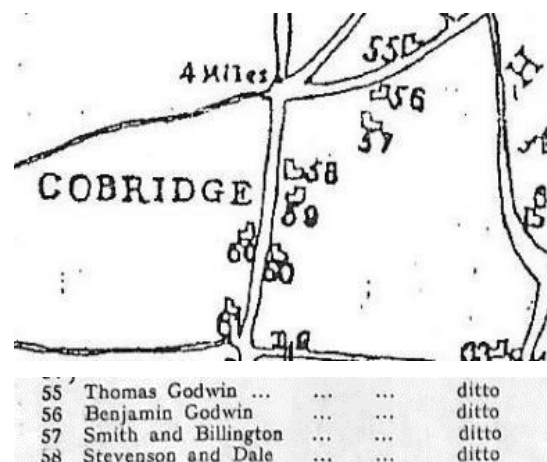
Finally, we come to Ralph Stevenson. Perhaps the most characterful of the three Stevenson brothers, more social, more political and in business for longer. His close circle of friends from his Edinburgh University days, included the poet Thomas Campbell who visited him at Cobridge, a number of times. On a nine day visit in 1803 he wrote “Stevenson kept amazingly well; he is really an honest fellow, and among the wicked gang of workmen, a provider for the needy and great encourager of industry.” he went on “the country is one chaos of smoke and brick furnaces”, and he wrote a little couplet

“No product there the traveller can survey
but men and mugs, the potter and his clay.”⁹

Henry, Lord Brougham, was another of Ralph’s English friends from his university days. He was a scientist, a politician, a lawyer to Queen Caroline and not least designer of the Brougham Carriage. Ralph moved in interesting circles. He was often in the local newspaper, writing about all kinds of matters, demanding apologies when slighted, and enjoying the support of many of his Staffordshire acquaintances.

Ralph’s first pottery making venture appears to have ended in July 1799 when a notice of dissolution shows that he had operated a pottery in Cobridge with James and Andrew, trading as Ralph Stevenson & Co. Ralph went on to partner briefly with Andrew in a Glasgow pottery warehouse and perhaps continued on his own account as a potter in Cobridge.

In December of 1800, the partnership of John and William Dale, and George and Samuel Poulson of Cobridge, Staffordshire earthenware manufacturers was terminated and a new partnership was announced between John Dale and Ralph Stevenson trading as Stevenson & Dale, in both the Cobridge pottery and the Glasgow warehouse. It seems that Andrew was no longer with his brother Ralph in Glasgow and perhaps had already joined his oldest brother James in his china dealing business in Edinburgh. The following year, on 10 April 1801, Messrs. Stevenson and Dale of Cobridge, Potters insured their stock of earthenware, raw materials and utensils for £800¹⁰. Although this may not seem like a high value it is in keeping with many others and more than most.



35 detail from Thomas Allbut's map of Staffordshire Potteries 1802

In 1802 Benjamin Godwin, Ralph's stepfather, joined the partnership, trading as Godwin, Stevenson & Dale. John Dale died the following year in April of 1803. The firm was then listed as Stevenson, Godwin & Dale, with Stevenson and Godwin focussing on the pottery in Cobridge and the Dale family taking the retail business in Glasgow which was still advertised as Stevenson & Dale in the Glasgow Directory as late as 1816, but by 1817 it was in the name of Ambrose Dale alone.

In Cobridge, Stevenson & Godwin continued to make pottery. While none of their wares have been identified, there are a few references to their products in the source previously mentioned, the business records of John Wyllie, who had a Staffordshire Warehouse in London¹¹.

In 1809 Stevenson & Godwin supplied to Wyllie

- 10 dozen *teas handled French* at 5/- per dozen
- 12 pairs of *ewers & basins Grape* at 3/- each
- 12 pairs of *ewers & basins Leafage* at 3/- each
- 30 dozen *muffins, willow* at 2/6d per dozen

In 1810 they supplied

- 5 dozen *basons & saucers landscape handl'd* at 8/6d per dozen
- 36 dozen *handl'd teas French tower patt'n* at 6/- per dozen
- 7 dozen *Jugs (24s) landscape* at 7/- per dozen

It's possible the references here are to printed designs and although no patterns can definitively be attributed to Stevenson & Godwin, there are a number of unattributed patterns that might fit the bill. And it should be noted that *French* is a usually thought to be a size and *(24s)* is also a size indicating a small to medium size jug, 24 of which would fit on a potter's ware board that would be carried to the oven.

In 1807 Ralph Stevenson married Mary Mayer, daughter of the potter John Mayer. A year earlier, in 1806, he had made a large purchase from Jacob Warburton of land and newly erected buildings, and also a further parcel of land and a set of potworks¹². The former is likely the premises he converted to a colour works and the latter is likely to be one of the two factories operated by Godwin & Stevenson.

By November of 1810 Ralph's partnership with Benjamin Godwin was over, with an agreement that *in future the Upper-Manufactory will be carried on by Benjamin Godwin and Sons-and the Lower one by Ralph Stevenson*¹³. There is no reason to suppose that there was any rift between the Godwins and the Stevensons, it may have just been a sensible business decision. The two factories occupied by them had both been owned by Jacob Warburton until Ralph's purchase in 1806. It seems likely that Benjamin was succession planning for his own sons, Benjamin Endon & Stephen, in the upper factory which he continued to rent, while Ralph Stevenson established his own business at the lower factory which he now owned.

NOTICE.

THE business heretofore carried on at Cobridge, under the firm of STEVENSON & GODWIN, as Earthenware Manufacturers, was this day dissolved by mutual consent.—All debts due to and by the said firm, will be paid and received by RALPH STEVENSON.

In future the upper Manufactory will be carried on by BENJAMIN GODWIN and SONS; and the lower one by RALPH STEVENSON.

(Signed) RALPH STEVENSON,
Signed in the presence of BENJAMIN GODWIN.
THOS. PIERPOINT.

Cobridge, Nov. 10th, 1810.

36 Staffordshire Advertiser, 24 November 1810

So, from the end of 1810, Ralph was in business in his own pottery factory. In addition, he established a colour works where he was in partnership with Thomas Maydew trading variously as *Colour Manufacturers, blue colourists, and refiners of zaffre*. Not surprisingly Ralph Stevenson became a major manufacturer of blue-printed pottery.



37 Group of blue printed wares with Ralph Stevenson marks

However, the second decade of the 19th century was not an easy time to be in business, there were American embargo acts and challenging French and British trade restrictions. By 1811 pottery production along with other British industries, was stagnating. Things were so bad, that a Government debate to discuss the matter was planned for 11 May 1812. As the British Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, entered Parliament he was shot and killed by John Bellingham, a distressed

Liverpool merchant. This, the only assassination of a British Prime Minister, was commemorated by Staffordshire potters in a range of printed designs, almost all of which featured a portrait of the murderer, John Bellingham rather than the victim Spencer Perceval.

Eventually manufacturers were invited to give evidence to a House of Commons Enquiry on the state of industry and Ralph Stevenson, Josiah Wedgwood II and Robert Hamilton were elected to represent their fellow Staffordshire potters.¹⁴

The distress in the Potteries was greater than it was ever known before, briefly reported Josiah Wedgwood II. Ralph Stevenson gave more detailed evidence that, of approximately 14,000 people who had been employed in the pottery factories only 10,000 could find work. Of 140 pottery companies, about 35 had stopped work within the last two years and 15 or 16 had failed business completely, more than in the last 10 years. Those that continued to produce wares, were stock piling their finished goods ready for dispatch as soon as the markets were restored, but if that did not happen soon, then more hands would be laid off. To further his own depressed business, Ralph reported that he had shipped world-wide but that *at Buenos Ayres the market [was] glutted ... Trade to the West Indies declined, and ... [he had] shipped to British America*, but the speculation has not succeeded. *Has shipped to Sicily and Malta*, where the loss was 25 to 30 per cent” He concluded that if *the American trade was opened, all the goods suited for that market would be taken off as fast as they could be packed ... An open trade to America would remove the distress of the Potters in Staffordshire*. He ended with a comment that he had *heard of two Potteries established in America; that large offers have been made to workmen to leave this country for America, and that some have actually gone*.¹⁵

His was just one of numerous grim reports from many British manufacturers and the restrictive Orders in Council were withdrawn on June 16, 1812 to universal celebrations. However unaware of this gesture, James Madison the American president signed a declaration of war with Britain two days later, on June 18, 1812. The news came by ship and reached Britain at the end of July and the potters found themselves back in dire straits. In 1812, Ralph Stephenson took out a mortgage for £3,000 on property that he owned including both his potworks and colour works. Presumably he needed financial support to continue his businesses.¹⁶

Like his younger brother, Andrew, Ralph managed to keep producing pottery during this difficult time and it seems after the partnership with Benjamin Godwin was dissolved Ralph continued to supply blue printed wares to John Wyllie until 1813¹⁷. Several of the orders included patterns names, he supplied

6 pair <i>Ewers & basins Johnnguel</i>	18/-
1 doz <i>Sugars India</i>	13/-
30 doz <i>handled Bute teas College</i>	5/-
20 doz <i>handled Bute teas Bird</i>	6/-
36 doz <i>handled Bute teas Villa</i>	5/-

It seems likely that these pieces had underglaze printed decoration, but no Ralph Stevenson wares have been identified with patterns that match these descriptions. Some orders only mentioned shapes, not patterns, these included, round, oval and oblong teapots and lion head tureens. The only



*38 Drabware jug with black printed portrait of John Bellingham. Maker unknown.
Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent*

Stevenson lion head tureens known, are those made by Andrew Stevenson in the pattern known as Chinese Traders, found with the impressed Stevenson ship mark.

By 1815, after peace was restored between Britain and France and Britain and the United States, trade was resumed. Almost immediately after the cessation of hostilities, ships left Liverpool for the ports on America's eastern seaboard, carrying crates of Staffordshire pottery. No doubt, Ralph Stevenson's blue printed pottery was soon taking its place in its most important market.

By 1821 Ralph and Thomas Maydew's partnership as colour makers was dissolved. Ralph Stevenson continued to own the colour works but Maydew worked it alone. The following year on 2nd March 1822, Maydew was declared bankrupt. Ralph Stevenson reclaimed his colour works and converted it into a china factory. By 1825 his mortgage had increased to £7,000 using property, including the china works and the pottery factory in Cobridge, as collateral.¹⁸

While most authorities say that in 1825 Ralph Stevenson was joined by Augustus Aldborough Lloyd Williams in a partnership trading as Stevenson & Williams, it seems their partnership was underway as early as 1823 when Williams travelled to America on behalf of the firm.¹⁹ The letter book of the Boston china dealer Horace Collamore includes an order for 5 January 1824 addressed to Stevenson & Williams, requesting over 700 dozen pieces of pottery²⁰. The list includes cream colour, edged, and beaded ware plates assorted, chamber pots jugs and mugs; painted teas with blue figures; lettered toy cans, blue edge plates; BP or blue printed plates specifying *several patterns and well covered*; 25 dozen blue printed teas again; they asked for *several patterns all dark and well covered*".



39 Tureen with 'Chinese Traders' pattern, made by Andrew Stevenson, private collection



40 left, Soup plate printed with Beehive & Urns pattern, "dark blue and well covered", with printed mark of Ralph Stevenson & Williams shown in the centre and impressed mark "23" probably indicating a date of 1823.; right, soup plate Beehive & Urns pattern, the centre changed to portraits of George Washington & General Lafayette. The latter probably made to commemorate Lafayette's triumphant visit to America in 1824.

The copy of the letter that accompanied the order says, *if the quality of your goods and the prices will warrant, the present small order will be the forerunner of larger*. So, for Collamore, more than 700 dozen (almost 10,000 pieces) was a small order! Importantly, it also refers to *Mr Williams who has so lately visited us*. The term *lately* may be relative as the only passenger record I can find that might refer to Williams, notes a *Mr A. Williams, Merchant*, of about the right age listed as a passenger on

the ship Florida, out of Liverpool and landing in New York in the 2nd quarter of 1823. That ship is recorded in Newspapers as having arrived in New York at the end of April, it sailed in March 1823, and by that time, Augustus Aldborough Lloyd Williams must already have been in partnership with Ralph Stevenson. In fact new research has found that the partnership began in December 1822.²¹

Teawares by Ralph Stevenson or Ralph Stevenson & Williams are very uncommon. Examples that may indicate what shapes they produced are illustrated in figures 41 & 42, the latter being more typical of the dark blue well covered prints requested in Collamore's order. If anyone has Stevenson marked teawares of any description, we would love to hear about them, they may be vital clues as we try to identify more of their pottery. When Collamore ordered blue printed plates in *several patterns and well covered* he probably meant something similar to that seen in figure 43.



41 Teawares in a pattern titled "State House Hartford" unmarked but attributed to Ralph Stevenson and which could indicate shapes made by Ralph Stevenson & Williams



42 Coffee pot and sugar in a pattern known as Harp, other examples are recorded with a Ralph Stevenson mark c. 1830 but they could indicate shapes made earlier by Ralph Stevenson & Williams



43 Plate with pattern titled Nahant Hotel Nr. Boston

Despite intensive searches, no marked blue edged wares have been recorded – but there is a green edge platter in figure 44 with a very unusual Stevenson & Williams circular impressed mark.



44 Green edge pearlware plate with impressed mark STEVENSON & WILLIAMS WARRANTED around the outside of a crown with STAFFORDSHIRE above the crown. Collection of Winterthur Museum.

Stevenson & Williams must have been in business from very early in 1823, if not from 1822 following Maydew's bankruptcy. They were making earthenware and stoneware in Ralph's main factory and china in the converted colour works, in the latter they were soon joined by Samuel Alcock.

Augustus Aldborough Lloyd Williams was an unusual partner. He was a British citizen born in about 1791 in Benares, India, a district under the rule of the British East India Company. He joined the navy 1804 and saw very active service across the seven seas before his retirement. He and his older brother married two sisters, daughters of James Bell a banker of Uttoxeter in Staffordshire. Williams obviously wasn't a potter but somehow, he must have thought making ceramics in Staffordshire was a good investment.

Between 1823 and 1827 Ralph Stevenson & Williams made a range of pottery products and an almost disproportionate number of marked examples survive, identified by the full name of the partnership or by the initials RSW incorporated into their marks.



45 Pattern of 'Milkmaid and goats' with marks, one with and one without the initials RSW

The marked wares are so numerous for this short period I can only think that Williams was extremely tenacious in making sure his name or initials were included on all marks during their partnership. Which leads me to suggest that wares marked with Ralph's name or initials alone must have been made before or after Williams involvement. You can see from fig.45 that the same patterns were continued and that initials RSW were squeezed into Ralph's existing marks. The marks in fig 46 suggest that after the partnership ended the W was removed and something like foliage was inserted to fill the gap.



46 Plates printed with Pastoral pattern name, one with the addition of RSW and the other with RS

Perhaps the most attractive of the Stevenson & Williams productions are their stone chinias. Various tea and tableware shapes are known along with some toilet wares and a few vases. Decoration is usually printed in underglaze blue, often with the addition of over-glaze enamels. The marked examples carry a large blue printed design of the Royal Coat of Arms and the name Royal Stone China above the initials RSW.



47 plate with blue printed floral design and with Royal Arms mark collection of The Potteries Museum



48 Chamber pot underglaze blue printed with touches of overglaze enamel and with Royal Arms mark courtesy Chipstone Foundation



49 Group of wares all with the Royal Arms mark of Ralph Stevenson & Williams. Private collections

For reasons unknown, Williams' partnership with Stevenson was dissolved in 1827 and he moved to live in the south of England. Apparently, it was an acrimonious parting and Williams sued Ralph Stevenson for a fairer distribution of the assets on dissolution and the dispute may have encouraged Ralph to eliminate the Williams part of the mark quite promptly.

It was in the china making business that Stevenson and Williams were joined by Samuel Alcock. Very few objects can be attributed to the brief Stevenson, Alcock, & Williams partnership and none of the surviving known pieces are particularly inspiring. They comprise a group of underglaze blue printed wares with a very flowy blue pattern in a design known as Canton which derives from Chinese export porcelain. At least two marks are recorded, the first is clearly shown in fig 50 the second shown in fig 51 is known only from a very poor photo was submitted to the Transferware collectors club in 2004²² showing a few more pieces of a similar pattern. This mark has not been recorded since that time.



50 Bone china saucer with the blue printed mark of the Stevenson, Alcock & Williams partnership



51 second bone china mark of Stevenson, Alcock &

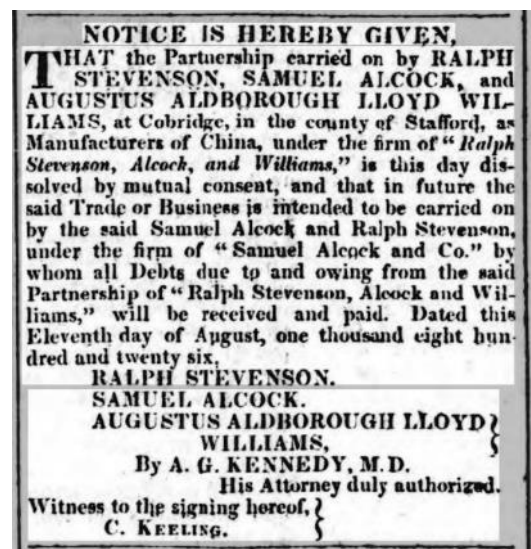
On the basis of the marked wares other, unmarked, teawares are regularly described as Stevenson Alcock & Williams products, but whether they can all be attributed to the same manufacture is open to debate.



52 Three unmarked bone china teacups and saucers, of a similar pattern but different forms, that are typically attributed to Stevenson, Alcock & Williams without any corroborating evidence.

This Stevenson, Alcock & Williams partnership lasted just over two years. In August 1826 the dissolution was announced²³, and the partnership divided, with Stevenson and Alcock continuing as “Samuel Alcock & Co.” to make “china”, and Ralph Stevenson and Aldborough Lloyd Williams briefly continued to make earthen- and stone-ware as previously discussed.

The earliest porcelain products that can be positively attributed to the Stevenson & Alcock partnership are described by Simeon Shaw in his *History of the Staffordshire Potteries*,²⁴ “In the latter part of 1828, Messrs. Alcock and Stevenson, of Cobridge, published a series of Busts of the most eminent characters of the present time, executed in the best manner of the Art”. A number of these have survived. The two examples in fig 54 have a mark that includes the date 1828. Blisters particularly visible on the plinth of the example on the left suggest some early technical problems, but these were soon resolved, and in fig 55 you see a new mark with the phrase “improved porcelain”.



53 Staffordshire Advertiser 19 August 1826



54 Bisque porcelain busts with blue printed mark including the date 1828 collection of Potteries Museum & Art Gallery



55 Bisque porcelain bust with gilding and a brown printed mark, perhaps a little later than 1828

The Stevenson & Alcock partnership lasted for 6-7 years and expired in 1831²⁵ and a fuller discussion of their porcelains including illustrations of many of their wares can be found in their paper published in the Journal of NCS²⁶ and which is available on the NCS website. A few examples are shown in fig 56.



56 Bone china attributed to Alcock & Co. Private collections

Because of their close similarity to marked Ralph Stevenson & Williams stonewares pieces, bone china with a moulded border known to collectors as “melting snow” has been attributed to Alcock & Co. see fig 57



Figure 57 Left – stoneware plate with royal arms mark seen in fig 45; right - bone china plate with painted pattern number 507

A pattern book attributed to Alcock & Co, formerly in Geoffrey Godden’s collection, is now held by the City of Stoke-on-Trent archives department²⁷. While the attribution may be correct, there is no definitive information to support the Alcock attribution. The book has pages watermarked with the date 1824 which fits the dates of the Stevenson Alcock partnership, however pattern 507 in the book seen at fig 58 does not match the bone china plate with pattern number 507 seen on the right in fig 57.

58 Pattern 507 in the pattern book attributed to Alcock. Collection of Stoke-on-Trent City Archives



There may be some explanation for this which remains to be discovered. Other examples in the pattern book include a range of finely painted vases and a number of plates with the “melting snow border”.



59 Sample pages from the pattern book attributed to Alcock & Co. City of Stoke-on-Trent Archives collection

When Stevenson’s partnership with Alcock expired in 1831, Ralph took his oldest son, John Adams Stevenson into business. Ralph Stevenson & Son was listed as both earthenware and china manufacturer. A notice in the Staffordshire Advertiser for 1833 reports that a man was prosecuted for stealing bones from Ralph Stevenson & Son. It is possible that the company continued making bone china until at least May 1834 when Ralph sold some of his property in Cobridge, see fig 60. The description of the property as “a small compact set of potworks” suggests that that it was the property that Stevenson began as a colour works and then converted into a china factory. However, it seems that these later Stevenson bone chinas have not been discussed or identified.

LOT 9.—A DWELLING-HOUSE, with a garden in front, and a small compact set of POTWORKS in the rear, situate on the north side of the said road from Cobridge to Milton, in the occupation of Mr. Ralph Stevenson, comprising in the whole about 3,327 superficial yards of land.

60 Staffordshire Advertiser 17 May 1834

Surviving earthenwares produced by Ralph and his son in the last phase of his business after Williams departure in 1827 suggest that this, his larger factory, concentrated on printed wares for the American market. They continued making the dark blue, in December 1826 the Baltimore China merchant Matthew Smith, had written to his agent in the Potteries *For Country trade the call is still for dark and well cover'd patterns in Blue Printed Ware, but in a few instances I have been asked by retail*

buyers for Dinner Sets for light patterns.²⁸ No doubt Stevenson wanted to supply both dark and light blue printed patterns to maximize sales.



60 Dark blue printed patterns with Ralph Stevenson mark, top left depicts Fonthill Abbey from the Panoramic series of views, below right is a scene depicting South Front of Melrose Abbey from the Castles series.



61 Light blue printed patterns with Ralph Stevenson marks, left from a series of patterns titled "Ancient Greece", right from a series titled "MANHATTAN"

The lighter blue prints often had a central motif and restrained borders leaving more of the white pottery showing. The Manhattan series seen in fig 61 is typical of the wares from the late 1820s known as Romantic Staffordshire in which the pattern name and the scene depicted seem to be unrelated. Researches into dark blue printed pottery, found no documentary references the darker colour after June 1831²⁹. And by 1830 the new Romantic styles were in vogue. Not only was lighter blue in greater demand, but new fancy colours had become available by that time.



62 Ralph Stevenson plates printed in fancy colours, from three of Ralph Stevensons most commonly seen pattern series, from the left, Manhattan, Cologne and Swiss

Just as it seemed the Ralph Stevenson's family was settled, the pottery was prospering, and trade was brisk, new challenges arose that ultimately led to the failure of the business. What began as a small series of industrial disputes in the Potteries' town of Tunstall, escalated into a succession of strikes and violent protests spreading to Burslem in 1834-35 and on to the other Potteries towns by 1836. Many of the manufacturers were unable to continue business, and one of the many casualties was Ralph Stevenson and Son.

In 1835 the first notice of their bankruptcy appeared in the Staffordshire Advertiser³⁰, by which time Ralph and John Adams Stevenson had mortgage loans of over £7000³¹ which they were unable to redeem. Although the firm was occasionally listed as Ralph Stevenson & Sons, the bankruptcy notice lists only one son, naming Ralph and John Adams Stevenson as the partners. Both John Adams Stevenson and his younger brother, Ralph jnr. were lawyers of some prominence locally, and the bankruptcy seemed to have had no effect on their legal businesses. The factory premises were soon forfeited for the large debt, and advertisements indicate that everything from the factory and was sold in two sales in February 1836³².

Two years later, Ralph Stevenson's sold land in Bagnall Street Hanley³³, probably land around his house which must have been a rather large property, as it became a girl's school subsequently³⁴. It may be that when he eventually sold his house, he was still trying to repay creditors or perhaps he sold it when he became infirm. He died on January 29, 1853. His lengthy obituary recalls that for several years before his death he was afflicted with paralysis but that he "expired in full possession of his mental faculties."³⁵ His two sons fared well, and at times he lived with them in their homes. John Adams Stevenson in the 1861 census lived in Stoke-on-Trent and with his wife and three servants. And Ralph Jun. eventually retired to the salubrious environs of Cheltenham in Gloucestershire where he lived in Wolsley House with his wife, three daughters and four servants.

Conclusion

The work on understanding the contribution made to the Staffordshire Pottery industry by James, Ralph and Andrew Stevenson continues, and there are many areas of the Stevenson brothers' life and work that need research, if you have any information that would add to our knowledge please share it. You can contact us through the NCS website.

A late addition – a previously unrecorded mark

With many thanks to Dick Henrywood, I am able to include a newly discovered Ralph Stevenson mark. Dick has found at least two examples. The first is on a blue printed dish from Ralph Stevenson's Lace Border Series depicting Eaton Hall which carries the standard printed mark with the initials RS and also has the oval impressed mark STEVENSON above an illegible device all

within a radiant cartouche. The second example of the oval impressed mark appears alone on a dish printed with the same design printed in pink. On the second example, the mark is perhaps a little clearer. Dick and I would love to hear from anyone who has examples of this mark in their own collection.



Illustrations courtesy Dick Henrywood

Endnotes

- ¹ Scottish Post Office Directories, Glasgow directory ... Corrected till September 1799. <https://digital.nls.uk/87869810> (accessed 4/9/2019)
- ² Caledonian Mercury, 22 & 29th June, 1799
- ³ Burslem Land Tax Records
- ⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 25 April 1807
- ⁵ Eatwell Ann and Alex Werner, "A London Staffordshire Warehouse" *Northern Ceramic Society Journal* Vol. 8, 1991
- ⁶ Henrywood, R. K. 2015. *The Transferware Recorder Number 2, Selected British Views*, Bow, Devon : Reynardine Publishing, pp 140, 148, 165.
- ⁷ *Philadelphia Aurora and Franklin Gazette*, 28 February 1826
- ⁸ *Staffordshire Advertiser* 29 June 1822 and 6 July 1822
- ⁹ Beattie, William, and Thomas Campbell. 1850. *Life and letters of Thomas Campbell*. London: Hall, Virtue & Co. <http://books.google.com/books?id=dIOEAQAIAAJ>. (Accessed 27/08/2009)
- ¹⁰ Edmundson, Roger, "Staffordshire Potters Insured with The Salop Fire Office 1780-1825" *Northern Ceramic Society Journal* Vol.6 p.88
- ¹¹ Eatwell op. cit.
- ¹² Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, Adams papers
- ¹³ *Staffordshire Advertiser* 24 November 1810
- ¹⁴ *Staffordshire Advertiser* 04 July 1812
- ¹⁵ Great Britain. 1812. *An abstract of the evidence lately taken in the House of Commons against the orders in Council: being a summary of the facts there proved respecting the present state of the commerce and manufacturers of the country*. London: Printed by J. M'Creery. p.13 https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=8c9AAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false (last accessed 09/02/2020)
- ¹⁶ Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, Adams papers
- ¹⁷ Eatwell op.cit.
- ¹⁸ Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, Adams papers
- ¹⁹ I am most grateful to my colleague, Amanda Lange of Historic Deerfield for the information about Augustus Lloyd Williams visit to Boston in 1824.
- ²⁰ The substance of this order were generously shared with me by my colleague, Amanda Lange of Historic Deerfield. The Collamore letter book is in Baker Library Special Collections, Harvard Business School. Horace Collamore Papers, Vol. 13, Letterbook, MSS:77, 697.
- ²¹ Information courtesy of Robert Cluett who found the date of the partnership 12 December 1822, in an account of the disagreement between the partners in 'Examination between Augustus Aldborough Lloyd Williams and Ralph Stevenson' ref C13/1502/38 dated 15 day of June 1831 held at the PRO at Kew.
- ²² *Transferware Collectors Club Bulletin* Spring 2004 Vol V. No. 3, pp 7&13
- ²³ *Staffordshire Advertiser* 19 August 1826 see fig 51
- ²⁴ Shaw, Simeon. 1970. *History of the Staffordshire potteries*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles Reprints.
- ²⁵ *London Gazette*, 16 August 1831
- ²⁶ Bressey Stephen, and Murray Pollinger, "Porcelains of The Ralph Stevenson & Samuel Alcock Partnerships C. 1822 - 1831." *Journal* 20 Northern Ceramic Society pp.65-98
- ²⁷ Stoke-on-Trent City Archive Service, reference SD 1687
- ²⁸ Pomfret, Roger "A Staffordshire Warehouse in Baltimore-the Letter Books of Matthew Smith 1806-32", *Northern Ceramic Society Journal* Vol.26. 2010. p. 98
- ²⁹ Halfpenny, Pat, "Dating Dark Blue American Themed Prints on Pottery" *Transferware Collectors Club Bulletin* 2012 Vol. XIII, No.1 pp.11-13
- ³⁰ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 26 December 1835
- ³¹ Stoke-on-Trent City Archive Service, Reference EMT 11-825
- ³² *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 30 January 1836 and 6 and 20 February 1836
- ³³ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 10 November 1838
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- ³⁵ *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 5 February 1853

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