

# TEXIAN CAMPAIGNE

by Wes Palmer, Andrew Pye and Connie Rogers #

It all began with a posting on the Message Board of the TCC Website.

**Posted by RICK REED on May 28, 2008, 2:31 pm**

***"I joined today specifically to get info on the Texian Campaigne patterns. However my search for this pattern yielded no results. I wonder why?"***

Rick found nothing in the database because no patterns had been entered at that time. Wes Palmer, database editor for American Themes, got images for three of the patterns, and entered them in the database. One had no mark on the back. The other two had a cartouche with the words "Texian Campaigne". The initials 'J.B.' were under one cartouche, and 'T. Walker' under the other.

The series has historically been attributed to Anthony Shaw. The commonly held opinion about the series was stated in the first sentence in the article "Texian Campaigne – A Different Mark!" on p. 10 of the TCC Bulletin, Spring 2008: "Texian Campaigne, a most popular American Historical Staffordshire series, shows battle scenes from the War with Mexico (1846-1848) that resulted in the United States acquiring most of our current Southwest."

What then do we make of the patterns Wes found? One is marked J.B. and another T. Walker. Research was needed to determine what potters used those initials and name and when and where did they operate. We needed to start with a blank slate and "forget" what we have heard and read about who produced the Texian Campaigne patterns. We also had to look for pieces marked with the name A. Shaw.

With research done by Andrew Pye on our



#4, T. Walker Plate and Mark

behalf, and Sarah Finch Maiden Rollins who wrote the article "Texian Campaigne Ware" for *The Magazine Antiques*, February 1983, receiving research help from Pat Halfpenny who was at that time Keeper of Ceramics, City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, we can present the following time-table:

From 1821 to 1834, James Beech of Lion Works, Sandyford, Tunstall, Staffordshire was in partnership with Abraham Lowndes. After Lowndes retired, Beech continued in his sole name until 1844, using the initials J. B. as a backstamp. When he was ready to retire, he advertised his manufactory to let in the Staffordshire Advertiser on August 31, 1844. Thomas Walker leased the pottery and, it is believed, acquired Beech's equipment, moulds and patterns, as no advertisement appeared in the Advertiser announcing them

for sale. Thomas Walker ran the Lion Works until his death in 1852. Anthony Shaw was operating the nearby Newfield (formerly Child Works), Tunstall, from 1851-1856, after which he moved to Burslem. An auction of Walker's equipment and engraved copper plates was held in September 1853 and it is known that Anthony Shaw bought engraved plates at that sale and the name A Shaw is also recorded on the Texian Campaigne printed cartouche mark. There is also evidence that all three potters exported to the USA.

Taking all this together one deduces that James Beech introduced Texian Campaigne some time between 1834 and 1844, and as a popular design, it was continued by Thomas Walker (1844 to 1852) and subsequently by Anthony Shaw (1853 and later).





**#6, 7 1/2" Texian Plate w/ "J.B." Mark**

The cartouche illustrated with the words Texian Campaigne and maker's initials or name does not include names of the individual patterns. Most of the patterns appear on no more than four shapes, as it was a series made for dinnerware with changing patterns on different pieces. Since our research began in May, the initials J. B. have been found on over 20 items in 9 of the documented patterns. T. W. or T. Walker has been found on 2 patterns and A. Shaw on 3. These facts support the belief that most of the production was done before 1844.

This, however, brings up a problem with the previously accepted time line. The series, reputedly, depicts romanticized views of the United States' victory in the Mexican-American War. The war resulted from the annexation of Texas, in 1845, by the United States Congress during the Presidency

of James K. Polk. Mexico did not recognize the annexation of Texas, which it still considered a rebel province of Mexico. Between 1846 and 1848, the United States and Mexico went to war over the disputed lands. Indeed some of the views have been "identified" as particular battles in that war by using titles of lithographs by Nathaniel Currier (such as The Battle of Monterey, Resaca de la Palma and Chapultepec). However, from our research on the makers of the pattern, we see that it was already in production long before the Mexican-American War began, and the earliest of Currier's lithographs are dated 1846 and 1847.

There is only one conclusion that fits the facts, and that is the Texian Campaigne series was introduced by James Beech about 1837-40 to mark the Texas Revolution (1835-36) or first Texian Campaigne, when Texas achieved its independence. We know the design was continued unchanged by his successors. Incidentally, 'Texian' was the original form of the word 'Texan'. The let-



**#5, Purple Transfer Texian Serving Bowl with Shaw Mark**



ter 'e' added to Campaign may have been a British addition to give the name greater distinction – as in Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe.

How then, did Anthony Shaw and the Mexican War get into the picture? Most early writers gave little attention to the series, just listing an entry or two with the printed Texian Campaigne car-touche mark, usually with the initials JB beneath. Ellouise Baker Larsen (1939) came along and delved more deeply into the subject. She took into account Shaw's occupation of the Mersey Pottery at Burslem beginning at 1850 according to Jewitt, although he was at Tunstall 1851-56 and moved to Burslem in 1856. Using that time period, though, she did her best to find where the designs came from and what inspired them. Larsen realized that none of the scenes are direct copies of Currier's prints. However, she held to the idea that a few details may have been borrowed from the prints and used for the Texian Campaigne patterns. Pursuing all leads, Larsen sent a number of photos of china marked Texian Campaigne to leading authorities of Mexican War scenes to have them checked against countless lithographs. She received no confirmations. No exact source pictures were found.

She notes that "the series was for many years known only by its solitary letters on the reverse, J. B., beneath the mark: Texian Campaigne, enclosed by a scroll." She states that in 1947 a platter was donated to the New York Historical Society that was signed by the maker. "The letters J. B. were replaced by the name: A Shaw." This is when she got the idea that J. B. was the



**#2, Purple Transfer Plate with Texian Scene marked Tampico**

designer of the pattern. Her explanation of the letters J.B. has continued on down until the present day by authors and collectors. We wrote a letter of inquiry, and a reply was received June 21, 2008 from the New York Historical Society. The scene on the platter was described. We learned that the platter is on display and bears the title: "Platter: Texian Campaign 1850-1878. Artist/Maker: Anthony Shaw. " The Curatorial Remarks: "The 'Texian Campaign' represents a battle in the Mexican War. The initials 'J.B.' may refer to James Broadhurst of Longton (and later Fenton), Staffordshire, who used this underglaze mark from 1862-1870." Evidently, Larsen never saw the platter. That it was



**#5, Rare Texian Mug marked Valparaiso**



**No. 65, Polychromed Napoleon Plate by William Smith & Co.**

marked A. Shaw was hearsay; however, the myth has endured for all these years.

We have reviewed everything previously written about Texian Campaigne and the evidence presented by all the writers actually supports the attribution to

James Beech, Thomas Walker and Anthony Shaw. The Finch article is backed by the research of Pat Halfpenny. The frequency that the different initials/names are found on backstamps on surviving pieces today gives added weight to the attribution and chronology.

What has got in the way over the years is the claim that Texian Campaigne depicts actual battles and events in the Mexican War. That somehow became accepted as a given, and all the other facts were distorted to fit; yet nobody has ever found a source print for any Texian Campaigne scene. Indeed some have commented on the similarity between Texian Campaigne scenes and those found in paintings and engravings of European wars, notably those of Napoleon. The uniforms and hats are more European than US or Mexican and there is no sign of the flag of either the US or Mexico. None of the scenes can be visually identified with an actual place or scene from the Mexican War. No specific battles are given on the backstamp. There is not a single fact supporting the Mexican War scenario.

There are now 11 scenes entered in the Database for Texian Campaigne and we have chosen to number each scene in the database to identify them, but retain the 5 named Battle Scenes as alternative pattern names to facilitate searches using the previously accepted names. Our numbering system (1-9) follows the list as presented in Margie Williams' list on p. 73 in *American Historical English* Pink:

- 1 Battle of Buena Vista
- 2 Battle of Chapultepec
- 3 Battle of Monterey

- 4 Battle of Palo Alto
- 5 Battle of Resaca de la Palma
- 6 General on Rearing Horse
- 7 Officer on Foot, et al
- 8 Officer and Men at Rest around Fire, et al
- 9 Two Officers on Horse, et al
- 10 Battle by a Bridge
- 11 Unidentified

Our thanks to Henri Gadbois, a docent of the Bayou Bend Museum and Gardens, Houston, Texas, who has provided photos from the collection as well as insights into the patterns. A further two patterns from Bayou Bend are illustrated here – primarily because of the marks. The Staffordshire potters exported transferware to many markets beside the US. A plate bearing pattern #2 has a “Tampico” mark, and a blue printed mug with pattern #5 has a mark “Valparaiso”. These items do not have the Texian Campaigne backstamp, but are clearly the same scenes, although the printing plates look to have become worn by this time, so the print is not as crisp and clear as earlier pieces. They illustrate how the Staffordshire potters were prepared to stretch the life of a design, by giving it a new backstamp and possibly a new name.

It does appear that around 1840, wars and battles were in vogue as tableware. C J Mason produced a series pattern visually similar to Texian Campaigne, which is known as the Napoleon series and the battles depicted are named in the backstamps. The similarities are such that one wonders if the same engraving shop produced both patterns. William Smith & Co produced Napoleon's Victories and the final photo shown here of one of their wares may bring to mind the #2

pattern seen on the Tampico marked plate. Copeland & Garrett to redress the balance introduced their Wellington series.

We realize that what is reported here does change the Texian Campaigne collecting landscape in a major way, but the evidence is substantial. We would welcome more opinions and reports of more pieces of Texian Campaigne. There have been some reports of teawares and a ewer and bowl featured in the Eugene Fleischer Collection auction in 2007: however, the backstamps are not known.

A final thought, before collectors begin the search for source prints for the 1835-36 War: our belief is that the War was the inspiration for Texian Campaigne and nothing more. The pattern was not introduced to chronicle or depict what actually happened, but is really Romantic Staffordshire – if a war can be described as romantic. Time has shown that without doubt James Beech's choice of pattern name was a shrewd piece of marketing.

An interesting illustrated article “Texian Campaigne Pottery” by Wesley & Sallie Tucker Anderson (The Boll Weevil) can be found on the website of the Antiques Council.

<http://antiquescouncil.com/organiz.htm>. Look under FOCUS. Ceramics: Pottery.

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# Texian Campaigne: The Mystique Unraveled!!

*Editor's Note: Two separate postings, one in the Spring 2008 TCC Bulletin concerning a mark on a Texian Campaigne plate previously unseen by TCC Member and American Historical Staffordshire dealer Bill Kurau, and the other to an entry on the TCC Message board in May by Rick Reed seeking information on the Texian Campaigne pattern, has led to significant discussion and research by other members of the TCC. Both the letter from Lucille Gagnault and the article by Wes Palmer, Andrew Pye and Connie Rogers were received by the Bulletin at approximately the same time, and because there is so much relevant information in both, your editor has decided to print the two pieces for the benefit of the TCC Membership.*

## **To the Editor:**

Here is a reply to "Texian Campaigne – A Different Mark" on page 10 of the Spring 2008 TCC Bulletin.

Researching this pattern is akin to traversing a quicksand box in stiletto heels: difficult at every step, given the quantity of misinformation available. Once an "UNfact" appears in print, it stays there for eternity.

Charles James Mason & Co. potted "Napolean" ca. 1829-1845. Around 1838, James Beech, Tunstall, fiddled slightly with the border and some details and marketed "Texian Campaigne," presumably his egregious spelling, to appeal to the American market. (It DID!)

There are several James Beeches listed in Kowalsky under the "J.B." marks (p. 548, Encyclopedia of Marks), but this is the only one in Tunstall whose dates fit our present report. He produced "Texian" from ca. 1838-1845.

In 1845, James Beech either died or retired, and the Tunstall works passed to his son-in-law, Thomas Walker, who potted "Texian" until 1852 or 1853, when Anthony

Shaw took over and produced the pattern until ca. 1856; how he acquired the pattern from Walker I do not know, but both worked in Tunstall.

Many of my reference books have a paragraph about Anthony Shaw's "Texian Campaigne" and then as proof, show a backstamp clearly marked "J.B."! Isn't this carrying dyslexia a bit far? Remembering Winterthur's impressive pile of "Texian" plates, in the stacks, not on exhibit, I called Leslie Grigsby, Curator of Ceramics and Glass, who was very helpful.

The Winterthur computer records James Beech, James Broadhurst (who's he?) and Anthony Shaw as the various potters of Winterthur's sixty-odd pieces of "Texian," mostly plates and a few hollow ware items.

But HA! A more recent computer list shows that ALL the pieces in the collection are marked either "J.B." or nothing at all.

Leslie suggested that I call Michael Brown, Curator of the Bayou Bend Collection, a branch of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Michael, too, was very helpful. As befits a Texas museum, the Bayou Bend collection holds about 120 pieces of "Texian." Two bear genuine printed Anthony Shaw backstamps (at last!), and one item shows both a printed and an impressed "T.W." The remaining pieces are marked "J.B."

My own 8 ¼" (210 mm) pink "Texian" plate has a backstamp very similar to the one shown on page 10 of the Spring Bulletin, but with gentler indentations. Below the backstamp is a vague "blob" which could be a 'T' or a 'J' but the rest is absent.

A final remark: could this "J.B." be the potter of Eastern plants?

**Lucille Gagnault  
Princeton, NJ**