Major Charles Odingsells  
(1754-1810)

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Major Charles Odingsells

Major Odingsells was a man of many talents. He was a Revolutionary war soldier, state legislator, wealthy planter, and a widely acclaimed man about town. He appears to have come from South Carolina where he was also a man of fame. He lived for the most part on Skidaway Island, but owned property in Chatham, Effingham, and other locations too numerous to mention. He had only two children by his wife Sarah Livingston Odingsells. Both children Charles Spencer and Mary Susannah Odingsells died at very early ages. His wife remarried to a David E. Adams and they had no children that I could locate.
I was able to locate a piece of material that gives a character study of Mr. Odingsells.

"Mr. Oddingsell appears to have been a rural gentleman from the neighboring province of Carolina; nervous as to temperament, and un instructed in the devious ways and strange surroundings of city life. The temptation to visit the metropolis of Georgia was too strong for him, and setting aside the natural caution of his disposition, and, with the obstensible object of seeing for himself how the colony succeeded, he disembarked on what should have been hospitable shores." 1

Major Charles Odingsells left us a grat deal of information on himself with a very elaborate gravestone. It is located along the footpath in the Old Colonial Cemetery on the East side. The following is the epitaph of Major Charles Odingsells.

(1753-1310)

"Here endures the fate of mortality
The earthly part of
Major Charles Odingsells
During the Revolutionary War
A Patriot Soldier
After its close a legislator and farmer.
In each capacity
His conduct was such as justly acquired
Him as much confidence and popularity
In this country as any man in it.
He died on Skidaway Island
On the
2nd day of December 1810
Aged 56 years"

Also located on Major Odingsells' tombstone are the epitaphs of his two children.

(1811-1817)
(1808-1817)

"SACRED to the last remains of the children of Charles Odingsells; Esq.
Who lie buried in this tomb
With the ashes of their father.

Charles Spencer Odingsells
Departed this life October 17, 1817
Aged 6 years, 7 months and 6 days.

Mary Susannah Odingsells
Departed this life November 6, 1817
Aged 9 years and 7 days." 2
There was also another reference in which I found that verified the death of Mary Susannah Odingsells.

"Thursday, Nov. 13. On Skidaway Island on 6th inst., Mary Susannah Odingsells, aged 92 years, 7 days, only daughter of Major Charles Odingsells." 4

Major Odingsells married a Sarah Livingston in South Carolina it is believed. The following is in reference to a marriage licence application.

"Register of Marriage Licences Granted, December, 1765, To August, 1776.
To Whom Granted Mar. 7th. Chas. Odingsells to Sarah Livingston. " 4

Upon the death of Major Odingsells there is reference to Mrs. Odingsells remarrying to a David E. Adams.

"May 4, 1812 Last Tuesday Evening, April 30th at Skidaway Island by the Rev. Bartow, David E. Adams, Esqr., to Mrs. Sarah Odingsells, widow of the late Maj. Odingsells." 5

This was also verified by the newspaper file on that day.

"Married Tuesday evening last, at Skidaway Island By the Rev. Mr. Bartow, David E. Adams, to Mrs. Sarah Odingsells, widow of the late Maj. Charles Odingsells. " 6

There is also a deed that dealt with one Sarah Odingsells and a David E. Adams dated 1819.

"Georgia Chatham County, We the undersigned legates of Charles Odingsells deceased acknowledge to have received one dollar of Sarah thd. David E. Adams, in full of our demands of whatever they may be..."January 28, 1819. " 7

There is also a reference to her marriage to Major Odingsells dated in 1806.

"Odingsells, Charles Esq. and Miss Sarah, m. Skidaway Island by Rev. Best 6/26/1806." 8

Sarah Odingsells is mentioned often in the South Carolina record books. The following is one such instance.

"(Church Warden) "Poor Tax" 1726-1812 Dr. John Rhodes for Poor Taxes rec'd from the following S. Odingsell......1.16." 9
There is much information concerning Sarah Odingsells and Henry Livingston often mentioned with the Ash family.

"The excommunication of Joseph Ash from the genealogical notes collected by the late Mr. Alston Read Esq., it appears that Cato Ash, who died interstate about 1757 was a brother of Joseph Ash, all mentioned as administrators; another brother was James Ash, and his sisters were Portia, Theodora and Priscilla; these were the descendents of John Ash who was sent to England in 1703 by dissenters to lay their grievances before the Lords Proprietors; Ash died in England in 1704. Sarah, the widow of Cato Ash married Henry Livingston, after his death she married Charles Odingsells." 10

It would be a logical assumption that Charles and Sarah became guardians of Theodora Ash, Richard Russell Ash and John and Mary Ash. All the following information seems to support this assumption.

"Feb. 22, 1765 Proved the will of Henry Livingston Junr. of St. Paul's Parish planter one of the subscribing witnesses to the same and duly qualified Chas. Odingsells Exec." 11

"Citation granted to Charles Odingsells to administer on the estate and effects of Theodora Ash late of Georgia in behalf of Sarah Odingsell as next of kin. To be read in the Parish Church of St. Michaels and returned certified granted 27th day of April 1770. " 12

"Citation granted to Sarah Odingsells widow to administer on the estate and effects of Theodora Ash of Georgia and late of this province unadministered by Charles Odingsells as mother and next of kin." 13

"Dedimus issued to Andrew Agnew Esquire to qualify Sarah Odingsells Adm: of Theodora Ash left unadministered by Charles Odingsells. Deceased issued 23rd May 1771. " 14

It became apparent that the church records would be of great importance to help things into context. I began my search in South Carolina where most of my research had taken me. I found out that Major Odingsell's roots lie in the Baptist Church of South Carolina.

"Another church which claims to trace its early history from Rev. William Screven and the dissenters of 1682 is that of Euhaws named from the Euhaws Indians' land and located at the estuary from Port Royal Sound called Broad River....Evidently the majority of the inhabitants of the island, being Presbyterians, were displaced with this. Leaving the Baptists without a place to worship.

In 1730 the congregation bought of Mathew Creece (or Cres) a tract of land of one hundred acres adjoining the church lot, which was put into the hands of trustees (Charles Odingsells, Joseph Sealy, Sr.; William Elliot, Sr. John Sheppard and Samuel Screven) for the use of an Antipedobaptist on "Edisto Island forever"..." 15
I was not able to locate a deed for this land purchased for the Antipedobaptist Church. From what I understand this deed has yet to be found. The trustees are listed in a sketch of Edisto Island Church, in Edisto Island. There is reference to about 100 acres in the tract, let in 1772 for twenty pounds per year. Major Odingsells name also appears frequently in the annals of another church, the Willtown Presbyterian Church of Edisto S. C.

"It s also a greed that James Stobo Edward Furguson is to agree with Charles Odingsells on sum other person to git One Thousand Bushells of Shells..." 16

"...to pay James Stobo Esqr. and Charles Odingsells the sum of Six Hundred Pounds for the Rev. Mr. Allen." 17

"At a meeting of the trustees of Willtown Congregation Nov. 28th 1765 was present James Stobo, Ezekiel Branford, John Mitchell, Abm Hayne, Edward S. Platt and Archd Hamilton at what time we did proceed to nominate Charles Odingsells to succeed in room of Capt. Richard Ash Deceas'd...." 18

Also, there is a reference to an Elizabeth Odingsells at one Wappetaw Congregational Church.

"In a grove of live oaks near hwy 17, about fourteen miles from Mt. Pleasant South Carolina stood a church established by the settlers of this region. A marker at the burial ground read:

This Stone
Marks the Spot
Where The
Wappetaw Independent
Congregational
Church Stood
This Church Was
Planted Here In
1696 By A Colony
Of 52 Who Came
From New England
And Landed At
Seawee Bay" 19

"Rev. Moses Allen was born in Northampton, Massachusetts, Sept. 14, 1748, was graduated from New Jersey College in 1772, and was ordained March 16, 1773, and Installed as pastor of Wappetaw ... He married Elizabeth Odingsell, a ward of her brother-in-law, General James Screven of Georgia." 20

Elizabeth Odingsells was mentioned in Major Odingsells will, as was an Elizabeth Lee of Massachusetts.
"... my sister Elizabeth Lee of Massachusetts, Charles Odinsells Screven
the children of John Hart of South Carolina, who married my niece
Mary Screven..." 21

There seemed to be quite a response to Elizabeth's marriage to Rev. Moses
Allen. The following is a letter to the Rev. Allen from Gen. Screven.

"Surprised you may naturally conclude (Mrs. Screven and myself were)
on the arrival of your letter, considerably surprised indeed we
were that you, the Rev. Mr. Allen proceeded in such a hurry to gain
the affections of a girl of fifteen..." 22

It seems, however, that the marriage was not to be of a long nature. Many events
seemed to occur to prevent happiness for the couple.

"Soon after the marriage of the young couple, the turbulent
times of the American Revolution brought about the British fleet to the
coast of South Carolina. In 1777 the Rev. Mr. Moses Allen left to
serve Midway Church, near his wife's home in Georgia. Later, he
served as a chaplain of the Georgia Brigade of Patriots, was taken
prisoner, and confined in a prison ship. The news of the tragic
death was conveyed to his young widow, not yet twenty years of age,
by the Rev. Oliver Hart, a near relative of the Screven family:
Charles Town
Feb., 17, 1779

"In an attempt to escape from a ship in Savannah River (in the
company of two Frenchmen) the cramp seized him and he sank within
about twenty yards of the shore..." 23

The following is the last remnant of information I could find concerning the
Wappetaw Church.

"During the Revolutionary War, Wappetaw Church and grove were the
campgrounds for General Francis Marion... The British burnt it when
they evacuated Charleston in 1782, and all the books of the church
are said to have been destroyed at the same time..." 24

Major Odinsells was himself a Revolutionary War soldier, and he was quite
good at it.

"Whereas a most audacious, wicked and unpromised rebellion lately raised
and carried on against his majesty in the province of Georgia., General
Charles Odinsells late of the same Rebel Captain." 25
The district of little Ogeechee made a return of officers that were elected the 8th inst., viz.: Stephen Dean, Esqr., Captain; Charles Odingsell, First Lieutenant..."  26

There was also a brief reference to one Benjamin Odingsell, relationship not known.

"Benjamin Odingsell late of the same Rebel Officer."  27

Major Odingsell was also a noteworthy state legislator for Georgia. There are many references to him and his quality of performance. His actual term as a state legislator was from 1781-1782 and his resignation on Feb. of 1866.

"Chatham County: 5. 1781 Charles Odingsells (elec. Ex. Coun.)
6. 1782 Ex. -82 Ann. Adj. 82
2nd Adj. - 82 3d. Adj.
Charles Odingsells
(elec. Ex. Coun.) " 28

"1786 (Jan. 16-) (Met in Augusta)
Chatham Charles Odingsells (Res. in Feb.) " 29

There were several other resources which gave information on his service to the state.

"We the subscribers do hereby promise to use our influence with the city corporation to pass a vote in favor of said John Houston for 150 Sterling.

Chas. Odinsells " 30

"The Representatives of Chatham County are desirous that some long tried Patriot should offer himself candidate for the Senate of the state legislature, they call upon Major Odingsells..." 31

"We are authorized in stating , that Major Odingsells will not be a candidate at the approaching election of the members of the legislature, owing to the precarious state of his health. " 32

The evidence is overwhelming as to his importance to politics in general.

"At a board of Commissioners held at the town of Ebenezer in the city of Effingham, for the sale of confiscated estates in the county of Chatham on the 13th day of June 1782 present—Charles Odingsells." 33

"This day John Goldwire and Charles Odingsells wited on his honor the Governor." 34
"Odingsells, Charles, member of the Committee of Correspondence.... they are hereby nominated and appointed a committee to correspond with the said Benjamin Franklin...." 35

There were many deeds associated with Charles Odingsells, most were of little interest, but there were some that illustrated his wealth and other important events.

"Effingham County Deed Book C-D. Charles Odingsells of Chatham County, planter, to John Rentz, Sr. of same place. Deed dtd Feb. 20, 1787, for 50 acres in Effingham county." 36

"Deed Book D-F. Chas. Odingsells of Chatham County., planter, cons. of one thousand five hundred dollars- tract of land cont. 707 1/4 acres in Effingham County..." 37

This land exchange illustrates that Chas. Odingsells owned land in many places and that he had established residence there.

"... I think it highly probable they are in Effingham County near the Ogeechee river, in the neighborhood of Robert Burton, as they once belonged to Maj. Odingsells who once lived there. " 38

Many deeds appeared as Major Odingsells approached death or had already passed away.

"All persons having demands against the estate of Charles Odingsells-deceased, are requested to render themselves, duly attented: and those indebted to his estate, will please make payment to Charles O. Screven
Joseph Spencer
John Screven exec's " 39

"The subscribers, as the executors of the last will and testament of Charles Odingsells, esqr. dec., late of Chatham County, planter, will, at the expiration of nine months of this date apply for an order or an decree from th inferior court, for leave to sell and dispose of the following lot to wit: all that lot of land and buildings in the city of Savannah, in the second tithing, Anson Ward, known as number (4) four, on Broughton Street.

Charles O. Screven
John Screven exec's " 40

The only deed of originality as to his house that seemed pertinent was the following.

"Georgia.
Charles Odingsells Esquire late one of the Commissioners of Confiscated estates being duly sworn with that of John Blake late of the town of Savannah had in possession by virtue of a deed of exchange a lot of land in said town." 41
One may have noted by now the recurrence of certain names. I would like to put some reality behind these names.

"The Rev. William Screven, born in Somersetshire, England, in 1627, settled in Kittery, in the Province of Maine. He was married to Bridget Cutt, a member of the British Parliament, whose second wife was Mary Hart... Thomas Smith Screven, the great-grandson of the Rev. William Screven and great grandson of Landgrave Thomas Smith, married Eleanor, the daughter of the Rev. Oliver Hart, Mar. 6, 1770... John Hart, third son, born March 7, 1758, died March 17, 1814, married Mary, a daughter of James and Mary Screven, January 17, 1786. The Reverend Charles Odingsells Screven, the great-grandson of the Rev. William Screven and son of General James Screven (who was shot at Midway, Liberty County, Ga., during the Revolution)... Mary Screven, second son was Gen. James Screven of 1776, who married a Miss Odingsell. John Hart, a third son of the Rev. Oliver Hart, born March 6, 1758, died March 17, 1814, married Mary, daughter of James and Mary Screven."

In the will of Major Odingsells there is the following entry which relates heavily to the above information.

"...I leave after the death of my wife Sarah, to James Odingsells Screven and the children of George Washington Allen who married my niece Mary Odingsells..." 43

I would like to mention an entry in the will concerning a mulattoe, Anthony Odingsells. He was a very interesting man in which to research. Few Negroes made much progress in the 1800's, Anthony did just that.

"...will to Negro wench Hannah (Her mother Lucy) her son Anthony (mulattoe) in trust to Charles Odingsells..." 44

"Anthony Odingsells of Chatham County, owned 200 acres of land and fifteen slaves...." 45

The following are some epitaphs which I feel are important to note. They all are in reference to people already mentioned.

"Ash, Theodora (section A.) 1770
Small slate upright stone carved on both sides and top with poppies. At the center of top, a child's head is carved surrounded with hour glass and scythe.

Here lyeth the body of
Theodora Ash
Who departed this life
February the 17th A.D., 1770
aged 17 years 46"
"Screven, John
Vault with two inscriptions.

In
Memory Of
John Screven
Who died Nov. 1830
Aged 53 " 47"

"Brig. General James Screven.
Distinguished officer of the Revolution, who fell mortally wounded
near Midway Church.

Reared By
The Congress
Of the
United States
As a Nation's Tribute to
Brig. General's
James Screven
and
Daniel Stewart

To the Memory
Brig. General James Screven
Who fell covered with wounds at Sunbury
Near this spot on the 22nd
Day of November 1778...." 48
As a final note, there is an error in the Annuals of Georgia Mortuary records. It lists Charles Odingsells age at death at 67. I believe they are referring to his son, Charles Spencer, who was 6 years and 7 months at his death. Major Odingsells was age 57 at his death.
NOTES


7. Deed, Chatham County Inferior Court. Deed 2-1, 1818-1820.


28. Congressional Record of Georgia. p. 1126.

29. Congressional Record of Georgia. p. 1127.

30. McLaughlan McIntosh Papers of the University of Georgia Libraries, University of Georgia.


34. Allen D. Candler, Revolutionary Records Of Georgia. (The Franklin Turner Company, 1908). p. 23


41. Deed. Foliq 331, Book A, 1785; Chatham County Court of the Ordinary, Savannah, Georgia. (May 24th, 1785).


44. Will, File #16, Dec. 1810, Chatham County Courthouse, Court of Ordinary, Savannah, Ga.


46. Early Epitaphs In Georgia. (Section A)

47. Early Epitaphs In Georgia. (Section A)

48. Early Epitaphs In Georgia. (Section A)
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