Amos Scudder: A Yankee in Savannah by Shelley Carroll

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ABSTRACT

Amos Sudder was born in Westfield, New Jersey in 1779. He married Josephine Ross in 1811, and together they had eleven children. The Sudder family lived in Savannah, yet kept their family farm in Westfield as a summer residence. A bricklayer/mason/architect, Sudder is credited with building many of Savannah's private residences, some of her finest public buildings, and many rice mills along the Savannah River and Ogeechee Canal. He built or repaired many sections of the canal, and served as the President of the Canal's Board of Directors from 1837 until his death. He served on the Savannah City Council from 1825-1829. Sudder died in Plainfield, New Jersey on 12 June 1856 and is buried next to his wife in the Westfield Presbyterian Church Burying Ground.
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1. INTRODUCTION

On 17 June 1856, 77 year old Amos Scudder passed away in Plainfield, New Jersey after battling a long illness. But who was Amos Scudder, and why was this New Jersey native so important to Savannah, Georgia? In order to understand Amos Scudder’s importance to the Savannah community, one must understand the things that were important to him. To Amos Scudder, the Ogeechee Canal meant everything; it was “the joy in the winter of his years,” and as “canal fever” tore through the northern United States, a canal meant everything to South Georgians.

Amos Scudder was an aggressive, litigious entrepreneur who made financial success his business. An architect and builder, Scudder involved himself in all aspects of the Savannah community, serving on the Savannah city council for nine years and constructing some of Savannah’s finest public and private buildings, including the City Hotel, the Savannah Theatre, the Archibald Milton Harrison...


2 Savannah Daily Herald, 23 June 1865:1/2, s.v. "The Savannah and Ogeechee Canal."

3 Jr. Mark A. Finley, "Canaa," unpublished article, used with permission of author. Hereafter cited as: Finlay, "Canaa." Finlay, Professor of History at Armstrong State College, stated that while Southerners caught “canal fever” just as Northerners did, the South faced funding shortages that often put Southern canals in a bad light. Southerners wanted canals as much as Northerners did, Finlay said, yet economics held them back.
house and the Independent Presbyterian Church. It was his ownership of
and work on the Ogeechee canal, however, that earned him the respect of
many of his peers and a place in Savannah history. Because of his hard
work, persistence and dedication, the economically endangered "folly,"
as the canal was sometimes called, was saved from certain economic
failure and rejuvenated, becoming known as "Sculder's Canal" in the
late 1820's.

In the business world Amos Scudder was a shrewd, never hesitating
to step on toes in order to get what he believed was rightfully his. He
was prone to litigation, and had a high success rate in the court
system. His personal life is sketchy, but from the available
manuscripts, it appears that his business life took first priority.
This paper will attempt to detail Scudder's life in Savannah, from his
productive architectural and building career, to his civil service, and
finally, to his legacy, the Ogeechee Canal.

II. FAMILY LIFE AND GENEALOGY

Captain Amos Scudder 1st (b. 1762, d. 1788) married Martha
Spinning (b. 1755, d. 1817) on 1 March 1788. On 12 February 1789, their
son Amos was born in Westfield, New Jersey. He was the sixth of eight
children born to Amos, a revolutionary war

4 Aloos, "Scudder family in Georgia," p. 11, GHS.

5 Genealogy of the Westfield branch of the Scudder famil
(hereafter cited as Genealogy), p. 17, Westfield Historical Society,
Westfield, New Jersey (hereafter cited as WES); Aloos "Scudder family in
Georgia," p. 7, GHS.
veteran who served with the Essex County unit of the New Jersey
Militia. His siblings were Rachel, Lydia, Sally (or Sarah),
Elizabeth (or Jerry), Arrivesmith (Smith), Amos, Phoebe, and John
Sinning. Amos was baptized into the Presbyterian Faith on 11 April
1779 in the Westfield Presbyterian Church.

On 26 December 1793, Amos and soon to be wife Phoebe Ams obtained
a marriage license, however the two were not married until 21 September
1803.8 The early marriage license may have been a system of betrothal,
an insurance policy intended to guarantee a marriage between the two,
as Amos was only 16 years old in 1792.9 Through their union of
marriage, Amos and Phoebe had eleven children: Theodore, Emily J.,
Mary, Ann Eliza, Amos Victor, John, Catherine C., Lydia, Caroline
Matilda, Phoebe, and Sarah.10

6 Genealogy, p. 10, WhS. The Records of Officers and Men of New
Jersey in Wars, 1791-1815, Trenton: State Gazette Publishing Company,
1993, did not list Lydiaham Schaller as a revolutionary war veteran. It
did, however, list another man from Essex County, Ben Scudder. This may
have been Amos' father.

7 Ams, "Schaller Family in Georgia," p. 11, GSNS.

8 Ams, "Schaller Family in Georgia," p. 11, GSNS.

9 New Jersey Marriage Records 1665-1862, p. 347, GSNS; Genealogy,
p. 28, WhS.

10 Because of the ten year discrepancy between the date of the
marriage license and the marriage, and because Amos was only fourteen
years old at the time, I am assuming that the 1793 marriage license
was indeed a system of betrothal.

11 Genealogy, p. 28; Walter C. Bartridge Collection (hereafter
cited as Bartridge Collection), Box 71, folio 1769. MS 1769, GSNS.
Amos Scudder's first child, Theodore, was born on 22 April 1805, and he was baptized into the Presbyterian Church on 12 August 1812. He married Azeline Coggeshall of New Rochelle, New York on 3 November 1838, and died in Westfield on 23 November 1877 at the age of 32. He left no children.

Emily J. Scudder was born on 20 July 1807. She too was baptized in Westfield on 12 August 1812. Emily became the fourth wife of Alford Marsh, also a native of Westfield, who later moved to Savannah, and became a prominent Savannah attorney. She died on 29 September 1876, leaving no children.

Mary Scudder was born on 7 April 1809. She was baptized with Theodore and Emily on 12 August 1812, and later married John Magee of Elizabeth, New Jersey. They had no children.

Ann Aliza Scudder was born on 27 December 1811 and was baptized with her three older siblings on 12 August 1812. She married Moses Crane of Westfield on 25 October 1836. She gave Amos two grandchildren, Theodore and Sarah, but both children died young, and Aliza died on 12 December 1881.

12 Genealogy, p. 28, GHS.
13 Allos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 1, GHS.
14 Genealogy, p. 29, GHS; Sketches of eminent Americans, various pages contained in Esdras Collection, GHS; Allos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 1, GHS.
15 Genealogy, p. 28; Allos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 1, Georgia Historical Society.
16 Genealogy, p. 29; Allos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 1, Georgia Historical Society.
Amos pictum Scudder was born on 17 March 1812. He did not spend much time in Savannah, but instead became a viable part of the Westfield and Jersey communities in New Jersey.

He was baptized in Westfield on 26 September 1812. He married Susan Ayman Marsh on 25 April 1844 in Jersey. He gave Amos six grandchildren: Milford Marsh (1845-1918), John Randolph (1847-1914), Margaret Ayman (1850-1927), Elizabeth Smith (1852-1926), Lybrahn (1857-?), and George Marsh (1857-1922). Amos pictured held a high position in his community and in politics. He served as the director for the National Bank of Jersey, and in his later years, served as Director of the Board of Censors Freeholders of Union County, New Jersey for eleven years. He ran as the Democratic candidate for the New Jersey State Assembly on two occasions, but was unsuccessful. He was killed in Jersey on 17 June 1872 when he was thrown from a horse, sustaining serious head injuries.

John (9th) Scudder, was born on 24 January 1815, and was baptized on 2 July 1815 into the Presbyterian Church. John would take up his residence in Savannah and along with younger brother Lybrahn, form the corporation of J. & L. Scudder. He was married to Sarah Amanda Crawford Wilson in December of 1839 by pastor J.G. Simney in 17 Aloos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 5, Georgia Historical Society. Aloos says that Lybrahn moved to South Dakota, and no information is available thereafter.

18 Genealogy p. 29; "The Scudder Family Papers," (hereafter cited as Scudder Family Papers), folder 13, MS 710, Georgia Historical Society. Folder #5. Information taken from newspaper clippings from a New Jersey publication, title and dates unknown, e.g., "Serious Accident," "Deaths of Mr. A.R. Scudder," and "Sad and Fatal Accident." Aloos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 5, GHS.
Savannah's first Baptist church. They had two children: Mary Elizabeth and Henry Tyler. John died on 22 May 1869 in Westfield of acute pneumonia.

Catherine C. Scudder was born on 22 July 1817. She married Jonathan Corey, Jr. of Westfield and had five children: Martin, Mary, Frank, Stebe, and Elizabeth. She died on 4 September 1880 in Westfield. Azrahim (Lit.) Scudder was born on 25 March 1819. He, like his brother John, kept residence in Savannah and followed in his father's Masonic footsteps. Azrahim died at 10:00 a.m. on 15 August 1872 in Bryan County in the home of his friend, Thomas Davis. He had been ill for some time, and was visiting Bryan County in hopes of recuperating when he was "suddenly taken with a congestive chill which terminated his existence." He is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery. He never married.

Caroline Mathilda Scudder was born on 1 August 1822 in New Jersey. She was baptized on 7 October 1852 in Savannah's first Baptist church. She married Milton Julius Schenker on 7 February 1855 in Savannah, and had five children: Caroline Mathilda, etc.

19 Genealogy, p. 29; Index to Marriages 1806-1851, pp. 221, 222. Chatham County Probate Court; Alcoy, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 22. GHS; OR, 29 June 1869: 2/5.

20 Genealogy, p. 29; Alcoy, "The Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 4. GHS.

21 Genealogy, p. 29; Partridge collection, box 72, folder 1749. MS 1718, Georgia Historical Society; Alcoy, "The Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 1. GHS; Scudder Family Papers, folder 3, n.d. newsclipping, updated. MS 719, GHS.
Cote, Marion Scudder, Harriet, andester Allenott. Caroline died on 17 February 1881."

Shebe Scudder was born on 27 April 1821, and was baptized on 5 November 1828. She married Lewis Meeker of Westfield on 7 October 1865. She died little more than a year later on 10 October 1866 in New Jersey at the age of twenty four."

Sarah L. Scudder was born on 22 May 1826, and baptized with sister Shebe on 5 November 1828. She later married Elias Freeland, and died in Westfield in 1882."

Amos' wife Shebe died on 21 July 1838 at the age of 50. She is buried in the Westfield Presbyterian Church burying ground in Westfield."

Scudder never remarried.

III. JOURNEY BY A FOUR-HORSE HITCH- ARRIVING IN SAVANNAH

Scudder's arrival in Savannah is a point of debate. Some sources put him in town before the second building of Christ Church in 1824, while others say he arrived in 1817 to help build the first.

22 Genealogy, p. 28; First Baptist Church Register 1822-1826, p. 68, no. 1066. Eartridge Collection, box 71, folder 1748. MS 1798, GES; DSW, 9 February 1856:2/7; Kloos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 4. GES. It should be mentioned that Caroline was born into a Presbyterian family, and she probably did not convert to the Baptist religion until after her father built the first Baptist Church.

27 Genealogy, p. 30; Eartridge Collection, box 71, p. 1768. MS 1798, GES; Kloos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 4. GES.

28 Genealogy, p. 28; Tloos, "Scudder Family in Georgia," p. 4. GES.
mills along the river. Letters left at the post office are the only proof that Amos Scudder was in Savannah previous to 1811. So although he may have visited Savannah or worked here earlier, he does not appear frequently until 1811, when he can be found in the official city records. For a long period of time, he claimed New Jersey as his permanent residence, and used Savannah as his winter home. Each spring and fall, he made the journey between Savannah and Westfield by a four-horse hitch. In most cases, he is not listed as owning any property in Savannah until 1819, when he claimed one slave in his taxes.

26 Mills Lane, Architecture of the Old South, 74. Lane first places Scudder in Savannah before 1807. I have not found any proof to corroborate with Lane's estimate.

27 Columbian Museum and Savannah Advertiser, 8 December 1806: 355; Georgia Republican, 6 July 1806: 37; Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger, 7 July 1807: 2/2; 2 October 1808: 2/2; 4 September 1810: 2/2; 2 October 1810: 2/2. All of these newspaper entries stated that Amos Scudder had a letter in the post office and tell us nothing of his purpose in Savannah.

28 City of Savannah: Tax Digests, 1809-1815, p. 75. C5602 C273 pl(on microfilm), Georgia Historical Society. The 1811 Digest lists Scudder among those who own no property, but more importantly signifies that he claimed no property.

29 Marietta and Scudder, p. 46. Westfield Historical Society; City of Savannah Tax Digests, 1819-1825, p. 68. C5608 CT 70-02, GaH. Scudder paid two dollars for one slave and a seventy-five cents poll tax.
IV. AND THEN HE BOUGHT PROPERTY

In 1826, Scudder bought the east half of Lot 12, Jackson Ward, or 114 East Hill Street, from John Crane and the Crane heirs, Saker Syrney.

Throughout his stay in Savannah, Scudder owned various other properties in town. He purchased the brick buildings on the corner of Congress and 311 Streets, or Lot 1, Tyrconnel Tything, Derby Ward. These buildings began to steadily increase in value, until

3d ibid., 1821, p. 30. Scudder paid $25.00 in taxes on the house and a $2.00 poll tax; deed of sale, Deed Book 2K, p. 127, Chatham County Superior Court, Records Room. Scudder bought the property on January 17, 1820.

3d, examination of the Census, painting, housed in the GHS, in comparison with the 1821 tax digest, show that Scudder definitely built something on the property in the early 1820's.

32 Deed of sale, Deed Book 12K, p. 325-326, Chatham County Superior Court, Records Room.

33 Mary Jane Morrison Papers, Folder 12, p. 108, MS 1325, GHS.

34 David Galloway, Directory of the City of Savannah for 1849, p. 12, section 8, s.v. "Scudder, Amos."
1852, when J. J. Screven desired the property for the Screven House, a local hotel.  

Because of his connection to the Osceola Canal, Schudder also purchased various wharf properties. He became interested in the proposed canal early on, for he purchased one such property, in Warren Ward, in 1810.  

Lot 3, Warren Ward became "Schudder's Wharf," where many constructed various mills and warehouses, including the Steam Saw Mill building. It is possible, too, that this was the site of the Savannah Steam Rice Mill, incorporated on 19 December 1827 by Alexander Telfair, Robert Daheshan, and Moses Schudder.  

Regardless, on 25 March 1830, the Steam Saw Mill building caught fire, and "being built of wood, burned quickly." Fortunately, the mill was saved. That same night, however, the city's old filature lot, where Schudder also owned property, caught fire as well. The larger buildings on Reynolds Square were engulfed in flames. The larger building, belonging to Schudder and Mr.


16 Savannah Republican and Evening Ledger, 5 May 1810:2/1. Although I could find no deed of sale, this newspaper article referred to a sale of Schudder's Wharf, lots 2 and 3, in Warren Ward. Lot 2 was purchased by Williamson.  

17 Georgian, 19 March 1830: 1/6; ScM, 9 December 1873, s.v. Mary Jane Morrison papers, folder 12, MS 1221, GHS.  


19 Georgian, 2 March 1879: 2/2, s.v. "Fire Again."  

20 Deed of sale, deed Book, p. 159, 163. Chatham County Superior Court, Records Room; Deed of sale, deed Book 1A, p. 11, 20, 126.
Thomas Clark, was covered by $9500.00 in insurance, but unfortunately, nothing else was insured. Scudder owned various other buildings in the area, many of which caught fire, including a double storied tenement on St. Julian Street. Three of his buildings were more or less "destroyed by the conflagration" as well, and his losses were heavy." Scudder also purchased Yamacraw Swain Lots 8 and 9, from the estate of General John Twiggs in 1826 and in 1827, respectively."

An examination of the 1815 Map leads one to believe that this was the site of the rice mills that Scudder was rumored to have built, though no other evidence exists to support this claim. Regardless, some structure was built on the property in 1852 or 1853, for the property drastically increased in value."

In addition to buying a great deal of property in Savannah and making various improvements, Scudder improved upon the property of others. He is credited with building many of Savannah's private residences and some of her finest public buildings, including the Savannah Theater (1817), the Archbold Studio School; William Seyde Emanuel House (c. 1818), Independent Presbyterian Church (1819), the city Hotel (1822), the Greene Monument (1825), the White Oyster

V. CAREER AS AN ARCHITECT AND BUILDER

Schedler, famed in the city for building the Savannah Theatre, was primarily an architect and builder. Although the sheer number of projects Schedler engaged in is overwhelming, his later years (1835-1847) especially demonstrate the strength and substance in his approach to design and construction. Schedler's early work, such as the Shipyard Hotel in York (c.1835), laid the foundation for his later endeavors in Savannah. As the age of brick buildings grew, so did Schedler's role as a master builder. His innovative designs, such as the Central Cotton Gin in Westfield, became a hallmark of his skills. The Gin, a two-story, multi-room brick structure, featured a central chimney and a symmetrical facade, showcasing Schedler's prowess in creating functional and aesthetically pleasing architecture.

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17 Mary Lane Morrison papers, Folder 10, NS 1725, GAH.

18 The size and number of the projects that Schedler was working on in the 1830s and 1840s are far too large and numerous for any hands on work. In addition to his various architectural projects, Schedler was also involved with the Savannah City Council and, Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company at this time.

19 Morrison and Schedler, p. 77, MS.
roof line that was roughly gambrel shaped. This irregularity suggests the rear of the house was a later addition, or that the original slope of the roof had been altered.\textsuperscript{6} It is safe to assume the house was Sollner's first architectural design and the beginning of his bricklaying and Masonic career.

The foundation of the Savannah Theatre (illustrated in Appendices 2, 3) was laid in the spring of 1817.\textsuperscript{7} The theatre, designed by English architect William Clay, was "erected by Amos Sollner, who came here from New Jersey, bringing his carpenter's tools by ox cart." While Sollner may not have carried his tools here by ox cart, the first work on the country's oldest theatre began on 23 April 1817, and Scyram Woodifl laid the cornerstone in early summer. The original theatre, sometimes referred to as "Jay's Palace," was a massive three-story, five bay structure. The extensive second-floor stone work balcony boasted detailed masonry, and overlooked a tent-shaped roof, covering the theatre entrance.

\textsuperscript{6} Interview with Dr. Christopher Hendricks, Professor of Public History and Vernacular Architecture, Department of History, Armstrong State College. The discussion centered around the architectural elements of the structure and possible structural changes that have occurred. All information was obtained from studying photographs of the structure. A hands-on examination was out of the question, as the structure was demolished in 1975. The irregular roof line is the most interesting feature of this house. The dormer on the rear of the house may also suggest that similar dormers once adorned the front of the house, and that the slope was altered when the dormers were removed, giving the house a more Georgian appearance.

\textsuperscript{7} Savannah Morning News (hereafter cited as SMN), 1 June 1895: 3/1.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
The roof was rimmed in an ornate, cast iron design, and the building combined Georgian and Greek Revival styles. Steps to the theatre suggest that the floor sloped down on the inside towards the stage. According to Scudder's great granddaughter, Caroline Sackner Saxley (granddaughter of Caroline Mathilda Scudder), the theatre was constructed at a cost of $16,000.00.

Just when Scudder built the Archbold Bolloch William Taberham house is anyone's guess. Though some sources determine the house was built as late as 1840, the massive Oglethorpe Square House (pictured in appendix 6) was probably constructed circa 1818. It is important to note that on 27 January 1812, Bolloch:

69 Margaret Hemming Armistead, The Atlanta Journal Magazine, 27 February 1947, s.v. "Savannah Theatre... Oldest in U.S." Georgia Historical Society, vertical files, s.v. "Theaters Savannah Savannah Theatre"; interview with Dr. Christopher Hendricks, ASC Department of History, to determine architectural elements of the structure. Discussion and conclusions based on an artist's rendition of how the theatre appeared in 1818. The extensive, ornate balcony is the most distinguishing feature of this structure.

52 Savannah Morning News, 1 June 1995: B1. Ms. Saxley stated
began making payments to Scudder, though in small amounts. 3 Again, Scudder came in contact with William Jay, as the renowned English architect designed this fantastic home. Located on Berry and Barnard streets, the Ebenzer Ebenezer House was a two and a half story, three bay regency structure with a colonnade. Its most spectacular feature was a circular entrance portico, with six majestic Corinthian columns.

Another interesting if not bizarre aspect of the house, however, was the unusual treatment of the first floor windows. Two ionic columns adorned each of the windows, and to the outside of the columns, were sidelights. It appears, too, that either Scudder or Jay felt the house needed transportation, for the walls were fifteen feet thick. 4 The structure was demolished in 1916 to make way for the Municipal Auditorium.

The extent of Scudder's involvement in the building of Savannah's Independent Presbyterian Church ( pictured in Appendix E ) is debatable. The cornerstone of William Green's design was laid on 17 January 1817, and the building completed by 1819. 5

52 Wayne Stiles Anderson Papers, Box 2, Folder 18, RS 876, GHS. Scudder received payments for unknown work on an unknown building in amounts of $1772.

53 Savannah Morning News, 20 February 1925: 7/1. Interview with Dr. Christopher Hendricks, ASC Department of History. Discussion centered around the circular entrance portico and unusual treatment of the windows. Rarely did architects place columns in the windows, and sidelights were usually reserved for doors.

Scudder submitted a bid to do the work for the flagstone paving for 22 cents a foot. The bid from J.H. Walker & Bros. was lower, but in light of his generous $100.00 donation to repairs for the church, Scudder was awarded the contract. He brought the flagstones "from his farm near Westfield... in wagons pulled by oxen." Other sources simply state that Scudder "was doing work for the Trustees of the Church." It appears, however, that Scudder did more extensive work on the church than laying the flagstones. In late 1821, the litigation Mr. Scudder filed a petition in the Superior Court of Chatham County requesting $11,712.91 in damages. He claimed that "in consideration of certain work and labor by Scudder as a bricklayer and mason, who found and provided materials in and about the execution of said work for the Presbyterian Church Trustees. At their special request," the Trustees were so indebted to him he sought an additional $15,000.00 as reimbursement for his own expenditures.

1817. vertical files, GHS.

55 Lowry Ashley, Holding Aloft the Torch, p. 66; letter to Walter Eartridge from Lowry Ashley, dated 25 October 1855. Walter Eartridge Collection, Box 72, c. 1850s, MS 1768, GHS.

56 Lowry Ashley, Holding Aloft the Torch, p. 66.


58 D.R. Waring, Cervant's Savannah, p. 19; Mary Lane Morrison, Folder 10, MS 1720, GHS.
The jury found for Scudder.

Amos Scudder began construction on William Jay's city hotel (pictured in floor plans and photographs in appendices 14) in 1821. The property on which the hotel was to be built (Lot 17, Wilmington Tything, Jerry Ward) belonged to Jane early, the wife of Pleazer early. Jane had purchased the property in March of 1817. We know that Amos worked on the hotel, for in 1826, he sought a large sum of money in damages in a court case against Pleazer early, citing work performed for the construction of the city hotel on Lot 17, Wilmington Tything, Jerry Ward. This case, filed in the superior Court of Chatham County, places Scudder on the construction site of the hotel in the summer of 1822. The jury found for the plaintiff, Amos Scudder, and although he had to sue the Bank of Darien to collect his payment, the debt was finally settled in 1826.

59 Chatham county Superior Court Judgments, case # 574, Box 50, s.v. "Amos Scudder v. the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church of the city of Savannah." MS 5125, GHS.

60 Chatham county Superior Court (CCSC) Judgements, Case #527, Box 50, s.v. "Amos Scudder v. Pleazer early." MS 5125, GHS. Ibid., CCSC Judgement #527, Box 50, s.v. "A. J. Scudder v. Pleazer early." MS 5125, GHS; Ibid., CCSC Judgement #5619, Box 61, s.v. "Amos Scudder v. Pleazer early by the Bank of Darien." MS 5125, GHS.


62 Nobomugh, Jay. William Jay Seebery Architect in Georgia and South Carolina, p. 31, 69; Chatham County Superior Court Judgement #5612, Georgia Historical Society Collection #5125, Box 50; CCSC Judgement #5619, Box Mary Jane Morrison papers, MS 1725, GHS, folder #15, page 65.
The hotel itself, situated at 21 Bay Street, is an impressive structure even in its present state of dilapidation. In Snudder's day, it was a four-story structure on the north elevation, boasting a symmetrical facade with seven bays and two end chimneys. The second story, like the Savannah Theatre, contained an impressive decorative balcony with an ornamented set of double doors adorning the center of the building. The balcony was supported by modified ionic columns. The south elevation of the hotel was a two and a half story symmetrical structure, unlike the north elevation, this side of the building had decorative fanlights and a loading entrance. 62

On 21 March 1825, the Marquis de Lafayette laid the cornerstone of the Greene Monument (pictured in Appendix E), a white marble obelisk standing 55 feet in height. The Johnson Square monument was dedicated with great Masonic ceremony, and it read:

This cornerstone of a monument of the memory of Major Nathanael Greene was laid by the General Lafayette on the 21 March 1825... The architects cavilard and Strickland of Philadelphia. The Mason Contractor, Snudder. 63

In 1831, Snudder agreed to build "the Beacon..." on the white

62 Interview with Dr. Christopher Hendricks. Examination of floor plans, sketches and photographs led to this architectural description.

63 Savannah Georgian, 29 March 1825:2/1, s.v. "History of the Monument erected in Johnson Square to the Memory of Major General Nathanael Greene."
oyster," and Congress appointed $7000.00 for its construction.\footnote{65} The lighthouse, or beacon, was to be 18 feet wide at the base, and nine feet at the summit, reaching the height of 25 feet. It would be "an important aid to vessels."\footnote{66} Unfortunately, tragedy struck the construction site. Isaac Scudder, one of the workers, was drowned along with "three valuable negroes" when his boat, in tow of the steamer George Washington, capsized.\footnote{67}

Savannah's first Baptist Church (pictured in Appendix 2) was erected on Chippewa Square in 1822. Henry O'Byer laid the cornerstone on 2 February 1821.\footnote{68} Scudder built the church along with Thomas Clark and Matthew Southard, another native of New Jersey. The church, designed by Elias Carter, bore a striking resemblance to plate 57 of Owen Biddle's 1857 young carpenter's assistant, published in the Daily Georgian in 1848.\footnote{69}

The first edifice for the Christ Church (pictured in Appendix 1) congregation was erected circa 1764, and it became the "first English ecclesiastical edifice in Georgia."\footnote{70} Located on Johnson Square, the first building was destroyed "by the great fire of

65 Georgian, 11 May 1821:2/2.
66 Ibid.
67 Georgian, 12 July 1821:2/2; 14 July 1821:2/6.
69 Mills Lane, Architecture of the Old South, p. 150.
1796," and was "deduced to ashes with a principal part of Savannah."

The congregation resurrected the church in 1823, when a new structure
was raised. On 8 September 1824, however, "the winds of change blew
fresher than anyone knew," and a hurricane of biblical proportions
devastated the newly erected church. Not until 1817 was the Church
back to normal. Later, when this second structure was deemed unsafe,
the Wardens and Vestry of Christ Church awarded Amos Scudder with a
contract to "take down the present edifice and construct another on its
site." Architect J. Hamilton Cooper was called in to design the
building, and Scudder was awarded a contract for the mason work. In a
letter to Colonel W. Thorne Williams, Cooper detailed the floor plans
of the new church, and Amos Scudder co-signed the letter.

Dr. Neville, rector, laid the cornerstone on 26 February 1828,
and it read:

71. Ibid., p. 54. Taken from an oval plaque on the second
structure, reminding all of the church's history.

72 Ibid., p. 55.

73 Copy of the agreement between Amos Scudder and the wardens
and Vestry of Christ Church. Christ Church Records, Vestry
Minutes, January 1828, Box 2, folio 40. MS 978, GS.
In this agreement,
Scudder promised to take down the present edifice and erect a new one,
under specifications drawn by J. H. Cooper.

74 Letter from J. H. Cooper and Amos Scudder to Colonel W.
Thorne Williams, Christ Church. Christ Church Records, Vestry
Minutes, Box 2, folio 40. MS 978, GS. A copy of this letter is also
contained in The Walter G. Fartridge Collection. MS 1943, GS, Box 71,
72.
Glory to God
Christ Church
Founded in 1742
Destroyed by fire 1796; refounded on an
enlarged plan 1823; partially destroyed by
Hurricane of 1824
Rebuilt 1815
Taken down in 1839
Cornerstone laid
February 26th, 1839
New edifice to be erected
(according to a plan furnished by James
Hamilton Cooper, esq. of Georgia)
by Amos Scudder, mason,
and Gilbert Scudder, carpenter.

The building cost approximately $26,000, exclusive of materials."6

Before he died, Amos Scudder passed his architectural trade on to
his sons, John and Myhran. Between 1852 and 1855, he began
construction on a row of houses on Gordon Street (pictured in Appendix
8), and with his direction, his sons completed the buildings in 1855.
The Monterey Square houses became known as Scudder's Row. 7

75 Christ Church Records, Vestry Minutes, Box 2, folio 41.
Georgia Historical Society, MS 578. At a meeting held on 25 February
1824, this inscription was chosen for the cornerstone. Dr. Nashville's
name from Yearbook and Directory, Christ Church, 1926. Georgia
Historical Society Vertical files, s.v. "Savannah Churches - Destroyed
Christ Church."

76 Ibid

77 Miles Lane, Architecture of the Old South (Savannah: Seabiscuit
VII. HOW THE "POLLY" BECAME "ST. JOHN'S CANAL"

The Savannah and Ogeechee Canal was started in 1825 under a
"grant by the General Assembly of Georgia... and was incorporated as
the Savannah, Ogeechee, and Altamaha Canal Company." "Its purpose was
to build a canal "from the city to the Altamaha River, thereby
connecting the Savannah and Altamaha by an inland water passage."\[^23\]

Amos Scudder first became involved with the Ogeechee Canal in 1827.

But why did Scudder, a successful and affluent architect, become
involved in a massive civil engineering project? How he became
interested in the canal and from where he gained his knowledge and
experience in canal construction is unknown. It seems odd that the
Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company would hire a man with no
experience, but unless Scudder worked on canal projects before, it
appears that the Company did just that.\[^23\]

\[^23\] Savannah and Ogeechee Canal, "Savannah Daily Herald (S.D.S.), 22
June 1865:1/2. "Scudder's Canal," D.W., June 6, 1855:2/4. This phrase
was the title of a letter to the editor addressing the need
for a bridge over "Scudder's Canal," or the Ogeechee Canal.

\[^24\] Savannah Daily Herald, 22 June 1865: 1/2.

\[^25\] Mary Jane Morrison Sanders, folder 17, p. 67, s.v. "Ogeechee
Canal," A History of the Port of Savannah, Joseph Moore, p. 21. SHS,
MS 1721.

\[^26\] Although there is no proof that Scudder worked on any canal
projects in New Jersey, it is safe to assume that he came into contact
with canals while living in the northeast. Not only does it seem odd
for a canal company to hire an architect to construct a canal, but it
is also strange that a successful architect would take on an immense
civil engineering project. Scudder's hometown, Westfield, New Jersey,
is located between New Brunswick and New York City, in the upper
northeast section of New Jersey, and is located neither on the Morris
nor the Delaware and Harleian canals. He could, however, have worked on
the Delaware and Harleian canal, which passes through Trenton.
Yet somehow, Amos Scudder used his influence and persuaded the canal company to listen to his suggestions. In July of 1827, he submitted proposals to the Savannah, Ogeechee and Altamaha Canal Company board of directors to build the new Ogeechee locks of brick rather than of wood. He informed the board that brick would add durability to the locks, and therefore the $12,000 in additional monies needed to construct the locks of brick would be well worth the expense, because the contractor Ogeechee Dockets had no objections, and because J.T. Gill, the canal company's engineer, supported the brick construction. Scudder was awarded a contract of $11,989.13.22. This would be the beginning of Scudder's long relationship with the canal.

In December of 1827, Scudder submitted a bid for building the lock at Coloonisier's, and the proposal for a lock "coped with wood and wood hollow posts" amounting to $4597.00 was accepted.\(^2\)

By January of 1829, the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company was heavily indebted to Scudder. In addition to the brick locks and the new locks at Coloonisier's, Scudder had also been excavating cuts along the canal, particularly the Ogeechee Deep Cut, and deepening areas to allow vessels to pass.\(^3\) Throughout that year, the company trickled money to Scudder, usually in small

\(^2\) Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company Minute Book 1. 1826-1862. p. 65. 6 July 1827, p. 76, and 9 July 1827, p. 77.

\(^3\) Ibid., 12 December 1827, p. 81.
payments of $250.00. The canal opened in 1831. On 20 March 1831, the "meetin' of the water" was celebrated." Amos Scudder, architect," opened the canal, so that the canal company could "have full reward for their labor and have the satisfaction of seeing their work come to maturity." For the next three years, Scudder would work on various portions of the canal, often waiting months for payment. In fact, when Scudder was elected to the Canal company's Board of Director's in 1833, the company was indebted to him in the sum of $15, 000.00."

In 1836, a "crisis in the financial affairs of the county" led to the company's bankruptcy and eventually, to the sale of the canal at a Sheriff's auction. Its purchaser was Amos Scudder, who was "long known in Savannah as a mechanic and a man of industry."  

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95 Ibid., p. 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 127.
96 Savannah, 30 March 1831:2/5.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., pp. 1/2, 1/4.
attempts were successful, eventually, he borrowed an additional $3000 from the city, and $1250 from the planters bank. It is interesting to note that Smudder was, at the time of these loans, a city council Alderman, and therefore in a very good position to borrow money. His close association with the city at the time of his purchase was not overlooked by Savannahians, either, as some citizens felt the canal was in too tight with the government. Although many citizens were disenchanted with the idea of a canal, others endorsed the work of Smudder, believing that he should be commended for his efforts. He would be more successful, they believed, save the 11 recent monetary embarrassments of the country.93

eventually, the state became involved. In January of 1877, Georgia Governor William Schley agreed to turn the state’s $15,000

91 Savannah: and Ogeechee Canal Company, Minute book 1, 1826
1840, 21 May 1837, p. 256. Smudder reported to the board of directors that his attempt to gain an $8,000.00 loan for the canal had been unsuccessful. He also reported that he was looking into other outlets for money to continue repairs and improvements on the canal.

92 Thomas Gamble, Jr., A history of the City Government of Savannah, Georgia, from 1792 to 1901 (Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1927), Chapter VII, p. 169 171. Information passed through J.R. Park Finlay, M.C.O.


94 1877, 6 June 1855: 272. Although this letter to the editor
interest in the canal over to Scudder. On April 1st of that year, Scudder received the script for "nine hundred and eighty-five shares, being the amount of shares held by the state," and was given full permission to sell those shares and transfer all monies to the state through the Central Bank of Georgia." Three days later, Scudder was elected president of the company's board of directors, and immediately appointed a committee to ascertain the degree of indentation the company faced. At the time of Scudder's takeover, the canal was in deplorable shape, and was commonly known in the city as "the folly." Scudder immediately began making changes with his purchase, and although the lack of money made the project slow, Scudder had restored some of the community's faith in the canal. Contrary to popular belief, Southerners were as afflicted with "canal fever" as Northerners.

96 Governor William Seattle to W.H. Gordon, 17 January 1837, in Georgia, executive department, western and Atlantic Railroad correspondence, 1824-1826, 1825-1829, Georgia Department of Archives and History, reel 2051/12. Thanks to J.D. Mark Finlay, Armstrong State College Department of History, for use of this information. Corroborated through the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company Minute Book 1, 1826-1837, p. 265. Georgia Historical Society, MS 1962 A.1.


98 Ibid., 1 April 1837, p. 267.


100 Daily Georgians, 18 August 1836: 2/6. This was an editorial recognizing the efforts Scudder had put into the canal. The author said, "We have faith in Scudder," information obtained from J.D. Mark Finlay, professor of History, A.S.C.
were; the biggest difference lie in that the North had the funding, while the South did not." Yet Scudder was determined to make the Ogeechee Canal work for Savannah.

Internally, Scudder motivated the board of directors through investigations into expenditures and possible improvements. Physically, banks were raised, old locks were repaired, new locks and towpaths were installed, and the canal was put in a general salvable condition. Often, when outside money was not available, Scudder used his personal money to pay for canal improvements. Along with W. Williamson, Scudder spent $16,850.00 of his own money to widen the canal at the water line to 120 feet and deepen the canal by 25 feet to enable it to hold the same amount of water as the Stiles Lock. This called for the construction of a new lock, at the expense of $11,000.

But the canal was not out of the woods yet. After being unanimously re-elected in April of 1828, President Scudder called

151 Sr. Mark A. Finley, "CSRA," unpublished article, used with permission of the author. While Southerners were afflicted with "canal fever" just as Northerners were, the South faced funding shortages that often put Southern canals in a bad light.

152 Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company, Minute Book 1, 1826
153 Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company, Minute Book 1, 1826
154 Ibid., 25 July 1827, pp. 262, 263.
a special meeting of the board in July, Judge James Moore Wayne, a member of the board who later became Savannah's first Supreme Court Justice, reported that he had been successful in borrowing $11,000.00; $21,000.00 from the slater's bank, $5,000.00 from the bank of the State of Georgia, $2,500.00 from the marine and fire insurance bank, and $2,500.00 from the Central Rail Road and Banking Company.\textsuperscript{123} One week later, J. Reynolds, an engineer, reported that the canal would cost $31,572.00 to repair.\textsuperscript{124} It seemed the canal finally had the money needed for repairs and was well on its way.

Oddly enough, though, in November, the board, under the direction of James Moore Wayne, demanded that "Scudder furnish the Board...with a statement in detail of the expenditures which have been made in constructing the lock on the river, the materials or kind, and with a statement in detail of what will be necessary to complete and put the lock in operation."\textsuperscript{125} One month later, Scudder unexpectedly resigned as president of the board, and as a director. dazzled, the board agreed to accept his resignation as president, but resolved to request that he "continue his connection with the board" in the position of a director.\textsuperscript{126} Scudder

125 ibid., 2 April 1878, p. 272; 6 July 1878, p. 276.
126 ibid., 12 July 1878, p. 281.
127 ibid., 19 November 1878, p. 327.
128 ibid., 12 December 1878, p. 324. It is important to note that there were no entries in between the demands for proof of expenditures and Scudder's resignation. No explanation for the resignation was given, nor were any assumptions as to the reason.
cended to the wishes of the Board and stayed on as a Director." The reasons for Scudder's resignation are still unknown. Perhaps a conflict arose between Scudder and Savannah's esteemed justice, James Moore Wayne, causing Wayne to second guess Scudder's integrity and Scudder to dislike Wayne enough to resign his position to avoid further conflict. Perhaps Scudder had something to hide. I assume that he supplied the Board with a reason sometime between 1813 and 1815, but unfortunately, no records of the Board are available from those years.

Still, the canal continued to operate, and by late 1815, many "extensive improvements" were made. The canal had been "deepened sufficiently to admit vessels, and had been widened for 1/2 of a mile to allow the loading and unloading of vessels." In 1817, it seemed that Scudder's canal would finally "exhibit its fruits." He had completed an additional lower level of the canal, and it was filled with water as far as the commissioner's lock, and then all the way to the city. The improvements on the canal allowed for the transportation of vast quantities of timber and other goods, and the land along the newly revived canal would made.

109 Ibid., 11 February 1815, p. 225. No one was elected to fill Scudder's position, and in the next canal entry in 1816, Scudder is again president.


111 The Savannah Georgian, 25 November 1815: 2/7, s.v. "The Canal."
be cultivated for rice planting.** For this, "Mr. Scudder deserves the thanks of his fellow citizens."**

In January of 1848, and again in 1849, Scudder was elected to the board of directors and chosen as their president.** By 1849, Scudder still owned the controlling 1668 shares in the company while his son-in-law Millford Marsc owned 1667.** Scudder was elected as president of the board every year until his death in 1866.** By 1869, the canal was worth approximately $160,000.00, and Scudder was a very rich man.** His sons, John and Abraham, also became involved in the affairs of the canal, from both a business and a labor aspect. John Scudder was elected to the company's board of directors in 1851, and Abraham joined his father and brother in the ensuing year. In many ways, the canal.

112 Ibid.

117 Ibid.

114 Savannah and Sogeetee Canal Company, Minute Book 11, 1858
1858, 10 January 1858, p. 1; 6 January 1858, p. 1. Georgia Historical Society. Central of Georgia Railway Papers, MS 1362 st.

115 Ibid., 7 February 1859, p. 1.

116 Savannah and Sogeetee Canal Company, Minute Book 11, 1858
1858, 16 January 1858, p. 16; 16 January 1851, p. 32; 12 January 1852, p. 39; 12 January 1851, p. 44; 6 January 1855, p. 44; 11 December 1856, p. 45. Although the elections of January 1856 are not recorded, I have assumed that Scudder was indeed re-elected as president because of the 31 December 1856 entry, which read: "Mr. Scudder was requested to take the chair and the board president to supply the vacancy caused by the death of Mr. Amos Scudder. John Scudder received the unanimous vote and took the chair as president."

117 David Galloway, ed., The Directory of the city of Savannah, for 1850, p. 48, s.n. "The Savannah and Sogeetee Canal Company."
was under the definite control of the Scudder family. Though times were often difficult, Scudder's persistence with the financial end of the canal affairs paid off when steamboats and other large vessels could reach the railroad bridge from his newly repaired canal. After his death, the canal did indeed lose some of its vitality, but it continued to operate under the control of his son, John, and his son-in-law, Milton J. Backner.  

VIII. A Model Citizen?

In 1872, Scudder was elected as an alderman on the Savannah city council, where he served until 1879. Scudder first took his seat on the city council in September, 1872. This was not, however, his first contact with the board of aldermen. Scudder had, in many instances, visited the council to plead his case on any number of issues. In 1829, for example, he spoke to the aldermen and tried to convince them to allow the building of a

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118 Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company. Minute Book 11. 1848
1855, 13 January 1851, p. 72; 12 January 1852, p. 73; 12 January 1853, p. 12; 9 January 1854, p. 22; 8 January 1855, p. 24.


120 Ibid., 31 December 1856, p. 65; 12 January 1857, p. 66; and 11 January 1858, p. 66.


122 Minutes of the city council of Savannah, 1828-1871, p. 162. GEH, microfilm.
second theater in the center of the city." Later that year, he found it necessary to defend the condition of his rice mills, when the city's board of health questioned their sanitation, and when his lease on the eastern half of the trust filature lot came due. "As some citizens pointed out in the years after the completion of the Ogeechee Canal, Scudder may have run for city council for personal gain, and not for the gain of the community."

IX. The Savannah Steamship

His connection with the Ogeechee Canal also led Scudder to purchase a steamship, the Savannah. The Savannah was a 127-ton steamer that ran from Savannah to Florida and Florida to Augusta, by way of the Ogeechee Canal. Interestingly enough, in 1855, the Savannah became a thorn in Scudder's side. Mylly Woodbridge filed a suit against Scudder, citing "endangerment and other grievances for the loss of a slave.

127 Minutes of the city Council. 1828-1831, p. 97.

121 Ibid.

125 Letter to editor. DSM, 6 June 1855: 2. Angry citizen complained that Scudder's Canal received special treatment from the city because of Scudder's city council seat in the thirties.

126 Case 4 7581, Chatham county Superior Court Judgments. GE 38 5125, s.v. "Mylly Woodbridge v. Ainos Scudder." This court case is the only link to Scudder. It states that in 1821, Scudder was "possessed of a certain steamboat called the Savannah."

127 Amy Kahn, River Highway for Trade: The Savannah, p. 19, s.v. "Steamboat Savannah."
Sudder died, aboard the steamship. Sudder "took so little and such bad care of said steamboat, voyage, in the direction and management of the same" that Sudder was "struck, wounded and killed and thereby lost wholly to the petitioner [Woodbridge]." Although Sudder was found not guilty, his innocence rested upon the condition that he pay to Woodbridge the sum of $500.00 as compensation."

XI. The estate of Amos Sudder

Amos died on 13 June 1856 in Plainfield, New Jersey. His will, drawn in 1852 and probated in Savannah, left three of his sons as executors: Amos, John, and Alexander. His oldest son, Theodore, died nineteen years earlier in 1837. To his daughters Mary, Caroline Mathilda, Sarah, and Eliza, and Catherine he left $1000.00 each. To daughter Emily he left $1000.00. He left a total of $5000.00 to three of his grandchildren, and the rest of the estate was left to the three executors. The will also

129 Case 7583, Chatham County Superior Court Judgments, RS 5125, Gbl.

129 ibid.

129 ibid.

129 ibid., 18 June 1856: 2/1.

122 Last will and Testament, 8 299, Chatham County Probate Court; RS, 15 July 1856: 2/7.
identified five slaves who were, at the time of his death, the property of Amos Scudder. His sons would hold his estate intact for a few years after his death, but when Amos Scudder died, most of his investments died with him. Amos Scudder moved back to New Jersey, and John and Edmund alone remained in Savannah to continue their father's legacy, forming the corporation of J & A Scudder. John and Edmund built various residences throughout the city, and continued their connection with the Ogeechee Canal for a short time. It appears, however, that the canal was a passion that belonged only to Amos, for although John served as president of the board of directors for a few years after his father's death, he eventually turned to architecture and abandoned the canal.

\[\text{Last Will and Testament, S 295, Graham County Probate Court; Savannah and Ogeechee Canal Company Minute Book II, 1848-1858, 12 January 1850, p. 9, John Scudder is no longer on Canal Board; Bills Jate, Architecture of the Old South (Savannah: Savannah Press), p. 74: 350N, 19 January 1956, section C, p. 1.}\]
XII. CONCLUSION

Amos Scudder was the proverbial jack of all trades. Jumping from architecture to civil engineering to civil service, he had his hands in virtually every cookie jar in the Savannah area, and in New Jersey. He was aggressive, intelligent, litigious, and determined to be successful. Many questions surrounding his personal life remain unanswered, such as the reason for his resignation from the canal company in 1846. Still, the biggest question can not be resolved: why did Amos Scudder, a successful architect and builder, become involved in a massive civil engineering project? One can only guess. Amos Scudder lived his life to the fullest, as we can tell by his extensive involvement in the Savannah community. His reasons for such intense involvement are unknown, but regardless of his intentions, his impact on Savannah was a positive one. Amos Scudder gave beauty to Savannah through his architecture, and gave her prosperity through the Ogeechee Canal. He was, indeed, a great figure in his day, and a notable part of Savannah history.
After two months of research, I am still not satisfied with my research on Amos Scudder. Too many questions remain unanswered. My biggest question is why he took on a massive civil engineering project in the Ogeechee Canal. I believe that he worked on canals in New Jersey, probably the Delaware and Killian canals, but proving this hypothesis would warrant an investigation of New Jersey canal records. A closer examination of the actual construction of the Ogeechee Canal may also give an insight into Scudder's character. How were the slaves treated? Was Scudder a tyrant? I plan to further study Scudder's life and answer some of my questions, and I plan to travel to New Jersey in order to accomplish this goal. I know that somewhere there exists a piece to this puzzle that can lead me in the right direction. I am requesting an independent study in Senior Thesis to further research Amos Scudder, and request that this paper be kept on file at the Georgia Historical Society for staff use only until the completion of my research.
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