SAMUEL WADSWORTH RUSSELL (1789-1862):
A STUDY OF ORDERED INVESTMENT

by

ALAIN D. MUNKITTRICK

Class of 1973

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honors in English

Middletown, Connecticut * June, 1973
PREFACE

What follows is the product of my interest and effort to create a solid narrative framework in which the life of Samuel Wadsworth Russell (1789-1862) can be studied in further detail. My object is to give order and meaning to a large and basically unorganized manuscript collection of business documents, specifically that of the Russell & Company Papers in the Library of Congress.

I believe the subject of this study was well chosen as there exists no biography or even accurate sketch of the life of Samuel Russell. Also, little has been done to interpret the material in the Collection.

The order and interpretation applied to the manuscript material is therefore strictly my own and is thus original. As there does not exist, to my knowledge, any of Samuel Russell's private correspondence, and as the Collection is composed primarily of business and business-related documents, my interpretations do not enjoy the aid that personal statements lend to biographical study. But a business history per se was not the intention here and was thus avoided.

The problem of interpretation was made more acute due to the fact that many of Russell's letters exist in manuscript collections scattered throughout New England and limited time prevented a more thorough investigation. However, I believe that further study of these other documents would not greatly alter my conclusions. The discovery of a cor-
respondence of a more personal nature would, however, allow for greater interpretation of the facts of his private life, while I have, for the most part, only included known facts so as to fill out more the picture of his life.

The study is not regarded as a complete biography. Nor is it an account of business transactions only. Rather, it is a study intended as the basis of further investigation; as a rough sculptured whole that wants further documentation and thus refinement.

The Thesis is divided into four chapters; the first and last chapters covering roughly sixty years of his life while the two middle ones only twelve. While the documentation of the first China experience and the construction of his House far outweigh that of the early and later years, and the second China experience, I have attempted an accurate distillation of much of that material to suit the narrative, without altering my conclusions for these periods.

My special thanks must go to Mr. W. Nicholas Knight, my tutor, Mr. William VanBeynum of the Middlesex Historical Society, and Jared Edwards of Hartford, who has helped direct me towards members of the Russell family and who has shown a continued interest in this project.

Alain D. Munkittrick
April 7, 1973
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Chapter I**  
**Early Years (1789-1819)**  
*Venturing Out*  

- i Ancestral Heritage  
- ii Childhood in Middletown  
- iii A Model of Success  
- iv Supercargo to Spain  
- v The Middletown Store  
- vi A Providence Connection  
- vii The Providence Agreement  
- viii Venture of the "Fame"

**Chapter II**  
**First China Experience 1819-1823**  
*Want of Means*  

- i Arrival in China  
- ii Connection at Canton  
- iii Advice from Providence  
- iv Charges and Duties  
- v The Canton Market  
- vi Problems  
- vii Interest in Opium  
- viii Disruptions of Trade  
- ix Appraisal

**Chapter III**  
**Second China Experience 1823-1831**  
*With Means*  

- i Expanding Operations  
- ii Connections at Lintin Island  
- iii The Firm  
- iv The House: Beginnings  
- v The House: The Site  
- vi The House: Russell's Plan  
- vii The House: The Form  
- viii Russell's Decision  
- ix The Inheritance

**Chapter IV**  
**Later Years (1831-1862)**  
*Investments at Home*  

- i Withdrawing from China  
- ii Investments  
- iii Conclusions

Illustrations  
Footnotes  
Bibliography
CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS (1789-1819):

VENTURING OUT

"It is a labor to task the faculties of a man--Such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge."

- Henry David Thoreau
Walden

1. Ancestral Heritage

A narrative of the life of Samuel Wadsworth Russell (1789-1862) is a narrative of progressions; from shop apprentice to investor, from agent to owner, from the want of means to the means, from Middletown to New York, Providence; and outwards to Spain, Savannah, Amsterdam, and China (and back again to Middletown), from interest in sea ventures to investment in the interior. It is a narrative of progressions with models in, and comparisons of, the lives of other men. And along the way Russell's personality emerges, a character is built.

* * *

-2-
To a remarkable degree, the lives of Samuel Russell's first ancestors in America were typical of a certain progression. And it was from the continuity of their lives that the subject of this study most dramatically broke away. Samuel Russell attained a predominant stature in his family, while his ancestors have been forgotten, the records of their lives largely lost.

Samuel Russell's first ancestor in the New World was William Russell who was born in England in 1612 and who emigrated to the Colony of New Haven in 1638-9. There William Russell married Sarah Davis and it was there that he died in 1664, leaving a son, Noadiah (born July 22, 1659), and a daughter, Anna (born June 29, 1660). Other than these facts, virtually nothing is known of this, Samuel Russell's first American forefather.

More, however, can be said of William Russell's son, Noadiah. He was educated in New Haven, "through the friendship and benevolence of [a certain] Mrs. Elin Glover". He graduated from Harvard College in 1681 and remained there as a tutor. He also tutored at an academy in Ipswich, Massachusetts.

In 1686, Noadiah Russell was called to the ministry in Middletown, Connecticut. The Town records show that on:

August 11, 1686. The inhabitants of Middletowne being meet together did by a unanimous voat shew theire desier of Mr. Noadiah Russell for the work of the min- estry among them on tryall in order to settling amongst them in the work of the ministry.4

He was ordained in Middletown on October 24, 1688 and replaced
the first pastor of the First Church Congregational, the Reverend Nathaniel Collins, who had died four years earlier. Russell was certainly filling large shoes, for the famous Cotton Mather had eulogized Reverend Collins with the following:

more wounds were given by his death, to the colony of Connecticut, than by the body of Caesar when he fell wounded in the Senate house—that the Church in Middletown upon Connecticut River was the golden candlestick from whence this excellent person illuminated more than that whole colony; and all the qualities of most exemplary 'piety', extraordinary 'ingenuity', obliging affability, joined with the accomplishments of an extraordinary preacher, did render him truly excellent.  

Apparently Russell was a successful replacement for Collins, for during his twenty-five years as the second pastor of the Church in Middletown, 180 persons were admitted to the Congregation. The meeting-house of the Church stood in the middle of the northern end of Main Street and was surrounded by a palisade to ward off Indian attackers.

Noahiah Russell was one of the twelve ministers who became the founders and trustees of Yale College at Saybrook, Connecticut, in 1700. He was remembered by a friend of President Stiles' (of Yale) who wrote of him, "he was a little man in stature, pious & holy, visited 'all' his flock twice a year 'giving good holy counsel'." Russell was also one of the framers of the Saybrook Platform in 1708 which consolidated Congregationalism in the Colony against its dissenters until 1784. One of his printed works was oddly titled, "An Almanack
of Coelestial Motions &c. For the Years of the Christain AEra (1684)... by N. Russel Astrtyr. Cambridge, Printed by Samuel Green, 1684." However, we have no further evidence of his interests.

The Reverend Noadiah Russell married Mary Hamlin on February 20, 1690, and they had nine children; William, Daniel, Noadiah, Giles, Mary, John, Esther, Mehitable, and Hannah. His wife was the daughter of Giles Hamlin, an early English emigrant to Middletown (1650) and a member of the Colonial Council from 1685 until his death in 1689. Noadiah Russell was buried in the Old Riverside Cemetary in Middletown in 1713.

William Russell (born November 30, 1690), first son of Noadiah, was the first Russell born in Middletown. He graduated from Yale in 1709 (where he studied theology with his father) and in 1713 (the year of his father's death) became a tutor there, as his father had done at Harvard. His younger brother, Daniel, also graduated from Yale (1724) and became a minister of the gospel in the Stepney parish of Wethersfield, Connecticut. William Russell succeeded his father as minister of the First Church in Middletown on June 1, 1715, and in 1745 became a Fellow of Yale College. He served in Middletown for forty-six years as the third pastor of the fortressed house, admitting 305 of the newly devoted. The Reverend William Russell married Mary Pierpont (1703-1740) on August 19, 1719, and they had at least four children; William, Noadiah, and Samuel, and a daughter Mehitable (born November 19, 1754). William Russell, Sr.
died on June 1, 1761.

William Russell, Jr. (1723-1775) graduated from Yale in 1754 and was a Berkeley Scholar and tutor there, like his father and grandfather. In 1750 he began to preach in Windsor, Connecticut, and was ordained there in 1754, when he also married Abigail Andrew (granddaughter of another one of the original Yale trustees). Noadiah, William's brother, graduated from Yale in 1750.

Of the third brother, Samuel, little is known except that he was born July 7, 1727, was probably not a minister, did not attend Yale College, and married Ruth Wetmore in August of 1757. Eight years after his marriage, he had a son, John Russell, who was the father of Samuel Wadsworth Russell.

Of Samuel Wadsworth Russell's grandfather one thing is known. During the Revolutionary War, the Royal Governor of New Jersey, Franklin, was brought to Middletown as a prisoner, he being a faithful loyalist. Middletown records show that on:

January 7th, 1777—Voted that upon a motion to this meeting for a committee to remove Gov. Franklin out of this town, Capt. Samuel Russell, Col. Comfort Sage, and Seth Wetmore to be a committee to prefer a petition to his Honor Gov'r Trumbull [of Connecticut], to remove said Gover'r Franklin from this [town] for safety of this town & State.9

If this is the correct Samuel Russell (and it probably is), then it can be inferred that Samuel Wadsworth Russell's grandfather was a sea captain and a patriot.

John Russell, the son of Captain Samuel Russell, was born
in Middletown on August 19, 1765. We know very little about him also, except that he, probably like his father, was a captain. Dr. David Field, in his *A Statistical Account of the County of Middlesex in Connecticut*, first published in 1819 at Middletown, wrote of the town's shipping trade:

Before the revolutionary war an extensive and profitable trade was opened with the West Indies...The foreign trade of the city is principally with the West Indies, and the coasting trade with the city of New York and the Southern States.

Thus if John and Samuel Russell were sea captains, they would have been involved with either the West Indies or the coasting trades of Middletown.

On June 29, 1788, John Russell married Abigail Ward Warner, also of Middletown, who was six years older than he (born December 4, 1759). Just previous to their marriage (Feb. 27, 1787), John Russell's father deeded to him, for a consideration of 64 pounds, 15 shillings and 8 pence;

One certain piece of Land--Lying in said Middletown, Butted & Bounded as follows--North on a Highway, West on Mr. Francis Sage Land--South partly on said Sages & partly on Joseph Johnsons, East on Reuben Plum's Land, Containing One acre & an Half be it more or less/Whit. Phinehas Mackey, Mary Russell [a sister?] 12

On this land, wherever it was located, John and Abigail Russell may have built their home, and if so, then in all probability this was where young Samuel Russell, the subject of this study, grew up.

The lives of Samuel W. Russell's first ancestors in
Connecticut were basically similar. Born in or near coastal ports, they never moved far inland, but rather always gravitated to the coastlines. Most were very religious, went to Yale, were tutors, entered the ministry, were ordained and married. They were always associated with spiritual (and thus political and educational) pursuits. If indeed John and Samuel Russell were sea captains, they would have been the first known of the Russell line to break away from a family tradition. Even so, however, their voyaging could not have taken them very far from home—i.e. the Caribbean or the Southern ports.

Samuel W. Russell made a cleaner break with the Russell ancestral tradition. He became interested in business and yet, for reasons unknown, did not follow what were the likely professions of his father and grandfather. They had probably voyaged out, while Samuel W. Russell would "venture" out. Neither his father nor grandfather had made large fortunes (he was forced to work when his father died). Russell broke with his family's traditional concern with religious, educational, and political matters. He ventured out from their coast even further than his father and grandfather had done. And by doing so he made his fortune and has since been remembered as the figure of importance in the family.

ii. Childhood in Middletown

Samuel Wadsworth Russell was born in Middletown on August 25, 1789. He was the eldest of four children: Lucy
held occupations concerned with farming and the shipping trade as these simple statistics suggest. As John Russell was most likely a captain with very little farmland, it was not unlikely that the young Russell was directed by his guardians towards a shipping, rather than farming, career.

The population of Middletown between 1790 and 1800 was a little more than 5,000. Between 1796 and 1801, the major exports of the town were lumber boards, barrel staves, butter, cheese, corn, oats, candles, soap, and potatoes; the major imports being distilled spirits, molasses, brown sugar, and coffee. By 1810, the aggregate tonnage of the shipping in the Middletown District had easily surpassed that of New London, New Haven, and Newport, with about 17,000 tons. At this time most of the Hartford and Middletown merchants bought local goods or received the same on consignment, for the trade with the West Indies, selling the West Indies goods to the same market as well as to merchants as far north as Springfield, Massachusetts. (European goods were usually bought at New York and Boston.) The Middletown merchants did both a retail and wholesale business. Middletown's good geographical fortunes, especially its excellent harbor, gave the Town an important industry in shipping that included the subsidiary occupations of shipbuilding, launching, maritime insurance, credit establishments, and which also supported the growth of local farms, manufactories, grocers, traders, and agents. While the coasting trade averaged (in tonnage) about one-half that of the foreign trade (until
1818 when it surpassed that trade), it was also an important asset of the region; Oriental and European goods traded also for local produce by the coasters.\textsuperscript{14}

Middletown was a growing seaport during Samuel Russell's childhood. Between 1793 and 1807, the Connecticut Valley shipping ports enjoyed an unprecedented growth as the hostilities between France and England allowed their trade, especially that with the West Indies, to continue undisturbed and unchallenged.\textsuperscript{15} Thus it was not unlikely that a young boy in Middletown, the son and grandson perhaps, of sea captains, should be inclined towards a mercantile profession. Sometime before 1810, the young Russell was placed in the stores of Chauncey Whittlesey & Joseph Alsop, and Samuel Wetmore, both in Middletown.\textsuperscript{16} How long and in what capacity Russell was in each of these stores, however, remains unclear.

Of Samuel Wetmore, little is known. He was probably a relative of Samuel's grandmother, Ruth Wetmore Russell, and because of this Russell may have secured an apprenticeship in the Wetmore store.

More, however, is known about Whittlesey & Alsop. The store of that concern was probably located on the northwest corner of Washington and High Streets, diagonally opposite the spot where Samuel Russell would build his mansion years later.\textsuperscript{17}

Chauncey Whittlesey studied theology at Yale but abandoned the ministry in favor of a mercantile career. Thus, one of Russell's first business tutors was a living example of what
had characterized the transformation, in the generations of
his father and grandfather, of the Russell ancestral tradition.
Whittlesey was Deputary Commissary of the State, 1777-80, pro-
curing provisions for the troops during the Revolutionary War.
He was a member of the Middletown Council in 1784, Collector
(of customs) for the port of Middletown, 1798-1804, and a repre-
sentative to the General Assembly between 1809 and 1811. In
1790, Whittlesey, with four other Middletown merchants, formed
the "River Bank Lottery" to secure improvements of navigation
of the Connecticut River. Besides being very civic-minded, he
was "distinguished for correct business habits." Whittlesey
married Lucy Wetmore in 1770 and he died in Middletown in March
of 1812. 18

Captain Joseph Wright Alsop (See Figure 1) was born in
Middletown in 1772. His father died when he was at a very young
age and he subsequently became a cabin boy and later master of
a ship in the West Indies trade. He married Lucy, the daughter
of Chauncey Whittlesey, in 1797 and sometime not long after that
formed a copartnership with his father-in-law. The firm of
Whittlesey & Alsop was terminated in 1812 with the death of the
former partner. 19 Alsop later inherited the important business
of Alsop & Company in Valparaiso, Chile and died a wealthy man
in 1844. 20

It is quite possible that Whittlesey, with his experience
as a commission agent (during the Revolution), kept the store,
while Alsop either captained ships or directed ships (through
contacts that he might have made as a captain) to the store.
Whatever the arrangements were, Russell was most likely exposed to the duties and demands of foreign trade, albeit from a limited vantage point within the store. Perhaps from Whittlesey, Russell had learned "correct business habits", while Alsop inspired a knowledge of foreign commerce. Samuel Russell's apprenticeship in the Middletown stores of Samuel Wetmore and Whittlesey & Alsop, was probably very much like that of the young Robert Bennett Forbes, a boy who grew up apprenticed in a Boston countinghouse and who later became a close associate and friend of Russell in China. Forbes wrote; "My duties at the ...store were to sweep out, make the fires, close and open the store, copy letters into a book in a very different manner, collect wharfage bills, run errands...measure out articles...catch[ing] rats." 21

But by 1810, as was customary at the age of twenty-one, 22 Russell's apprenticeship was ended. Usually at this time in his life, a young man, brought up in a mercantile establishment, had a number of options. He could marry into a wealthy merchant's family (thus securing himself an eventual partnership), become a clerk in a merchant's offices (investing his salary into the firm with the hope of a future partnership through recognition); if he had the means, he could establish his own store, or he could go to sea as a supercargo (a merchant's agent), and attempt to advance his own wealth through the private dealings that such ventures could afford the ship's officers. 23

Samuel Russell, by the time he reached majority, apparent-
ly did not anticipate marriage in the near future, nor did he stay on in one of the stores as a clerk. But rather, he chose to be a supercargo and commission merchant, with his own store.

iii. A Model of Success

John and Abigail Russell gave their son Samuel a much-repeoted middle name—that of "Wadsworth". And it is very likely that Samuel's great-uncle, Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, his namesake, had come to represent a model of success for Samuel Russell.

Jeremiah Wadsworth has been described as a merchant and financier...one of the important commercial figures of the North American Continent. He, and he alone, of the Connecticut Valley merchants, can be classified with the leading men of more important centers. A friend of Alexander Hamilton, a business associate of the prominent New York speculator, William Duer; largest shareholder in the Bank of North America in which Robert Morris was vitally interested, and possessing the confidence of many national figures, including Washington, Greene, Knox, and the Marquis de Lafayette—Wadsworth dominated the commercial life of the Valley for a quarter of a century.24

Jeremiah Wadsworth was born in 1743, the grandson (on his mother's side) of Joseph Talcott, minister of the First Church of Hartford, and son of Governor Wadsworth who led the Colony from 1725 to 1741.25 Interestingly, because both of his parents had died when he was young, Wadsworth was brought up in Middletown by his Uncle, Colonel Matthew Talcott, a merchant and farmer who lived at the corner of Main Street and Talcott's Lane. 26 Before his apprenticeship in Talcott's store was to end,
Wadsworth decided to ship out on one of Talcott's ships. He
did so and later, on a voyage to the West Indies, became the
leader of the ship, unexpectedly, when its captain died. By
1773, he owned a brig, did a thriving commission business with
Connecticut Valley merchants (to the West Indies), and opened
his own store in Hartford. During the Revolutionary War, Wad-
sworth, like Chauncey Whittlesey, was a Deputy Commissary.
Wadsworth, however, later became the Commissary General for the
entire Revolutionary Army (in 1778), earning one-half per cent
commissions on all the provisions supplied, and making valuable
connections with important American merchants and financiers.
In 1779, with a partner, J.M. Carter, Wadsworth provisioned the
entire French army and fleet; this contract greatly advancing
his advantage in many private dealings as well. Thus, "by the
end of the Revolution, Wadsworth was known as the wealthiest
man in Connecticut." 27

After the War, Wadsworth held interests in a Hartford
distillery, owned and directed a fleet of ships in the European
and West Indies trades, established connections throughout
Europe, the Caribbean, and the Atlantic seaboard, and was always
the recipient of proposed partnerships and dealings. He owned
valuable real estate and interest in an insurance company in
Philadelphia, was a shareholder in, and second President of, the
Bank of New York, a director on the first two boards of the Bank
of the United States, and one of the original founders and dir-
ectors of the Bank of Hartford. He was a shareholder in a New
Haven linen factory and a Hartford woolen manufactory; he was a Hartford Alderman, Council Member, a frequent representative to the General Assembly, a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention, a Congressman (1787-95), Vice-President of the Connecticut Society for the Arts and Sciences, President of the Connecticut Cincinnati, and possessed a library of one thousand volumes.

Not only did Jeremiah Wadsworth grow up in Middletown as an apprentice in Matthew Talcott's store, but on September 27, 1767, he married Mehitable Russell, the daughter of William Russell (Sr), who was living in Middletown at the time. It has never been noticed that Jeremiah Wadsworth married Samuel Wadsworth Russell's great-aunt, nor that he was very likely the namesake of Wadsworth. Jeremiah Wadsworth also owned shares in the Middletown Bank (of which Samuel Russell later became a President), two houses and lots in Middletown, and an interest in a brewery there.

John Russell, Samuel's father, must certainly have known Jeremiah Wadsworth (his uncle) and may have had business dealings with him. Wadsworth's work during the Revolution must have brought him into contact with Chauncey Whittlesey. He also had investments in Middletown which might have called for greater contact with the people there. In all probability, the young Samuel Russell had heard much about this successful "son" of Middletown and perhaps had met him personally. Samuel's father made him the namesake of Wadsworth, and while the famous Jeremiah
Wadsworth died in 1804, when Russell was fifteen years old; his memory must have continued on in the mind of Samuel Wadsworth Russell.

iv. Supercargo to Spain

Sometime around 1810, Samuel Russell entered the shipping house of Hull, Griswold & Company in New York City. Unfortunately, little is known about this establishment.

John Griswold came to New York in 1812 from Lyme, Connecticut. His cousins from East Lyme, Nathaniel Lynde and George Griswold, had established at New York in 1794 the powerful firm of N.L.& G. Griswold which did an international shipping business for eighty years. John Griswold opened his shipping House at 68 South Street with Hull (of whom nothing is known) as a partner. Between 1815 and 1819, Griswold's brother, Charles, was a partner of the House.

Samuel Russell's first sea voyage was as the supercargo (or agent) for Hull and Griswold on their Schooner "Ichu", Captain Bowers, bound to La Coruña, a seaport on the northwest coast of Spain. Russell was twenty-three years old. As Russell was twenty-one in 1810 and since he did not make this voyage until 1812, it is possible that he had worked as a clerk in the Griswold store before sailing, as their agent, to Spain.

Russell's mission was to sell the "Ichu's" cargo of flour at Coruña, and to purchase, with the proceeds, specie (silver dollars) in either Lisbon or Gibraltar. The last advices
from Griswold to Russell regarding the venture, dated April 3rd of that important year 1812, warned:

Having under the most confidant belief that an embargo will be laid immediately on all vessels in the United States [by the British]...we confide so implicitly in your discretion and judgement...that she ["Ichu"] should be fitted and attended in such a manner as to keep away from any vessel by ant descriptions—in this time of commercial difficulty & hazard, we injoin [sic] in particularly [sic] that the Schooner shall not be Spoken or approached if it can be properly avoided, by any vessel whatever...34

Russell was instructed to sell the ship's flour in Spain (or Portugal) for not less than twenty-five dollars a bale, with no sales to be for less than one thousand bales. He was also ordered to supervise the sales of the brig, "Defiance" (dispatched by Griswold with flour to Spain on March 24th). Proceeds from the sales of the two ventures were to be invested in specie and the ships returned to New London.35

Griswold wrote letters of introduction (as was customary) for Russell, to an "Alex. Hamilton" at Lisbon (who later advised Russell of the Iberian flour markets), and to "S.C.Blodget", Gibraltar (from whom Russell probably purchased dollars).36

While in Coruña, Russell stayed with "Benito Santos", the American Consul there.37

It was not reported whether Russell had trouble with any British ships due to the hostilities which had broken out between America and Britain, whether the venture was successful, nor whether Russell profited from the venture, as ship's officers
were always granted space in the hold for their own personal ventures. But Russell was certainly back in the United States by February of 1813.

The episode in Hull and Griswold's office, and his first venture out as a supercargo, probably gave the young Russell a good glimpse of the life of the foreign trader. That life was perhaps best described by the famous "landman", Henry David Thoreau, in Walden. Thoreau began, "I have always endeavored to acquire strict business habits; they are indispensable to every man", and catalogued the duties and "habits" that colored so completely the life of the foreign merchant;

You will export such articles as the country affords... always in native bottoms. These will be good ventures. To oversee all the details yourself in person; to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter; to buy and sell and keep the accounts, to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent; to superintend the discharge of imports night and day; to be upon many parts of the coast almost at the same time...to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking to all vessels passing bound coastwise; to keep up a steady despatch of commodities, for the supply of such a distant and exhorbitant China; to keep yourself informed of the state of markets, prospects of war and peace everywhere, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and civilization--taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements of navigation; charts to be studied, the positions of new reefs and lights and bucys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier.38

If the model of the foreign trader served Thoreau well, it may have also inspired young Samuel Russell, for he returned to Middletown port, ready to "buy and sell and keep the accounts", in his own store.
v. The Middletown Store

Middletown, as compared with Coruña, must have seemed a "friendly pier" to Russell, for it was there that he had decided to open his store.

It was, for reasons unknown, prior to his venture to Spain for Hull and Griswold, that Russell had made a decision to go into business in Middletown. Perhaps, as Griswold invested in Russell's store, it was necessary for him to take the job as supercargo of the "Ichu". On March 6, 1812 (a month before he left for Spain), Russell leased from a W. Noadiah Rockwell, Jr., certain "premises" on Main Street in Middletown. The lease was for nine years (an intention to stay in Middletown a while), the rent ten dollars a year. The property was described in the deed;

a certain piece of Land lying in the City of Middletown on the East side of Main Street. Bound—West on s'd street, North on Land leased to Cha's Brewer. East on Land belonging to the heirs of Sam'l Johnson Dec'd and South on Land occupied by Wm, R. Swathel. s'd piece of Land is nine feet in front and Seventeen feet East and West from the Line East.

Very likely, this was where Russell intended to locate his store.

On February 3, 1813, after his return from Spain, an Agreement was signed between three parties; John Griswold of New York, Samuel and Willard W. Wetmore of Middletown, and Samuel Russell;
That the said John Griswold, Samuel Wetmore, Willard W. Wetmore, and Samuel Russell have mutually agreed and do hereby mutually covenant and agree with each other to form a connexion in business under the name and firm of Samuel Russell & Co. for the purpose of selling European, East and West Indies Goods, Hardware &c for the term of three years from the first day of April next...\textsuperscript{40}

It was agreed that Griswold would supply $5,000, and the Wetmore brothers $5,500; of the original capital stock for the formation of a commission business, while Russell agreed to "take upon himself the care and burden of transacting the business of the firm both at home and abroad and to pay every attention to the concerns of said Firm at all times and places." Thus while he remained at his store in Middletown, Russell was already concerning himself with, as Thoreau described, "the state of the markets, prospects of war and peace everywhere... the tendencies of trade and civilization". His venture, even though he was stationed at Middletown, was similar to his venture to Spain for it retained a certain outreach to other ports and other markets.

Profits of the new "connexion" were to be divided equally among the three parties. Board was allowed for Russell in Middletown. The Agreement was also signed by a Thomas Boggs who was probably an assistant in the store (much like Russell had been in the stores of Whittlesey & Alsop, and Samuel Wetmore—who was now his latest partner).\textsuperscript{41}

Samuel Russell's role in the new arrangement was clearly that of the commission merchant. This role was a logical
extension of his previous business experience. There were generally five types of shipping merchants in the Connecticut River Valley (and elsewhere) during Russell's early years in Middle-town business; the investor, the captain, supercargo, commission merchant, and commission agent. The latter four types of men were essentially extensions of the investing merchant, although they usually resided or worked in localities different from that of the merchant. Their functions as agents of the merchant were necessitated by the communications systems too slow for the changing market situations. Thoreau had said correctly that the merchant, especially the foreign trader, had to be his "own telegraph", for the distances and time that separated the many markets were great.

The captain, especially in the West Indies and coast trades, was an agent of the merchant or merchants who had invested in his (or their) ship and its cargo. He used his own discretion in marketing the goods that he carried and in purchasing those that were to fill the return holds. Samuel Russell's father and grandfather were probably such type of agents. For some reason, conceivably discernible in his father's early and untimely death (possibly resulting from the rigors of his work), Russell had not been attracted to the captain's occupations. Perhaps his apprenticeship with Whittlesey & Alsop, and Samuel Wetmore (with whom his father may have done business), trained him best, or at least gave him an early familiarity with the commission business. Unlike Wadsworth (and probably his father
and his father), Russell did not break his home apprenticeship in order to voyage out to sea. His voyages were to be ventures only.

The second extension of the investing merchant was the supercargo. He served the same purpose as the captain, except that he usually did not command the ship and the crew and he was most often employed on the longer voyages to Europe and the Far East, where a greater knowledge, ability, and attention was required of the agent (who was usually trained). Russell was a supercargo for Hull, Griswold & Company on the "Ichu" to Spain at the young age of twenty-three. Perhaps he had been discouraged by the venture (trade depressed by the hostilities), for he returned to Middletown. Or perhaps he viewed the venture as merely a necessity before he could obtain the support and confidence of Griswold and the Wetmores for his store.

The commission merchant served as an agent for a particular merchant or group of merchants, and usually operated a permanent store in the market his employers or partners wanted covered. Russell, in 1813, had agreed to serve as such an agent for Griswold and the Wetmores.

Russell, not many years later, was to become one of the last type of agents, the commission agent, who served not one or group of merchants but rather sought consignments from many different sources. As he rented the store before he made his venture to Spain and before he signed the Agreement with Griswold and the Wetmore brothers, it is quite possible that he had
initially planned to operate a commission agency at Middletown. But it is likely that the depressed nature of foreign commerce, due to the War of 1812, made him recognize that large capital was necessary; merchants who could send one consignments, helpful.

As a commission merchant between 1813 and 1816, Russell had many duties. He would have superintended the unloading and loading of ships, the transportation and storage of cargoes. He had to pay customs, wharfage bills and carting fees, sell the goods (retail and wholesale) which involved weighing, measuring, grading, pricing, repacking, advertising, and occasionally delivering. There were matters of insurance, exchanging bills, providing credit, filling out bills of lading and invoices, and of course calculating and charging commissions.43

Regarding this last matter, Samuel Russell, on December 10, 1812, drew up a handbill advertisement or policy (See Figure 2), detailing his commission charges (which were probably fixed by the Firm). The commissions included 2-1/2% on "Sales of merchandise without guarantee...sales of vessels that have made a voyage 1-1/4% on "vessels that have not made a voyage" ... shipping Merchandise to a Foreign Country...Purchasing Merchandise...Ships Disbursements...obtaining Freight and Charter... Collecting Freight...Settling a loss on a policy of Insurance, on the sum recovered...Endorsing bills of Exchange...all cash advances", and 5% on "Foreign Sales", with the note added that, "No obligation on our part to execute an order whereby we should incur a responsibility beyond funds at our disposal."44
Besides the business of Griswold and the Wetmores, Russell did a commission business with such merchants as Thadeus Nichols of Boston; J.C. Bush, J.& E. Little, Sanford & Daggett; Josiah Williams, Leavitt & Burate, all of New York; Hudson & Goodman of Hartford; Lords & Barber of East Haddam, Connecticut; Edward Carrington & Company; Benjamin and Thomas C. Hoppins & Company, of Providence. Griswold and the Wetmores probably influenced many of these firms to trade with Samuel Russell & Company at Middletown. The latter two connections, Carrington & Company and B.& T.C. Hoppins, were undoubtedly influenced by Samuel Wetmore as he was a partner in both of those firms. 45

Either Russell or his assistant, Thomas Boggs, would occasionally visit New York and Providence, probably for the purpose of meeting with Griswold and the Wetmores or drumming up further commission business. On one such occasion, Boggs was in New York seeking consignments from John Jacob Astor, the famous fur trader and shipowner, but had to report that Astor "was not accepting letters" at the time. 46 Significantly, Russell had recognized, as early as 1814, the importance of Astor's investments and the advantage in obtaining consignments from his office. As will be seen later, Russell eventually succeeded in this goal.

Meanwhile, on one occasion when Russell was in New York on business, he met the sisters, Mary Cotton and Frances Ann Osborn, the orphan daughters of David and Mary Osborn of Hartford. 47 Russell eventually married Mary, October 6, 1815, in
New York City. She was nineteen and Russell twenty-six years old at the time. Mary and Samuel, and her sister, Frances, returned to Middletown (probably together) to live.

vi. A Providence Connection

Later in that October of 1815, Russell was in Providence. His partner, Samuel Wetmore, may have influenced Russell's decision to go to Providence at this time, for B. & T.C. Hoppins & Company (in which Wetmore had an interest), took Russell into their house as a supercargo on a venture to the South. There is no evidence of exactly when, why, and how Russell took this commission for the Hoppins brothers (i.e. no legal Agreement). However, Russell's Agreement with Griswold and the Wetmores was due to expire in April of 1816. After (or perhaps before) that time, the store in Middletown was most likely closed. With the arrival of a son, George Osborn, on July 5, 1816, Russell undoubtedly felt the burden of a growing family. Even before this son was born, Russell was supporting his mother, his wife (and her sister), and perhaps his two younger sisters and brother, all of whom probably lived in the "Old Mansion House", the old Russell homestead on the east side of High Street, about half way between Washington Street and Talcott's Lane. No longer an established commission merchant, Russell probably had to renew again a search for a connection with whom a venture might be risked and with whom perhaps a partner-
ship or agreement might be formed. Thus it was perhaps in this setting that Russell accepted the Hoppins' offer.

His ventures as a supercargo to Spain and as a commission merchant in Middletown could not have been very lucrative. The War with the British was having a devastating effect on New England shipping as a whole. After June of 1812, commerce with the Connecticut Valley was blockaded, shipping not regaining its pre-1807 stature until about 1818. All Connecticut merchants, except the privateers and those with capital to invest in manufacturing, were badly crippled. Russell most likely had very little capital to invest and therefore in the winter of 1817 he found himself a supercargo, once again, this time on the Brig "Mary", Captain Charles Sheldon, bound for Savannah, Georgia.

On December 29, 1817, Russell arrived in Savannah, where he sold quantities of chinaware, fish, duck, iron, and (Chinese) Hyson tea on account of Edward Carrington & Company (through the Hoppins). There he bought large quantities of rice. He then took a stage to Augusta where he purchased cotton and tobacco for the account of the Hoppins. He returned again by stage to Savannah where the cotton and tobacco had arrived by ship from Augusta. The cargo was loaded into the "Mary" and Russell then sent the ship to Hamburg to proceed with sales. Russell did not go to Hamburg, however, but rather returned to Providence via a stage to Charleston, sail to New York, steamboat to Norwich, Connecticut, and a stage the final leg to
Providence (which altogether cost about $140).\textsuperscript{51}

It cannot be ascertained how successful this latest venture was, how Russell might have profited from it, or whether it was a "test" for the agent. In any case, it somehow led to a very important copartnership with Carrington & Company, Hoppins & Company, and a third Providence merchant, Cyrus Butler.

\textit{vii. The Providence Agreement}

December 26, 1818 was a very important day for the twenty-nine year old agent, Samuel Russell. On that day in Providence an Agreement with Edward Carrington & Company, Benjamin & Thomas C. Hoppins & Company, Cyrus Butler, and Samuel Russell was signed, establishing a commission house at Canton, China. Russell probably understood, at this time, that he was about to advance one large step towards the possibility, or at least the chance for, great success and wealth. The American China trade was famous for its quick fortunes made by American merchants.\textsuperscript{52} And perhaps Russell had undertaken the venture to Savannah knowing full well that it might lead to this important connection. The Agreement read;

The said Butler, Carrington & Co., Hoppins, & Russell agree to form a connexion in business at Canton in China under the name & firm of Samuel Russell & Co. for the term of five years. Said Butler, Carrington & Co., & Hoppins on their part agree to furnish Capital of Twenty thousand Dollars, to remain a permanent fund for the purposes of trade.\textsuperscript{53}
Butler, Carrington, and the Hoppins each supplied one-third of the total capital, allowing a six per cent interest annually, it also being agreed that "if hereafter it should be deemed expeditious, the Capital shall be increased, to an extent that may be tho't advisable for the interest of the Concern." The Agreement continued;

The said Butler, Carrington & Co., Hoppins further agree that each & every vessel bound to Canton that is owned by them jointly or individually or in which either of them have the controlling interest, shall be consigned to said Samuel Russell & Co. who for doing the business shall be entitled to a commission of two per cent on the investment... Russell was also allowed to charge any of the Providence-sent vessels between two and two hundred and fifty dollars, to cover the rent for the "Factory" (offices, living quarters, and storage rooms at Canton), according to the time of the season that the vessel arrived and the actual rent of the factory.

The Providence men agreed to use their, "exertions and influence to procure consignments for the House at Canton", and it was understood that Russell could not take credit in Canton other than for investments directly related to the loading of the Providence ships, "except by authority of the partners in this Country," All proceeds from the sales of Chinese products in Europe or the United States were to be remitted to Canton for re-investment at Canton, while, "The said Russell on his part agrees to go out to Canton and take charge of the Concerns of Samuel Russell & Co. until the expiration of five years and devote
his time & services strictly to the management of the business of the House.\textsuperscript{57} After five years the profits of the House were to be divided equally four ways. Russell's family was to receive $500 a year, at six per cent interest, in his absence. It was also understood that the transactions which Russell would oversee in Europe, prior to his sailing for Canton, were to be charged and credited to the accounts of Carrington and Butler only.\textsuperscript{58}

Little is known of these Providence merchants. The most important fact about them, however, is that Edward Carrington had been to Canton and was the American Consul there between 1806 and 1808. The new house at Canton was very likely his idea and he the leader of its business in Providence. With the firm of Brown & Ives, Carrington, Butler, and the Hoppins represented the most important foreign shippers in Providence.\textsuperscript{59}

\textit{viii. Venture of the "Fame"}

On the same day that the Agreement was signed for the formation of a Canton House, to be called "Samuel Russell & Co.", Edward Carrington and Cyrus Butler addressed a long letter of instructions to Samuel Russell, "SuperCargo of the Ship Fame" (Captain Joshua Rathbun). They handed Russell an "Invoice & Bill of Lading of 768 whole, 210 half bales, Surat [Indian] Cotton, and a quantity of Nicaragua wood in Bulk, shipped on board the Fame for our account, to your consignment," noting that the ship was cleared for Amsterdam but that her destination
was Havre, France. At Havre, Russell was to inquire of Messrs. Hottingam & Company and Welles, Williams, & Green of the cotton markets in France, England, and Holland. Keeping that information in mind, with the consideration that Indian Cotton had to be shipped to England in British ships only (thus an extra expense), and the current rates of exchange "between the places you may propose to sell the cotton at, and the places you propose to purchase your Dollars at", Russell was ordered to buy silver dollars for the initial investment of the firm in Canton. At Amsterdam Russell was to collect a credit of 80,000 dollars from Messrs. Daniel Crommelins & Sons as well as soliciting their advice respecting European markets ("they are our particular correspondents and whose opinions & recommendations, we place much reliance"). At Liverpool, Russell was also to collect funds from Messrs. Willis, Latham, & Gair, from the sales of cotton imported there by the Providence ship "Patent", or in case the sales had not been completed, to solicit from them an advance of 12,000 pounds sterling or more.

The letter also suggested various "tricks" that might be played to his advantage. They advised Russell, "On your arrival at Havre, you will give the impression that you are bound to Amsterdam and stopt [sic] in for supplies, advices of markets, &c", thus to not suddenly influence the cotton markets downwards there. Carrington and Butler also advised, "If you let them [merchants at European ports] know you have money in Holland and England to invest in Dollars, twill be magnified
into a much greater sum then you have & of course have an affect
on prices of Dollars, and all Merchants now are so much en-
gaged in Dealing in Dollars as any other Merchandise—"64. In
such a competitive business of procuring the best possible
prices, there existed a fine line between success and failure.65
The successful merchant had to gain information without divul-
ing it, and deception was a simple and useful tool to that end.

Russell was at liberty to purchase silver dollars in
England, Lisbon, or Gibraltar; the port to "depend very much
upon the courses of Exchange between places you propose to pur-
chase Dollars in, and the places your friends are at [i.e.
Holland and England].66

On February 12, 1819, Samuel Russell wrote his brother,
Edward, from Havre;

We arrived at this place after a passage of 29 days...
The markets throughout all Europe for Cotton is very
dull in most places, merely nominal & vessels droping
[sic]in every day loaded with it. this market does not
justify my selling here. I shall proceed to Amsterdam
as soon as possible...I have rec'd a letter pr. the
Crommelins, which has induced me to order the Fame to
Amsterdam.67

Russell sold the "Fame's" cargo at Amsterdam, probably pro-
ceded from that port to Liverpool to collect the advances on the
sales of the cotton of the "Patent", and then to Gibraltar where
he bought specie of Hill & Blodget, his old friends there.68

Carrington and Butler had instructed Russell, "Having
finished your business in Europe you will send us accounts of
your transactions, bill of lading of your Shipments of Specie,
and then instruct Capt. Rathbun to proceed direct to Canton." 69
With characteristic understatement, except an underlined "then", was Russell sent on his way to the Orient.

Samuel Russell was about to venture out further than he, or his ancestors, had ever gone. He was almost thirty years old. He had been twice a supercargo and had operated a modest commission business in Middletown. But with this latest venture to China, Russell would discover the truth regarding business of the foreign trader, that, as Thoreau had said, "it is a labor to task the faculties of a man".

Russell was going to meet the challenge, to seek profits in a strange land and market by combining the capital of others with his own resourcefulness, investing money and ingenuity. It would be, as Thoreau also said, a process of "gauging of all kinds", an ordering of investment where there existed nothing but always-changing circumstances. That was the venture out.
CHAPTER II

FIRST CHINA EXPERIENCE, 1819-1823:

WANT OF MEANS

"It's rather provoking to stand by and be an idle spectator to the good bargains which our neighbors are picking up, & which we might participate in, but for the Want of Means."

- Samuel Russell
Letter of January 15, 1822¹

1. Arrival in China²

On September 28, 1819 Samuel Russell wrote Edward Carrington and Cyrus Butler, "Gentlemen. We have the pleasure of informing you of the safe arrival of the Fame (at Macou) on the 23rd ulto. [August 23rd] after a passage of 110 days [from Gibraltar]." The voyage was described as a "pleasant passage", probably uneventful.³

Just as Russell spelled "Macao" wrong, so too was that place, and China, strange and foreign to his eyes.

The Portuguese port of Macao, eighty miles south of Canton, a narrow peninsula at the mouth of the Canton River, was Samuel Russell's first visual experience with the reality of the "Gelstial Empire". Viewed from the southwest or European approach (from the Bangka Island of Indonesia), Macao appeared
as a thin slice of land with irregularly shaped mountains jutting upwards haphazardly. The port at the base of the mountains was dominated by church spires and a handsome row of ornate Chinese, neo-classical Western, and gleaming white Spanish baroque buildings bordering the graceful curve of the harbor and its main thoroughfare, the "Praya Grande". That mile-long promenade had many jetties and steps down to the water. Small Chinese junks, sampans (flatboats), and "egg-boats" (taxies) cluttered the harbor. Tucked among and upon the mountains beyond the settlement were churches, monasteries, and villas, their approaches so steep that the roads were often stepped. Even higher among the promontories could be seen the old forts, "Barra", "Monte", and "Bomparto", the latter forming one point of the harbor, the Chinese Customs House the other. Cut off at its narrow neck by a wall, from the Chinese, Macao was not only one of the main Portuguese trading ports in the Orient, but also the pleasure-post for all the other foreigners in China. Marquiss' "English Hotel", the "Racing Green", and the "Cricket Ground", near the "Bishop's Garden", were enclaves for the idle travellers and foreign merchants residing in that land.

The Portuguese had traded at Macao for almost three hundred years; it was not until 1685 that their monopoly of the China trade was broken by the Dutch and the English. By Russell's time, the port served a number of functions. It became the center and a convenient situation for the smuggling of opium into China by the Western traders in that drug, defying the dictates of the far-away Chinese rulers in Peking. Governed by
the Chinese and the Portuguese together, Macao was where permits, or "chops", for foreign ships to pass on to Canton were issued by the Chinese, and fees collected for the same. It also served as a "hospital" for ill or pleasure-seeking Western merchants, as a place for those traders banished from Canton, and a refuge for foreign missionaries.  

But Samuel Russell's destination was Canton and he did not pass any time at Macao. But like most Canton traders, Russell too would be coming to Macao every year, during the late spring and early summer, as a rest from the rigors of the trade that he was about to become a part of. As Russell arrived in the "Fame" at Macao after the vacation season, it was likely that there would be few foreign merchants there anyway. After taking aboard the required Chinese pilot, who would guide the ship to its destination, the "Fame" proceeded on to the famous anchorage of "Whampoa".

Through the large "Bay of Canton" the ship passed "Lintin Island", an island three miles long and dominated by a single promontory almost two thousand feet high, for which reason the island had come to be called by the Chinese the "Solitary Nail". Russell could not have known then that this seemingly insignificant island would become the very center of his trade years later. Twenty miles further up the Bay, the "Fame" came to the mouth of the Pearl River. Surrounded on either side by steep cliffs, the "Bocca Tigris" or "Bogue", as the defile was called, served as a gateway to, and fortification of,
the city of Canton. Five miles long, the Bogue had two forts on either side of the River with a fifth on "Tiger Island" at the entrance into the upper Pearl River. The forts of the Bogue were practically useless, however, as their guns were permanently mounted and thus could not swivel. Frequently had Western ships penetrated the Bogue in times of open conflict with the Chinese. These victors included the British ships "Dragon" in 1637, the "Centurion" in 1743, the frigate "Alceste" in 1816, and in 1833 the "Imogene" and the "Andromache" commanded by Lord Napier.

The "well-defended" Bogue gateway, with its ironic ease of penetrability, symbolized the relations between the Chinese and the Western merchants in Russell's time. China's relations with the West, prior to 1842, was dominated by the deterioration of a "suzerain-vassal" or tributary system, this breakdown amplified by the increase of the Western merchant's demand for the products of the Chinese Empire, particularly its teas and silks.

Throughout its long and rich history of great material and cultural wealth, expansion into, and acculturation of, its many less powerful neighbors, the Chinese Empire naturally grew increasingly egocentric, regarding people outside of its sphere, including the Western traders, as "barbarians". The Chinese viewed their civilization as the most superior, their society the center of all human affairs, and their Emperor the "Son of Heaven". These beliefs, however, resulted in a great amount of "imperial benevolence" granted to outsiders. The Emperor had
allowed trading outposts for foreigners where they might deal with the "Celestial Empire," even though it was recognized by the Chinese and the West that China did not need to depend on that trade. 7

The "suzerain-vassal" relationship, necessitated by the Chinese system of tribute, and symbolized by the necessity for foreigners to "kowtow" before the Emperor, was, however, more a defense mechanism working effectively in the diplomatic and economic realms of China's foreign relations. With the system, China chose, and could for a while, deal with foreigners on her terms only. China's leaders depended on their society's recognized cultural superiority to gain a greater political and economical security for its local governors, emissaries, representatives, and merchants who came into contact with the foreigners. 8

Western traders, at least until the Opium War of 1839, for the most part accepted, as condition of the trade, the injustices that resulted from the often arrogant attitudes of their Chinese counterparts (often evading the laws established for the trade however). Their trade depended on that acceptance. While foreign merchants viewed the tributary system as a cloak, placing Chinese merchants on a more advantageous footing than themselves, the Chinese merchant was not highly regarded by his peers.

Problems arose when China's foreign trade increased to the extent where it made the ancient system of tributary impossible to effectively enforce. 9 As the Western merchants de-
manded more and more the Chinese products and as they became increasingly successful in finding imports suitable to the tastes and demands of the Chinese people, the tributary relationships were seriously called into question. By the early 19th Century, the continued invasion of China by Western commercial interests, and the continued Chinese arrogance with reverence for the tributary nature of diplomacy, would violently disrupt the Empire, shaking it into the modern Western world. 10

Samuel Russell and the "Fame" passed through the Bogue, past the odd and impractical fortifications above, and on to Canton. With this particular passing another crack in the Chinese "defense" of her great traditions, although certainly unrecognized at the time, was being made. The young supercargo of the ship "Fame", out of Providence, Rhode Island, would eventually found an establishment at Canton that would predominate for the remainder of the Century among those Western traders who were part of the important commercial invasion of the "Celestial Empire".

From the Bogue the "Fame" made its way to Whampoa, about thirty miles further up the Pearl River. With the proper tides two sandbars were crossed, "Cambridge Reach" navigated, "Six Flat Islands", and "Dane Island" passed, and the Whampoa anchorage, at the southern tip of Whampoa Island attained via "Fiddler's Reach". No foreign vessels were allowed to travel the further thirteen miles to Canton. Whampoa thus became a
thriving port, described often and colorfully. Doctor Downing, a traveller to China in 1836, said of Whampoa; "you have a view of a whole semicircle of shipping, drawn up and moored as if in the order of battle...a large forest of masts and rigging...Cargo-boats and junks, some of them highly adorned, are seen winding their way with great skill between the India-men [ships belonging to the powerful English East India Company] while the whole surface of the water appears covered with an infinity of small craft, paddling about in every direction."¹¹

At Whampoa a "linguist", "hoppo", and "compradore" came aboard. Measurements ("Cumshá") of the cargo was made by the linguist, a customs agent, and the exhorbitant port charges paid to him. The hoppo arrived to insure that no opium was aboard the vessel and that none of the cargo was taken ashore at Whampoa. The cargoes were unloaded at Whampoa but transferred to small barges which transported the imported goods to Canton warehouses. The hoppo, however, was usually easily bribed; goods, especially opium, often sold at Whampoa. The compradore, a Chinese representing each of the trading firms at Canton, secured provisions for the boats and was paid accordingly for his services. There were also facilities at Whampoa for the repair and refitting of ships as well as a small colony that met the demands of the foreign sailors there. ¹²

The thirteen miles from Whampoa to Canton was reached in two and one-half hours by fast-boat. The River, increasingly trafficked by local craft, was bounded by sweeping rice fields,
distant blue hills, and pagodas.\textsuperscript{13}

Macao and Whampoa undoubtably seemed tame to the bustle of Canton. The Pearl River at Canton was about one-half mile wide, one mile wide after the western tip of the large "Honam Island", directly across from the suburb of Canton where all foreign trade was done. Two Chinese forts, "Dutch Folly" and "French Folly", rose high out of the water in the immediate vicinity.\textsuperscript{14}

About one-half of the River fronting the foreign factories was clogged with a variety of small Chinese vessels, most of them the homes of Chinese peasant families. There were salt junks (in the Java trade), river junks, fast-boats, mandarin boats, flower boats (floating brothels), sampans, and egg-boats, all brightly painted and decorated—a small floating city itself.

The foreign factories (See Figure 3) were located between the walled city of old Canton and the Pearl River, among the crowded suburbs filled with a variety of warehouses, shops, and dwellings. The factories were set back from the River about fifty yards. They were bordered by "The Thirteen Factories Street" on the north, a creek and warehouses on the east, and the "Danish Hong", or factory, on the west. Between the factories (which were never manufactories), long and very narrow two and three-storied buildings of a generally neo-classical design, ran three streets, "New China", "Old China", and "Hog Lane". The factories were named, from west to east, "Danish", "Spanish", "French", 
"Hong" (a Chinese factory), "American", called "Wide Fountains" by the Chinese, "Paou Shun" (also Chinese), "Imperial" (Austrian), "Swedish", "Old English", known by the Chinese as "Assured Tranquility", "Parsee" (Indian), "New English", "Dutch", and "Creek" or "Peaceful Justice". Recurring fires, however, resulted in many changes in the order and names of the factories. Between the River and the factories was a guard station (at the corner of the American factory on Old China Street), a "Respondentia Walk" or large open square, an English Garden, and a number of jetties, the most prominent being named "Jackass Point".

Between each factory was a long, covered alley, and within each factory an open courtyard. The ground floors, the "go-downs" as they were called, of the factories, were generally composed of offices, storage rooms, showrooms, and treasuries or vaults. The first and second floors were reserved for bedrooms, sitting rooms, dining rooms, public rooms, and guest apartments. The merchants in these factories were essentially "volunteer prisoners" for if they desired to leave the immediate vicinity, special permission was necessary from the local Chinese authorities.

But the foreign merchants at Canton were more insulated than they were isolated, for their area was always crowded with "pedlars, hawkers, peep-show men and loungers, cobblers, tailors, and sellers of teas and nuts, not to speak of men who just stared and begged loudly."16 Ebenezer Townsend, the supercargo
of the "Neptune" from New Haven, reported the many strange sights that he had seen about Canton in 1799. He witnessed the large number of fish-vendors, coffin-sellers, and "beggers in the streets... who cut themselves until they were covered with blood to excite... pity and draw a mere trifle from my purse; others beat their chests with stones; others follow with a sort of corn-stalk fiddle until something be given to get rid of them". Occasionally the Chinese authorities would clear the foreigner's square of these people, but most of the time the crush around the foreign factories was unbearable. The many Chinese shops in the area offered such things as ivory, precious metals, silks, fireworks, birds and cages, herbs, pets, and a famous grog containing, "alcohol, tobacco juice, sugar, and arsenic."

To Samuel Russell the sights, colors, noises, and smells of Canton must have been strange indeed. Compared with Canton, New York, Providence, and Middletown must have seemed very serene to the supercargo of the "Fame".

Investments had to be made in this chaotic atmosphere, profits somehow gained. Samuel Russell must surely have thought that it would be a business, "to task the faculties of a man", as Thoreau had said. Russell stepped off at Jackass Point.
11. Connection at Canton

Samuel Wadsworth Russell and John Perkins Cushing met for the first time in the very different world of Canton and probably found that their lives, on the surface, were not dissimilar. However different the details of their individual backgrounds were, the basic facts that brought the two commission merchants together in that summer of 1819 in China, delineated a certain model of the enterprising young New England trader who found himself seeking wealth in the strange Far East. It was the probably the smallest of incidents—a letter—that occasioned the first meeting between Russell and Cushing. Perhaps in this way Samuel Russell's most important friendship and business connection began. The letter, from two of Russell's Providence partners, Edward Carrington and Cyrus Butler, was held for his arrival by Perkins & Company, John Cushing's agency in Canton.

After landing at Jackass Point, the new Canton agent, Russell, perhaps first made his way to the factory of the Cushing Agency, Canton branch of the redoubtable James and Thomas Handasyd Perkins (leaders of the famous "Boston Concern"). Russell could not have known then that he and Cushing would eventually be the closest of friends, their business tied together, the unquestionable "Merchant Princes" of the American China trade.

John Perkins Cushing was born in 1787 at Boston, making him just two years older than Russell. Cushing was the son of
a sea captain, perhaps like Russell, and was brought up by a guardian, apprenticed in a merchant's store, as Russell had been. Cushing, adopted by his Uncle, Thomas H. Perkins, worked as a clerk in the Perkins' countinghouse, engaged in all of the seemingly marginal, yet important, affairs of the firm's gigantic Northwest Coast-China fur trade.

Unlike the young Russell, Cushing was allowed an early opportunity to engage directly in the profitable and romanticized trade with China. In 1803, Cushing, just sixteen years old, sailed out on the new Providence ship "Patterson" as a special assistant to Ephraim Bumstead, the Perkins' newly-selected agent for their Canton affairs. After arriving in Canton in January of 1804, Bumstead's health began to deteriorate and by late November of 1805, he decided to leave his duties at Canton and ship out on the "Guatamozin" for Boston, leaving his young assistant, John Cushing, completely in charge. Upon hearing this, Colonel Thomas Perkins could only worry about his investments in that part of the world and hoped that Bumstead would be able to return quickly to the Company's business in Canton. Perkins' worry became greater when the "Guatamozin" arrived at Boston bearing the news of Bumstead's death during the voyage home. This bad news, along with an unexplainable silence from the accidental heir to the Canton agency, caused greater consternation among the Boston investors. To be sure, "The equivalent of millions of dollars worth of business were now in the untried hands of the seventeen-year-old boy eight
thousand miles from home and five months away from advice by letters."

All worries, however, were dispelled when the Perkins' ship "Hazard", loaded by Cushing with new teas of the 1805 season, arrived at Boston in perfect order; its hold carrying what was to be one of the most profitable cargoes in the Perkins' past twelve years of China trading. The parent-less and adopted Cushing had proven his competence before responsibilities and difficulties that few of his age ever had to face. He continued on in Canton, earned the undying respect of all the Boston merchants, and was allowed to buy interest in three foreign factories at Canton. He was later joined by another Providence man, William Paine, who became a junior partner in the Cushing agency of Perkins & Company, an establishment which quickly became the largest and most important American concern in China. And it had been firmly established by a young man who was not even twenty years old.

The story of John Cushing's early successes became the stuff for legends, endlessly retold on the Boston wharves and in the countinghouses. In very many ways was Cushing like someone out of Samuel Russell's past—Jeremiah Wadsworth. It is quite possible that Russell recognized the similarities.

Both Cushing and Wadsworth were left parent-less at an early age and both men were adopted by uncles who became their guardians, Thomas H. Perkins and Matthew Talcott. Both men were apprenticed in their uncles' mercantile establishments. At young ages both Cushing and Wadsworth were placed in unusual
positions that demanded leadership and drive. Cushing un-
expectedly inherited the reins of an important financial
venture when his employer suddenly died. Wadsworth had taken
to the sea in one of his Uncle's ships and because his captain
died, Wadsworth took responsibility for the voyage. Thus both
men had attained positions of leadership before they reached
majority age, had overcome obstacles and dangers, and neither
had reached their accomplishments by a studied or calculated
route. Nor did they marry and begin families before they
reached such positions. They both were commission merchants
(Wadsworth becoming his own merchant later), became extra-
ordinarily wealthy, gained a great deal of respect, and became
small legends in their times. They were men of activity, per-
haps Wadsworth more so than Cushing, and yet their wealth and
respectability were earned in somewhat shady dealings. Cushing
directed an opium-smuggling operation; Wadsworth monopolized
contracts to provision troops in time of war, establishing for
himself many important friendships, political and financial.

Even though Wadsworth died about the same year (1804)
that Cushing's first great success was achieved (loading the
"Hazard" in 1805), the two men were of the same mold. Russell
had been "connected" to Wadsworth in name, kinship, and perhaps
by acquaintance. But while Wadsworth probably remained a dis-
tant, yet influential, force in the early years of his life,
Russell was about to begin a more important connection with
another "model of success", John Cushing.
Samuel Russell's early years were certainly similar to that of Cushing. Both men were about the same age. Their father's occupations—sea captains—were probably the same. Both had lost their fathers early in life and both were brought up by merchant guardians. But there, in fact, the similarities ended. For while Cushing went before the mast before he had finished the customary apprenticeship, Russell did not have that opportunity until later, when in 1812 he went as a supercargo to Spain. When Cushing took over the Canton agency in 1805, Russell was probably still a clerk in a store in Middletown.

Russell completed his apprenticeship and by a longer, more calculated, and perhaps more agonizing route, he reached Canton to seek commissions where Cushing had been managing a very successful consignment business for fifteen years. Russell had a large family to support, including a mother, brother and sisters, a wife and her sister, and a son. Cushing had none. Russell had far to go before the wealth that he invested would be his own, while Cushing, only a few years after Russell had arrived at Canton, contemplated retirement.

iii. Advice from Providence

It might have been with some of these thoughts in mind that Russell approached Cushing to receive correspondence that September. It is possible that the letter for Russell from Carrington and Butler was addressed in care of the Perkins' agent with the hopes that their own man might become better acquainted
with an already successful venture. Edward Carrington, as an American Consul at Canton, had undoubtedly known Cushing. He and Butler, in fact, believed that their agent needed that better guidance which perhaps Cushing could afford.

The letter brought mostly bad news, yet worse, delivered that news with a distinct tone of reproof. It opened with discouraging reports about the current domestic prices and sales of Chinese goods; then reported happily, "A few days since we rec'd letters from our Liverpool friends, advising the sales of a part of our Cotton pr. the Patent, and of their intention to proceed in the Sales, as purchasers come forwards so that you will of course have no disappointment in realizing from that quarter the proceeds." With this news about the good British cotton sales the Providence men continued, "The accounts from France are rather discouraging for our Cotton pr. the Fame, and we shall not be dissappointed to hear that you have been induced to send it on apart [sic] to England." It was perhaps possible for Russell to detect the beginning of their lack of confidence in his actions in Europe. For Carrington and Butler added that, "It is not necessary at this time to make any remarks on your transactions in Europe, as whatever they may have been, cannot be altered." Such feelings induced them to begin a lengthy advice to the inexperienced China trader;

It is very difficult for merchants to give positive orders to their Agents at so great a distance, where time does not allow answers to be received to make alterations and changes, thus it is of the first necessity that Agents should bestow their whole minds, abilities,
and industry, to the instructions and interest of their employers.26

No supercargo or commission merchant at Canton could be wholly guided by instructions from home. The Providence men recognized the impossibility of close communication with their agent, yet were not completely willing to acknowledge that they would have to rely, in the end, on their correspondent's good discretion. Their advice continued;

"We know of no better mode to determine what articles will probably afford the best profit, than by making calculations of the cost, when delivered at the port of Sale, and assuming a price that will probably be attained... And in this way you may determine very nearly the probable result of almost any article, for in the present State of Commerce, all nations at Peace, and all carrying and trading at the cheapest possible rates--The prices cannot and will not fluctuate very quickly...27"

The lessons were indeed very basic for an experienced New England trader like Russell. But with such lessons the Providence men saw fit to append an extensive example of the calculations towards the cost of an article, in this case for different qualities of teas. For the different varieties--Hyson Skin, Young Hyson, Hyson, and Souchong--they calculated the total probable costs upon arrival at the port of sale. In this manner, for example, they added to the basic cost of 50¢ for one case of Hyson tea, the costs of, "7% Premium for Dollars... 2 years Interest on 1/2, allowing half to be bo't on credit...5% Insurance...Duty in America...Commission in Canton and America...freight at $0D\{\text{dollars}\}pr./Ton" thus making total cost
for the case of tea 109-1/2 cents. There were many factors that had to be weighed before tea might be bought and it was a complicated business. With the many trade restrictions imposed by the Chinese, duties that had to be paid; with the distance of between four to five months separating the buyer from news of the domestic market conditions (which could easily change within that time); with the volatile nature of Chinese demand (and thus prices for Western goods, the intense competition among foreigners for a limited amount of teas and silks, and with the general strangeness of the Canton environment for the Western merchant, the China commerce was perhaps one of the most intricate and thus challenging trades that Americans had ever engaged in. High profits were certainly just rewards, the many broken and missed fortunes inevitable. And it is little wonder that the very successful were respectfully titled the "Merchant Princes" of the China trade.

It was the subtleties of the Canton trade with which the Providence merchants wished to acquaint Samuel Russell, as they wrote;

We particularly recommend your best exertions to obtain teas either new or old, of good passable quality in handsome chests or Boxes, at lower prices than is paid at the sametime [sic] for same descriptions--than by your Neighbors.30 Perhaps it was that in America "handsome chests" sold less handsome teas. In another letter of instruction the Providence men explained further some of the intricacies of the tea market at Canton;
It has generally been the case, that some Teas are always remaining on hand, but, then the quality is inferior because 'tis the leavings of the whole previous season; therefore, the price is always below that of the first quality new Teas in the regular Season...last of October, November & December; besides, it must always happen, when the price of old Teas (as they are termed, that is, Teas of the preceding season, preceding the month of May or June) is low, they are sold for ready money...31

Interestingly, while they suggested that old teas may be desired, Carrington and Butler also noted ways in which their poor quality may be concealed;

Whatever Teas you purchase of the preceding Season, we recommend you keep either in your own Factory, or, in that of your Hong Merchant, 'till the regular season of shipping, as having the appearance of New Teas --because, should you ship them immediately, it will be notorious to the Canton residents, you are loading with old Teas--and with all the caution you can take, it would be known, but, then the quality you buy, will be only guesswork--and if you are accused of it, you can say, 'tis but a few chests---32

In such a case as this, the reputation of a commission agency was at stake, but if the old teas could be purchased at a discount, packed in "handsome chests", and made to arrive in the United States with other ships bearing teas of the new season, they might be sold as better quality tea. The advice went on;

Keep your own views and business yo yourself, move silently and apparently without anxiety or haste.33

In other words, calm appearances made for a better reputation; idle talk was foolish and dangerous, and deception profitable and worthy of cultivation;
get all your Cargo in readiness as fast as you can with advantage and when you begin to load, do it at once—never say when your ship will sail, only general terms—but always have her sail before the time you set—34

The ship loaded with new teas that reached a port before the others was more likely to obtain the best prices for its cargo.

A second letter from Carrington and Butler, which also might have arrived at Canton before Russell's arrival there, brought the news that Russell might have feared. They reproached him, "we have your letter of 23rd March advising of the Sale of the Fame's Cargo, which we think as well, as to have been kept for better prices which must be sometime before an improvement takes place..."35 Clearly, his partners were displeased with Russell's inattention to the European markets and his eagerness to sell the cotton in Amsterdam rather than waiting there or shipping the goods elsewhere for better prices.

Perhaps Russell had been eager to reach China. Perhaps the Providence merchants were exaggerating a missed opportunity for greater gain. In any case, they believed that the supercargo, Russell, had failed them in this respect. Whether Russell was offended or humbled by such remonstrances, it is difficult to say. But that he did not reply to Providence on this particular point, while he had often defended his actions at other times, suggests that he recognized his errors. Perhaps he measured this first failure as a Canton agent with John Cushing's first
success for his employer's gain. More likely, Russell resolved to send the "Fame" home with an outstanding cargo, giving his whole attentions at this time to the new Canton marketplace, perhaps confident that he had been underestimated.

iv. Charges and Duties

Soon after his arrival at Canton, Russell notified the Providence Concern that, "We have taken the Swedish Factory No. 4 with Mr. Ammidon & [it] is sufficiently large enough to accommodate the offices of all the Vessels we may both chance to have here together, by this arrangement there will be a considerable saving of Expense, which is all important in these hard times." 36

While Russell was the chief agent for the Providence Concern at Canton, it is very likely that he had there a clerk or special assistant, much like Cushing when he was an assistant to Ephraim Bumstead at the commencement of Perkins & Company in 1803. This assistant or assistants are never named or mentioned by Russell in his correspondence with Providence. However, the two different styles of writing in the letter book of the firm would suggest that he definitely had at least two different assistants between 1819 and 1823. While Russell almost always spoke of the firm, Samuel Russell & Company, in the plural possessive, most likely he was speaking for himself only.

The Swedish Factory, while built for Swedish traders originally, had come to be rented out to Americans as they had
filled their own building and as the Swedish no longer traded at Canton. The factory was one of the more modest buildings for foreigners at Canton. It was long and very narrow and nestled between the ornate "Old English" Factory and the Imperial factory. Like most of the other factories, it was simple and plain with two stories, its facade presenting four windows and a door on the ground floor and an arched veranda on the second (See Figure 3). Russell's rooms, those of "No. 4", were located at the rear of the Swedish factory, perhaps affording views of The Thirteen Factories Street and the walled city itself. He later mentioned the fact that, "We paid for the factory we rented, Swedish No. 4, $900 per year & this was 100 dollars less than we could have rented it for." 37

Thus Russell's first headquarters at Canton were somewhat modest. Renting with Ammidon probably made the situation crowded as each numbered office was originally planned for the quarters of one establishment; the captains and supercargoes of the establishment's ships also residing there. Trade, however, was quite languid in Canton at this time 38. The 1819 season would be one of "hard times" for Russell, as he witnessed. Russell may have been sacrificing his own personal comfort for the greater benefit of the Concern; not anticipating living in a grand style at Canton.

Philip Ammidon was from Providence and was the Canton agent of the Providence firm of Brown & Ives. In 1812, one of the ships consigned to him, which carried large quantities of
opium aboard, sank in the China Sea. It is likely that Ammidon sold opium after 1812 and probably during the time that he lived with Russell. Ammidon would figure strongly in the later development of Russell & Company, but in 1819 he was merely sharing the same quarters with Russell. Thus in Swedish Factory No. 4 were the Canton agents of the two largest shipping concerns of Providence.  

With his arrival at Canton and installation in the Swedish factory, Samuel Russell replaced Peter W. Snow, the last agent of the Carrington Company there. Russell wrote the Providence merchants that, "The Chauncey will leave Whampoa on the 8th inst. [November 8th], Mr Snow takes passage in her." We know little about Russell's predecessor at Canton except that he was later the American Consul there during the Opium War of 1839 and an important figure in that regard.  

Detailed instructions from the Providence merchants suggested to Russell his next course of action. They wrote:

In selecting your Security Merchant [that Chinese merchant who would secure cargoes of teas], you ought to give particular attention and endeavor, to get one in the first sett off [?], that will be enabled to serve you in your future business. Houqua is undoubtedly the first Merchant of Canton, but, he is much engaged in shipping for himself, Perkins & Co, Ammidon &c--that we are of the opinion, you had better have a man other than him--because, he will not be your Man, even should you secure with him. We should recommend you to Chunqua, Ponkiqua, Mouqua, Panqua & Youqua; during the residence of Mr. Carrington at Canton, he had Panqua & Youqua, but since that period we understand that they have become poor--Consequa, we have no doubt, will be very anxious to become your Merchant, and we should have no objections, except, he is said to be poor, and heretofore has been quite tricky in his former qualities of Teas, but we should have considerable confidence in him, for at least a few Cargoes--Cheonqua is also considered a tricky Man, and has also given bad Teas.
The Providence men, like many China traders before and after them, doubted the complete honesty of the Chinese merchants at Canton.\textsuperscript{43} There were always reports that the Hong Merchants had cheated the foreign merchants, by allowing the men who packed the chests with their feet to use shoes, which made the work go faster but which crushed the tea. \textsuperscript{44} Or there were occasionally reports that "Prussian blue" or "Chinese yellow" pigments had been added to the teas thus highlighting their brilliancy, or that iron filings, chopped willow leaves, had been added to increase the weight of the chests. \textsuperscript{45} But such things were apparently rare; the general honesty of the Hong Merchants, more often than not, was witnessed by foreign traders. \textsuperscript{46}

Of the "tricky" Chinese merchants, the letter continued;

\begin{quote}
it may be chargeable to all the Hong Merchants at various times, and it may be pretty generally observed, that according as Merchants are crowded or pushed, they will too often depart from the strict path of honesty--This can only be guarded against by being a competent judge of goods yourself, which you must be very active in obtaining a knowledge thereof.\textsuperscript{47}
\end{quote}

But the Providence men have already demonstrated that they too are guilty of small dishonesties in their business.

The Chinese merchants at Canton, known as the "Co-Hong" and usually numbering about ten, was established in 1720 at Canton. They were granted a monopoly of the foreign trade there by the mandarins in Peking. They were also held accountable for the actions of foreign traders at that place. Because an Imperial edict was issued in 1757, restricting all of China's foreign
trade to Canton, the members of the Co-Hong became very prosperous men, their monopoly of the trade secured. However, their work was not without its exactions, for they had to buy their positions with money and favors. They were also answerable to the mandarins for those foreigners who broke the many strict regulations of the trade, and their penalties were usually in the form of a "squeeze", another type of exaction which involved the paying over of huge amounts of money. And, as the Providence merchants had noted, when the Hong members were "crowded" or "pushed", they would be placed in financial jeopardy; the result being occasional cheating. The Hong merchants were the agents of the Peking government, acted as a buffer between the government and the foreigners, and were expected to participate in the bribery and general corruption rampant among the local ruling officials, especially the "Hoppo" or head customs man and the viceroy of the Canton province. 

Regarding a security merchant, the letter from Providence suggested:

We are now well know in Canton, it will give you some advantage in arranging with a security Merchant, and if Consequa should have regained his standing in some degree, we think he will have a disposition to serve us, and for a while, we think he would behave very well however, you must get all the information you can, and then decide as you think most advisable, but, you will always bear in mind that the American & Foreign Gentlemen, residing at Canton, have some one of the Hong Merchants for their friend, and whenever they recommend them to Strangers, they have some interest in doing it, yet, you must of course listen to their solicitations and wishes and afterwards decide for yourself. On the opinion of Mr Cushing & Mr Ammidon, should they give it freely, it will undoubtedly be given with sincerity & with attention.
It appears that Carrington, Butler, and the Hoppins trusted Cushing and Ammidon more than any of the other American traders at Canton. And Russell followed their advice. Perhaps it was their advice that led Russell to befriend Cushing and Ammidon. As will be seen, the three men, Russell, Cushing, and Ammidon, would choose courses that would bind their businesses together.

What Cushing and Ammidon might have advised Russell concerning a security merchant is not known, but Russell did not take Houqua, their Hong Merchant, as his Chinese agent. On September 28, 1819, with the notification to the Providence Concern of his arrival in China, Russell wrote:

Paunqua has secured the Fame, his standing here is good, he is free from debt & said to be well of in point of reputation for honesty and fair dealing is [sic] unsurpassed by none of them. he is very desirous of doing our business & manifests a disposition to give every accommodation & facility that may be required of him.50

Russell also later took credit from Paunqua, and on March 20, 1820, reported to Providence;

We secured the Fame & Integrity with Paunqua & we have no reason as yet to be dissatisfied with him. Houqua has refused to secure any American Vessel this Year. He is very ready to sell them Teas, but nothing further. we have done no business at all with him, having found him rather extravagant in his prices than some of the other Hong Merchants. the truth is he is too independent, he will not do business with any one unless upon his own terms & prices & you can never obtain as good prices from him, upon an inward Cargo, as from the rest of them.51

Houqua, the Hong Merchant of Cushing and Ammidon, was probably the most famous Chinese merchant of the 19th Century.52 He was
the leader of the Co-Hong, had many important contacts all over the world, his fortune estimated at between twenty and fifty million dollars at different times. He was a celebrity in the New England seaports, described by an American trader who later became associated with Russell, William C. Hunter;

He was a person of remarkably frugal habits (as regards his style of living) from choice and from being of a feeble frame of body. His generosity was boundless, and in accounts he was a singularly methodical and precise man, never multiplying them beyond what was absolutely necessary. The two or three rooms which he occupied during hours of business in his vast, well-regulated Hong were furnished with simplicity itself.

While Houqua later had many foreign agents at Canton who personally transacted his international interests for him, his first American agent was Cushing, in whom Houqua placed an unusual confidence. It is not unusual that a man of Houqua's standing should have placed his confidence in the hands of Cushing. It was generally known that Cushing was the most highly-regarded American merchant in Canton; many times he had been the arbitrator of disputes there.

It is likely that men like Houqua and Cushing naturally gravitated towards each other in the China trade, much like Jeremiah Wadsworth's attraction to and acceptance by many important American national figures. As will be seen, while Samuel Russell's business became entwined with that of Houqua's, the two men never had dealings on the level of those between Cushing and Houqua (and the Perkins of Boston). For the moment, however, Russell found the great Chinese merchant "too inde-
pendent", his prices "extravagant", and chose to deal with a lesser-known, but more reliable merchant, Paunqua.

After his first reconnoiter of Canton and all of its world-famous commercial commotions, Russell wrote Providence, "In regard to the prospect of there being very much Commission business to be done here, apart of what we may get from our immediate friends, we see very little indeed." Unfortunately, Russell does not here specify who the "immediate friends" are, but in light of events which were to occur not long after this, it might be possible that he was referring to Cushing and the allied members of his agency.

While Russell had been sent to Canton to oversee sales of imports from Providence and purchase Chinese products for export, there was also the intention that he should establish a commission agency to handle consignments from transient ships. By this way could more funds be earned which could be reinvested in more products for export.

But Russell quickly discovered that he was not the only new arrival at Canton as, "Almost every person who is in any ways extended in their trade, has an Agent here & every transient \[sic\] Vessel brings a Supercargo." He concluded, "Therefore the only chance that appears to us to be left, is in taking advantage of favorable opportunities to make shipments on our own account." For the remainder of his first establishment, Russell occupied himself solely with procuring cargoes on the Concern's
account. There is no evidence that he had any consignments other than those for Carrington, Butler, and the Hoppins. He was thus still a commission merchant, still working for other men.

But Russell was certainly occupied just with the duties of his firm's account. There would be the teas and silks to secure, dealings with the Hong merchants and the silk traders in the streets, credit arrangements made. He would keep constantly in touch with many foreign markets, solicit "Price Currents" from friends and connections in America and Europe. There were many letters to be read, noted; letters to be written -- to Providence, Europe, Gibraltar--- and copied faithfully in the huge letter books for further reference; letters to be written again and again, in duplicate and triplicate, so as to insure their reaching the destination, and run down to the vessels leaving from Whampoa to other parts of the world where correspondents there too, waited for news. There were day books, to keep, records of all kinds--costs, purchases, sundries, ship disbursements, compradore's account, trial balance sheets, bills of lading, invoices, tables, and fees. One had to be constantly aware of the Canton market; when and where teas and silks could be had, who was purchasing what, and where the goods were bound.

Goods purchased had to be stored, guarded, boxed and stamped, weighed and counted, and readied for a quick transfer to the small docks where they would be loaded into small boats and taken down to Whampoa. Silver had to be weighed, the bad
pieces removed, bagged and boxed. Even the ink had to be made. And all of these charges would easily occupy the agent's time while waiting for the next incoming ship.

When that ship actually appeared, work became frantic. Duties had to be paid, the cargo unloaded, transferred to Canton for storage, a security merchant obtained, exports loaded, and the captain, supercargoes, and other ship officers housed and entertained after their long journeys. His duties were many, the paperwork seemingly endless.

v. The Canton Market

With the goal of purchasing a return cargo for the "Fame", Russell reported to the Providence Concern, "After having secured the Ship [Fame] & got to House Keeping we went into the Market in search of old Teas, but we regret that we could find none of importance left, the market was never known to be so bare of Old Teas, the cause of this has been owing to the unusual number of late ships arriving here last Season." For every ship sent to Russell from Providence were detailed instructions regarding quantities, qualities, and prices of teas and silks that should be shipped on the return voyages. These instructions were always finalized with a view of the current American or European markets. In the case of the "Fame's" return cargo, the Providence merchants requested between 1500 to 2000 chests of "Hyson Skin" tea, 300 chests "Hyson Tea", 500 boxes "Souchong or Campoi" tea, between 200 to 300 piculs ( chests) "Cassia" ("July and August is the season for Cassia."),
which was an inferior cinnamon substitute, 3000 piece of "Crapes", 1000 pieces "Black Simchaw", 1000 pieces "Sarsenetts", and 50,000 pieces "short Yellow Nankins". Should his "funds hold out" ("which you must endeavor to husband, by obtaining some credit in the purchases you make of the Old Teas and Silks"), Russell was instructed to purchase also 500 chests of "New Hyson Skin" tea, 200 chests "New Hyson", 500 chests "New Young Hyson"; and 300 boxes "Anki Souchong" (in handsome boxes and fresh quality, Consequa is a great hand for Anki Tea--it comes from his native province."). They also noted that of the New Young Hyson Tea, Russell would, "have to purchase a part of [from] the outside Merchants, as none of the Hong Merchants like to engage so large a quantity for one Ship---". The outside merchants were those Chinese merchants not authorized to trade at Canton. The quantities as named above, were calculated to fill the hold of the "Fame", leaving a certain amount of space for, "adventures for the officers". This suggested cargo they estimated would cost Russell $153,500, and they calculated his specie on hand to be $200,000: "$70,000 From Sales of the Fames ...Cargo of cotton to your consignment", $50,000 "From Willis Latham & Gair", and $80,000 "From Crommelin & Sons". Out of this amount they noted that $77,000 would have to go to Perkins & Company for a debt to Houqua incurred by Peter W. Snow, the last agent of the Providence merchants at Canton, and they speculated that Russell would have to take some credit of between thirty and fifty thousand dollars in order to fill the order. 62
Either the Providence men were over-estimating their Canton resources or the sales of the "Fame's" cotton in Europe were very poor, for Russell paid over to Perkins & Company only $9,225 (for "Mr. Houqua") and took up a credit from Paunqua for $54,000. In all probability, as the Providence men had expressed displeasure with the European venture of the previous spring, the sales of the cotton at Amsterdam were a failure.

Prior to 1828, almost all teas exported from Canton to America, were green teas rather than the black varieties. The black teas consisted of "Bohea" (from the "Woo-E" Hills of Fuh-Keen), and "Powchong" (literally, "seeds in a bundle"). Green teas, those shipped most often by Russell, were "Young Hyson" (or gathered "before the rains"), "Hyson" ("opening of spring"), "Hyson Skin" ("refuse or end of the crop"), "Gunpowder" ("small pearls"), and "Imperial" ("large pearls").

The types of silk products that Russell sought at Canton were described by his employers;

Having become a little acquainted with the Tea Market ...you will examine the Silk Market, and if you find any ready made Silks on Hand, which, is sometimes the case, tho' not often, you will examine the quality, and if Black Sarsenettes, Black Sinchaws, and dark Coloured Crapes; Can be bought, at reasonable prices, we should like about the value of 50,000 Dollars in Silks....but, if you have to give an order for the silks to be manu-
 factured, it is probable you will have to give something higher--and in case you do not find them ready manu-
factured, recommend you to give an order for the manufacture of the whole, or part of the quantity--you ought to be particular, in having silks of good quality (if you have them manufactured) even threaded and of a good shining colour, and to have the weight and the full length, agreed for....In choosing Crape, be particular to avoid high colors, such as Scarlet, Pink, Purple & White & Yellow--the best colors, are, black, Plumb, Tea, Pearl & Olive--the weight os Crapes govern very much the quality and price.
Russell reported that the Hong and Tea Merchants had not completed their contracting, thus delaying the arrival of the new teas from the outlying provinces. The delay of the tea arrivals, which usually came in during the first two weeks of October, was more complicated, as Russell discovered:

In consequence of the lowness of the Waters between this [Canton] & the Tea Country, teas have come in very slowly in addition to which there have been no contracts made with the Tea Merchants as has been heretofore the case. Formerly the Hong Merchants contracted with the Tea Merchants to pay them for their teas at what the average price might be for the Season. The Hong Merchants can now only buy tea from the Tea Men as they are wanted for the Ships they Secure & thereby are governed altogether by the prices that are demanded by these Tea Men, who have been flattering themselves that they should realize high prices. It now remains altogether with the Tea Men. Most of the Americans being inclined to wait awhile, the Tea Men have discovered that there is not the demand for (or willingness to purchase their Teas, that they expected, the consequence is that they are less sanguine & prices have given way a little.

Russell was a close follower of the marketplace. His enquiries were at times almost scientific in their analysis and undoubtedly stemmed from a desire to know everything about his business; all that might be learned from his neighbors. He was going about the task of education in a new environment and seemed to delight in the knowledge and experience he was accumulating as his correspondence to Providence was filled with lengthy descriptions and explanations of the Canton market.

Russell wrote Providence, asking for the, "earliest & best information respecting the markets of the U.S. . . .", and subjoined to that note a list of "articles of export from this
Country, that might do to Ship, which are occasionally sent from here. The list included such items as camphor, a natural oil used in the manufacture of medicines; "Dragon's blood", a red resin used in photogravuring; gamboge, a reddish-yellow gum resin utilized as a paint pigment and laxative; vermilion, a durable red pigment; and musk, a valuable perfume fixative derived from the abdominal glands of the deer. Russell could only report high prices for the Chinese products in general, but added, "We anticipate a considerable reduction of prices in the space of 3 or 4 months & hope by that time to hit upon something upon which money may be made..."

To find that "something", Russell found it necessary to keep himself and his Providence correspondents constantly informed of what particular articles were being traded at Canton with the best results. He was always attentive. There were general trends to be noted;

Nankins [sic], it is thot' will decline, provided the Portuguese do not come into the Market, it is now so late in the Season there is very little probability they will appear here this year. they are in the habit of taking large quantities of the article & prices generally advance on their appearance in the Market.

Or Russell would occasionally report of the market for a specific article;

We think you would find your Account in sending a few pieces Dutch Camblets [sic] to this market occasionally ...we consider Dutch Camblets [a durable animal fur] one of the safest articles of Merchandise that can be sent to this Market.
Most interesting, however, was Russell's knowledge of what his neighbors, and their clients and partners, were doing in the markets. In November of 1819, he wrote:

business is very languid for this season of the year. There are a few vessels remaining and the greater part of them are waiting for prices to give way & no doubt they will wait in vain...The Vancouver has a considerable quantity of silks on board for acc't of her owner whose orders to his agent were not to make any purchases for his acc't till the 20th Oct. this being generally known & having large funds to invest, the Market was influenced thereby & his silks have been bought at the very highest prices given this season..."1

There was good reason, as this example may have demonstrated to Russell, for the agent to remain silent about his affairs, or as Carrington and Butler had suggested, "Keep your own views and business to yourself."

While those merchants who were not protective of their information stood to lose at Canton, there were stories of other merchants who had cautiously and silently delivered their goods to Canton and reaped great profits. Russell related one such account;

Ginseng is now very high, this is an article which fluctuates very much and the consumption [by the Chinese] of it is limited...

Ginseng, a native root of New England, was thought to have medicinal and religious qualities by the Chinese, and was the most important American export to China in the early trade, prior to 1800. Its limited demand in 1819, and the great fluctuations of its price at Canton, were due to the decline in impor-
tance that it experienced in China, although apparently there were occasions of great demand there. Russell continued:

there were 100 piculs of it brought out in the Dorothea from Philadelphia which was sold for cost at 270$ per picul giving to the owners about 20,000$ profit...

The sizable returns of this cargo was undoubtedly recognized by most of the American merchants at Canton. Russell thus anticipated;

this sale will without a doubt induce large shipments from America next Spring [so as to arrive for the tea season in the fall] which will probably knock down the price to 50 to 60$ per picul.

But it was the successful merchant that could turn such information to his own advantage. Russell concluded;

however this information will only reach America by the Vessels that are now Sailing from here... the Clothier, China Packet, and Caledonia. should on rec't of this there be any vessels about sailing for this place, and you can make the purchase \[of ginseng\] at a fair price, we should like you to purchase, say 40 to 50 piculs of this article and ship us by the first Vessel, and if you think it prudent and advisable, the quantity can be increased at any rate. we should not recommend over 100 piculs. should you think proper to ship us the ginseng, we urge the necessity of it being done immediately.73

The information that an agent, such as Russell, found important, ranged from specific particulars to general trends. Those facts found worthy of note were facts from which lessons could be learned and reiterated, and from which a greater advantage in the market might be made. The successful merchant gar-
nered and studied his information protectively, using lessons aggressively, yet cautiously, to his own benefit. Russell did all of these things.

At Canton Russell's outreach extended to many markets throughout the world. It became necessary to distill the information received from those markets and apply facts learned to his own dealings. Often he noted the circumstances of world markets and their influence on his own at Canton. For example, he reported to Providence that, "The Markets are high [at Canton] & there are a great many vessels already in port which with those daily expected the number will be unusually great & independent of what we term regular traders or direct Ships, there may be several expected from Manila & Batavia in consequence of the high prices of Sugar, Coffee, &c at those Ports."\(^4\)

The way that the successful merchant kept informed of other markets was by soliciting an exchange of correspondence with merchants stationed in other ports. Often the solicitations went out as a type of advertisement of one's own agency, with the hope of gaining consignments from those merchants. Russell, after describing briefly the state of affairs at Canton, and after announcing his arrival there and the establishment of a commission agency, wrote the merchants, Hill and Blodget of Gibraltar;

We hope the time is not far distant when we can justify making some shipments to your place. We shall be pleased to hear from you often & hope you will keep us constantly advised of the state of your Market as well as those of the Mediterranean, for should there be any inducements held out for making shipments, we should be pleased to avail ourselves of them.\(^5\)
The solicitations for exchange of information almost always suggested the possibility that, if the state of the markets allowed, one would naturally be sending one's business to whomever the solicitation was addressed. To Messrs. Van Baggen, Parker and Dixon at Amsterdam, Russell wrote:

We avail ourselves of the present conveyance to wait on you with our respects & hope that this the commencement of our correspondence may lead to something which may result to our mutual benefit...We shall be pleased to receive your communications relative to the Markets from time to time & beg to offer our Services, to you or your friends, for the transaction of any business you may have this way & it affords us pleasure to have it in our power to Serve you in return.76

A further intention of such solicitations was to confirm what other merchants may have advised. In the same manner, that most letters of importance were sent out on different vessels in duplicate and triplicate, so too was solicitations for correspondence sent out to confirm what another merchant may have written. As the solicitation above was sent to merchants in Amsterdam (and with whom Russell did no business after this time) and because, as will be seen, Russell was having suspicions of his client's judgement in that same place, it is probable that this particular letter was meant as little more than an attempt to confirm that which his clients had been reporting. Such a device was used, in fact, as a check on Russell's partners in Providence.

By 1819, Providence was beginning to decline in importance as a favorable port where East India products could be imported and marketed. New York City was surpassing the other New England ports in the amount of commerce transacted on its
wharves, and in its countinghouses and customs offices. Perhaps this trend had been noticeable to Russell. He wrote George N. Talbot of New York, the agent of the Providence Concern there;

We take the liberty of addressing you at this time to solicit your correspondence and to ask the favor of your advice relative to the China trade generally, State of Markets &c. Our Providence friends are so situated that we should rely more on the information that you will be able to communicate to us than them, and we hope are long to be able to do something with you to our mutual advantages.

This request may represent not only Russell's recognition of the decline in importance of Providence in the China trade, but also the earliest note of a dissatisfaction with the trade of the Concern.

But in some cases, there was little foreseeable advantage for Russell to send out information regarding the Canton market. To a Captain Timothy Bryant, Jr. of the Ship "Jackson" at Manila, Russell volunteered;

the prospects of freight from hence hither to Europe or America are by no means flattering, there are several vessels already in port, which must take freight & the shippers are very few indeed. The prices of Chinese products (from last advices) both in Europe & America were such as to hold out no inducements for shippers to adventure, some little freight has been taken at $30 per Ton.

But whether Russell's advices to foreign merchants, agents and captains were meant to advertise, solicit information, offer the possibility of future transactions, check on other quotations and advice, or merely as a service, one thing was sure to the agent Russell, that, "our quotations can only
be considered as the prices of the moment for this is the most fickle market in the World."\(^80\)

Between his duties of "House Keeping", surveying the tea and silk markets of Canton, studying the new market environment, and sending off announcements and solicitations for information, Samuel Russell purchased for the Fame's return cargo, 300 chests of "Old Skin" tea of passable quality, and in China Street found and bought 50,000 pieces "Short Nankeens", 1000 pieces "Sarsenetts", 300 pieces "Sinchaws", and 200 pieces of "black satin"--his first purchases at Canton.\(^81\) About a month after his arrival at Canton, Russell reported to Carrington and Butler that;

We cannot at present foresee anything to prevent the Fames sailing in 4 or 5 days. She will be the first vessel to leave here loaded with Teas of the present Season & we hope that she may be the first to arrive at Market.\(^82\)

On the 16th of November, Russell got the "Fame" on its way, ordering Captain Joshua Rathbun;

The Ship Fame under your command being loaded and ready for sea, you will proceed with all dilligent dispatch for New York. The owners are particularly desirous that the Fame should be one of the first ships to arrive in America with New Teas. we should wish therefore to impress on your mind the importance of using every exertion to accomplish their wishes in this respect.\(^83\)

In hoping to get the "Fame" off before any other ship, Russell was dutifully minding his employers' advice, "it is of the first necessity that Agents should bestow their whole mind, abilities, and industry, to the instructions and Interest of their employers." Russell's order to Rathbun continued;
You will please manifest the Vessel & Cargo bound to Providence, consigned to Messrs. Carrington & Co. & Butler. Mr. George N. Talbot is the Agent of the Owners in New York, upon whom you will call for any aid or any advice you may stand in need of. Wishing you a short and pleasant voyage....

The "Fame", the first ship that Russell secured a cargo for at Canton, carried 2717 chests of Hyson Skin tea, 200 chests Hyson tea, 502 chests Young Hyson tea, 299 half-chests Souchong tea, 50,000 pieces short yellow Nankeens, and 15,550 pieces of silk. His cargo was short of the tea that had been asked for, probably because they had expected some old teas and Russell found none left in the market; did not include any cassia, but contained more than three times as many silk pieces. (See Figure 4).

It was no small distinction to load and see off the first vessel carrying new teas of that season. Russell was apparently up to the competition. But there is no record that the "Fame" reached New York or Providence first, or whether substantial profits were made. Unlike John Cushing's first important ship of teas, Russell's left no great mark of distinction.

**vi. Problems**

Most of the ships, however, for which Samuel Russell procured cargoes at Canton between 1819 and 1823, were bound for Dutch markets, the sales consigned to Messrs. Crommelin & Sons at Amsterdam. It was probably while he was in Amsterdam that Russell made arrangements with Crommelins for the delivery of
teas at that port. After his arrival at Canton, Russell had reason to believe that the Holland market was the best, for he wrote the Providence merchants:

We have tho't for some time that the Holland market was the best market to send a ship [with teas] to at this moment. There have only four Vessels gone to Europe from here since we arrived (and none here that are bound there)...The Canton Packet will probably go to Holland. The Houqua also as well as one Dutch Ship if she has good luck. The Bocca Tigris we calculate has gone up the Streights [sic] of Malacca therefore you will readily conceive that the Exports from here direct to Holland fall far short of what they did last year up to this time.85

Interestingly, three of the four American ships that Russell noticed were engaged in the Dutch trade, the "Canton Packet", "Houqua", and "Bocca Tigris"; belonged to J. & T.H. Perkins of Boston; their business at Canton supervised by John Cushing. Russell had either made the decision, or was confirming an inclination of the Providence merchants', to sell his teas in a market where the only other American shipper to that same market was the Perkins, with Cushing at Canton. Russell's decision to engage in the same market as Cushing suggests that he was either following his lead or imitating his actions in this respect.

But his knowledge of the whereabouts of each of the Perkins' ships suggests more convincingly that Russell was being informed about their interests in Holland. Was perhaps Cushing giving Russell this information? And if so, does this suggest that Russell had been taken into the confidence of Cushing, and was possibly even being helped by him?
But Russell ran into problems with the Dutch market.

The Providence Concern advised Russell of that market;

We always considered it safe to purchase good Merchandize [sic] when they are very cheap & in purchasing Teas for Holland, too much attention cannot be given to quality prime quality will always sell at a fair price, whilst middling will barely find Sale. The difference of quality is wonderfull--86

But while Cushing and Russell of the American agents at Canton, and the Dutch of course, found an advantage in sending tea to Holland, their particular trade was not without its frustrations. Apprehensively, Russell related to Providence a newly-encountered problem;

We find there are great complaints by the residents here against the Brokers in Holland for giving to some Cargoes a good character & to others an indifferent & sometimes a bad one in cases where the qualities have been known to be the same. The Dutch Gentlemen informed us today of an instance where a Chop [quality] of Tea bought of Mr. Houqua by three different Shippers (a part of which they took themselves) and shipped in three different Vessels bound to Amsterdam, all of which underwent the inspection of Mr. Voort the great Tea Broker, who decided that which was in one Vessel was Superior, that in another Middling, & in the third common, when all was known to be one and the same chop, hence it is believed that the Tale [quality] of a Cargo, sent there is decided by the caprice of the moment...87

Russell believed that the Canton teas were being judged poorly. In light of this belief, he sent the "Integrity", loaded with teas, to Holland in March of 1820 with the note to his agents, the Crommelins, there;

We flatter ourselves this Cargo will acquire a reputation with your Broker for goodness of quality not inferior to any kind & we sincerely hope our expectations maybe fully realized in regard thereto. 88
By the end of that March, Russell had also loaded
and directed another Providence-owned vessel, the "George",
Captain Esdall, to the Crommelins, and of her teas, he reiterated;
"It would mortify us extremely, if any Vessel leaving here about
this time, should carry better Teas to Holland than we have
sent."
He demonstrated to Crommelins the basis of his ap-
prehension when he added;

Mr. George [a Dutch agent] has favoured us with a
perusal of Mr. Voort's report & valuation of the
Montesqueiu's Cargo sold in May last & it would
appear from the Sales having been effected at much
higher prices than he (Mr. Voort) had affixed to the
different qualities or chops that the Teas were ac-
tually better than he represented them to be.

In the end, Russell's fears came true, for he became the
victim, in his eyes, of unfair judgement of the quality of the
tea he purchased for the Dutch market. In defense, he wrote
to Carrington and Butler;

You may readily conceive Gentlemen, what our feelings
are when Cargoes selected by us for the European Mar-
ket, purchased at the same time and compared in those
Markets by the Brokers with other Cargoes selected by
our neighbors, and pronounced inferior to theirs...

Probably, Russell's teas had been judged inferior to those sent
by Cushing and the Dutch agent at Canton. Since his agency was
relatively young compared to those two, it is possible that he
was being taken advantage of by the Crommelins' broker, who
might have thought that less could be remitted to Providence
by questioning the abilities of a new Canton agent. Russell
continued his defense;

We not only feel that our reputation as Judges of Teas
is called in question in such Cases, but that we likewise incur the liability to have said of us that we did not take pains with, nor devoted that attention to your business that the importance & magnitude of your Concerns required from us.\textsuperscript{92}

Interestingly, Russell defended his agency's loyalty to its backers as well as his agency's reputation. But perhaps such a demonstration of intended devotion was meant as a flattering gesture to lessen the sting of what followed;

but from the latter [possibility of disloyalty] our consciences will readily acquit us from all imputations, & as regards the former ["reputation as Judges of Teas"], perhaps you will consider it presumption in us to say anything on the subject, but we feel it to be our duty to state explicitly to you that we think, if we always had the wherewithal to purchase Teas when we pleased we should stand on a much better footing with our neighbors in the Tea Market than we do now.\textsuperscript{93}

It was undoubtably at times like these that Russell wished for his own commission agency, free from the demands and inevitable reprimands of employers.

During his early years at Canton as an agent for the Providence Concern, Russell complained frequently and sometimes bitterly of the lack of specie sent to him for purchases on the Firm's account. The remittance of silver dollars in exchange for teas, sâlks, and other Chinese products was general and widespread; the practice interrupted only when other imports—ginseng, furs, sandalwood, bêche de mer, metals, raw cotton, and opium were available to the Western merchants and in demand by the Chinese.\textsuperscript{94}

Russell's lack of means with which to invest at Canton reached a crisis point during the early months of 1820. His
complaints were directed to all of the original investors in Samuel Russell & Company as the lack of adequate financial support brought Russell in confrontation with the Providence merchants more than any other issue.

The problems that arose because of a lack of dollars were many and varied but the results the same; the agent could not invest or loan money when he wanted, the best possible calculations reduced to the realm of mere chance, and the agent's impotence in the Market all but assured. Purchasing goods totally on credit forced the agent to accept the delays in the processing of his bought goods as Russell noted to the partners in Providence in February of 1820; "You will see the importance of our having money on hand to use as opportunities for investing it to advantage, & the difference of time between an immediate advance made upon the receipt of the Goods, & that which usually transpires before Sales can be effected & the usual Credit terminate, is to us an object of no small importance." 95

In April the situation had not altered appreciably for Russell noted;

At present we see nothing to induce us to use the Credit of our Concern [i.e. no purchases to be made against acquired credit]. As for the money, you are well aware we have none & were the opportunities to purchase the products and manufactures of this Country so good, we could not avail ourselves of them. Credit without a little money to help the bargain along is a poor need to rest upon. 96

Specie invested properly facilitated the acquisition of needed
credit and moved transactions more smoothly. But specie loaned also had its advantages as Russell pointed out to his partners; "We should like always some money at command to take advantage of the Markets... & when even they [prices] are too high, our money is accumulating interest at a better rate than with you." Most important though, the adequate supply of silver dollars allowed the agent a free hand in the competition for goods. In Russell's case, the lack of specie was a direct cause (or so he believed) of his teas being judged inferior to those of other Canton agents in Holland.

Russell frequently (especially during the early months of 1820 and occasionally later) endeavored to have this problem alleviated. He implored the Providence merchants to remit more silver for the greater benefit of the Concern; "we would therefore earnestly solicit your compliance with our request to enable us to embrace every chance to make profitable operations for the benefits of all concerned." Or he tried to get the funds by another argument; "we have to ask the favors of you to grant us, all the facilities in our business in this Country, that you can by way of advances &c on the shipments we have already made you & hope not be dissappointed." 

Whether no specie was coming from Providence was due to a lack of interest on the part of the Providence men in the continuation of the Canton agency, or whether it was due to the general specie problem in the United States at this time, is not clear.
But Russell was discouraged; his powers as an agent reduced by factors beyond his control. Perhaps he had lost, altogether, the confidence of the men in Providence; the failure of the early cotton sales in Europe, and now the bad reports from Amsterdam, had perhaps discouraged their further investment with Russell. On January 15, 1822, Russell could only write them, "It's rather provoking to stand by and be an idle spectator to the good bargains which our friends are picking up, & which we might participate in, but for the want of means."\footnote{101}

\textbf{vii. Interest in Opium}

American merchants had not entered the ancient trade of smuggling opium into China until 1804, just fifteen years before Samuel Russell’s arrival at Canton.\footnote{103}

Samuel Russell’s first written reference to the opium trade occurs in a letter dated January 14, 1820. Perhaps not just coincidentally did the beginning of his interest in opium begin at about the same time that he was experiencing difficulties with foreign brokers and obtaining dollars from his partners. Those who dealt with opium did not have such problems, as will be seen. The first reference stated simply, to the Providence merchants, that;

\textbf{Turkey opium is very scarce and is now worth Eleven hundred Dollars. Perkins & Co. continue to do a good deal in this article, they are the only persons who do anything of importance in that kind of opium. Bengal Opium is worth about \$1400$ [a chest], there is commonly a difference of about from 80 to 100 per Cent in the value of these two kinds in the market.}\footnote{104}
As there exists no evidence to show that the Providence merchants, Carrington, Butler, and the Hoppins, were ever involved directly in the opium trade, this advice from Russell must have been merely informational. However, in that this is Russell's first statement regarding the illegal and controversial trade, it is important for its matter-of-factly, very business-like tone, devoid of the moral questions raised by the Chinese and others. It establishes the fact that Russell, like the great majority of Western merchants in China, had come to regard opium solely as an article of trade. Russell found the only necessary remarks about that article of trade be limited to shifts in market value, potential profit, those merchants involved, and general information about prices. He mentioned Turkey opium above because of its sudden demand and its increased value relatively to the more commonly demanded Bengal variety.

It must be remembered that while the importation of the drug was highly objected to by the Chinese officials at Canton, it was condoned by the large part of the foreign residents there. Even though one famous American House, Olyphant & Company, had refused to deal with opium (and thus nicknamed "Zion's Corner), for moral reasons, most American houses looked upon the drug as merely another possible import demanded by the Chinese; a substitute for costly specie.

Russell's first reference suggests that he was becoming aware of the different prices that opium could bring in the Canton market.
Between the end of the War of 1812 and Russell's arrival in China in 1819, the only two concerns with large opium transactions at Canton were John Jacob Astor of New York and more importantly, James and Thomas H. Perkins of Boston. In 1816 Astor had brought varying amounts of Turkey opium to New York where it was transferred to vessels bound for Canton. 105 His Brig, "Macedonian", arrived at Canton in July, 1816 with 40 piculs, or chests, of Turkey opium, and almost seven months later his ship, "Seneca" arrived with 95 piculs. 106 In April of 1817 the Perkins of Boston authorized their agents in Leghorn, Gibraltar and Smyrna to purchase very large quantities of the Turkey drug as soon as possible to meet Astor's challenge, worried that because of "so many in pursuit of Opium that it will rise in price at Smyrna", and imploring their agents that, "no time should be lost as the first arrivals will put the others on the scent". With the War with England concluded and the attendant harassment of American vessels at Canton no longer the case, American merchants were once again investing heavily in the Turkish drug for the Canton market.

Their new optimism was checked, however, by what became known as the "Wabash Affair". In May of 1817, Chinese pirates boarded the Baltimore vessel, "Wabash", Captain Gantt (who was one of the earliest recorded American importers of opium into China), which had anchored near Macao. The pirates killed some of the crew members and plundered $7,000 in specie and 35 cases of opium. Benjamin C. Wilcocke (one of the earliest exporters of opium from Smyrna), the American Consul in Canton at the time,
protested the pirates' actions to the local Chinese authorities, not mentioning the contraband cargo that had been stolen. With the capture of the pirates, the Chinese discovered the nature of the cargo, and were quick to demonstrate anew their anger with the "foreign barbarians". Edicts were issued by the mandarins and the Hong merchants squeezed. Wilcocks was reprimanded and reminded that:

foreign Opium, the dirt used in smoking, has long been prohibited by an order received, it is not allowed to come to Canton; If it be presumptuously brought, the moment it is discovered, it inevitably involves the Security Merchant; and the crime of said Vessel, bringing the prohibitive dirt for smoking, to Canton, will also be assured.109

The protest, like so many of the other edicts of a similar nature were taken lightly by the foreign merchants, for bribery of local officials healed most wounds quickly; the drug continued to be sold at Macao or Whampoa.110

The latest edicts and threats of stringent enforcement of the regulations against opium, had a natural effect on the American merchants. While many of the smaller houses heeded the warnings, as they had more to lose if they should invest in opium and be caught; while the larger and more important trading houses saw the renewed Chinese pressures as eliminating their competition, namely the smaller houses. The Perkins interpreted the new state of affairs to mean simply that, "the transient adventurers cannot deal in it [opium] so adventurously as we."111 For the most part, the unique nature of the opium trade would not allow, especially with increased Chinese
interference, for small ventures in the drug by investors with small capital. As opium was a highly speculative article of trade, subject to wild price shifts and sold in a limited marketplace, any Chinese interference, no matter how small or spineless, usually caused great delays in the sales; the Chinese buyers fearing punishment. The conditions of the trade made it necessary to have vessels that could wait out such disturbances until the right market was available for its opium. And only the wealthiest American trading firms could afford such a proposition; tying up large amounts of capital in a smuggling operation that promised large profits if time was not a factor.

It was during the time of Russell's arrival in China that Perkins of Boston, with their own agents, John Cushing and William Paine, already advantageously installed at Canton, constructed a certain type of opium marketing mechanism that not only eliminated much of their competition in the lucrative business, but also became the model by which most of the fortunes in opium smuggling were made. It was a simple plan that not only gave Americans a complete monopoly in the Turkey opium trade—carriage and sales—but which also allowed them to expand into the heart of the trade—the British trade in Bengal opium. For the moment though, the Perkins would have been satisfied if they could completely eliminate their only competition, Astor.112

With the new mechanism established and with the very profitable Turkey opium transactions conducted by Astor and Per-
kins during the 1817 and 1818 seasons, it was logical that the Americans would turn their attentions to the potentials of the Indian opium trade, the recognized domain of the powerful East India Company. There were a number of plans, but most all failed apparently, as Americans had been barred from the Persian Gulf carrying trade by the John Jay Treaty with England of 1784.113 After Astor experimented with a small shipment, he apparently withdrew altogether from the opium trade.114 The only venture of this type which succeeded was that of the Perkins', who were able to market 80,000 pounds of Persian opium at Canton; the sales returning 25% more profit than the Turkey opium, the opium itself even costing less.115

Samuel Russell arrived at Canton during an important transitional phase in the American opium trade to China. Americans, led by the novel marketing mechanisms of Perkins & Company, established finally their monopoly of the Turkey drug in China. More importantly however, was the fact that the Americans had decided to attempt inroads into the more profitable Persian opium trade. It has been estimated that during the seasons of 1817 and 1818, Americans could have easily imported one-third of all the opium consumed in China for those seasons.116

There exists enough circumstantial evidence to support the conclusion that during the first establishment of his agency, 1819-1823, Samuel Russell was not involved in the opium trade. As an agent for the Providence merchants, it is likely
that any decision to speculate in the drug would have come from Providence. There is no evidence that Russell was sent to Canton to sell opium shipments nor that any of the ships owned by the Concern had carried any opium to China.

But Russell often mentioned the trade in his letters. The fact that his later establishment in Canton was to deal in the drug quite heavily, makes it important to mark these early references to the trade. It was during this time that Russell made a decision to devote a good part of his remaining years in China to opium transactions.

Early in the establishment of the first agency, Russell wrote Providence:

There are many articles which may occasionally be shipped to this Country in lieu of Dollars that will yield a profit. The saving of premium [extra cost of purchasing the dollars] is quite an object worthy of attention. Quicksilver will generally be a safe remittance. Russell here does not mention opium, and if he were dealing in the drug there would be many more references to prices etc. It is likely that the Providence merchants were well aware of the monopoly of the trade held by Perkins & Company and that to venture to disrupt that monopoly would necessitate larger capital and free ships which, judging by their withholding of funds in general, seems likely they did not have.

Because of the heavy importation of Turkish and Persian opium during the seasons of 1817 and 1818, and the resulting glut of the drug on the market, very little opium was brought to China by Americans for the 1819 season--Russell's first at
Canton. The East India supercargoes estimated that not more than 180 piculs of Turkey opium had been imported during the 1819 season. It was during these half-on months that Cushing, considering retirement from the China trade, made steps to divest his agency of all or part of its outside (i.e. that which was not Perkins') opium commission business. While a circular of October 26, 1818 was issued by Perkins & Company announcing the transferal of their outside opium business to the firm of J.P. Sturgis & Company, that business was actually given over to Sturgis in 1821. More interesting, however, was the fact that between the announcement of October, 1818, and the actual transaction between Cushing and Sturgis in 1821, probably in the spring of 1819 Cushing recommended that all of the Perkins' outside opium commission business be turned over to Samuel Russell. As there is no evidence to show that this was done, Sturgis was probably the only merchant to benefit by Cushing's desire to extricate himself partially from the traffic. The Sturgis Company was closely allied with the Perkins, Sturgis related directly to the Perkins family. It is significant, however, that Cushing had considered turning over the business to Russell, especially when it is considered that he had only been in China a year and was not related to the members of the "Boston Concern" in any way. Why Russell did not become heir to this business can not be said. But the trust that the recommendation demonstrates, even though the actual transferal more than likely never occurred, is greater evidence
of Cushing's increasing confidence in Russell and a growing friendship between the two men.

Whether coincidental or not (and I think not), Russell's interest in opium, at least gauging by references in letters, began not long after Cushing had recommended to his Boston partners that the outside opium commission business be given to him. In his first reference to opium of January, 1820, Russell had noted that Turkey opium was scarce and in demand at Canton. But even while there existed that demand, little, if any, was imported by the Americans during the 1820 season. By 1820, American commerce with China had been seriously cut back due to the domestic money crisis in the United States. While it has been noted that this may have been a reason for the fact that Russell was not receiving satisfying amounts of specie from Providence, it was the reason why little was done in the American opium trade during the 1820 season. Circulating rumors at Canton that told of an increased British importation of Persian opium to be imminent, also had the effect of discouraging American traders from venturing in the drug. Another reason for the lack of American adventure in the drug was the renewed interference of the Chinese authorities. In April, 1820, the governor-general and the Hoppo at Canton issued another edict requiring a search of incoming ships. The complexities of this latest action were elucidated by Russell for Carrington and Butler:

In regard to Opium we have to inform you that there have been new difficulties thrown in the way to prevent the selling of or importation of this article...
It is interesting that Russell here places "selling" before "importation" for the processes occurred vise-versa. But to a commission merchant, selling would be the most important in regards to the opium trade. He continued;

The Emperor has issued orders which are calculated to prevent the importation of it entirely, the prospect of which is as follows. that the mandarins are to ascertain by artifice or search, whether any ship or vessel has any of the article on board, if it is ascertained she has, the vessel is to be ordered off immediately, without permitting her to land her inward Cargo, if she has one or is to receive one [cargo] on board, the Hong Merchant Securing the ship is to be broken up and banished, and should it be ascertained even after the Ship is gone, that she had had opium on board while here, the fall of the Security Merchant would be the same. how long this new Edict will have the desired affect, we cannot say, but probably the trade will be resumed again before a great while, notwithstanding the difficulties attendant upon it. we would observe however that this order is not confined to Vessels coming to Whampoa alone but is extended to Macao & the Portuguese vessels treated the same as any other. 126

Again Russell was noncomittal, reviewing the affair from afar, an attitude consistent with the fact that he personally had little stake in this regard. But more and more was he witnessing the "difficulties attendant" upon the opium trade.

The rumors of a greater importation of Persian opium by the British "country ships", or those ships authorized by the East India Company to carry Indian opium and textiles to Canton, had come true for the 1821 season. The result of the increased supply of the Persian drug was the diminished importance of the American's Turkey opium trade, even though that article was growing in importance as part of the American trade
in general.\textsuperscript{127}

With increasing frequency, however, Russell noted various opium operations in his letters to Providence. His heightened interest in the article was probably due to the fact that by 1821 the traffic had drawn a great deal of attention from the local Chinese officials as well as from the Emperor in Peking himself; the controversy reaching a breaking point due to the general increase of the importations. In late June of 1821, Russell stated flatly, "There is not an article of Merchandise that we would recommend your sending at present, so completely stocked is the Market & so depressed in value." This advice was quickly followed by the recognition that, "Opium is the only article which of late can be said to have a profit", and he noted that the "Augusta", a Perkins ship, had brought in 99 piculs of Turkey opium which sold at $120 to a chest.\textsuperscript{128} And in September of that year, Russell also acknowledged the arrivals of the ships "EA" and "Emily" from Batavia, both carrying quantities of opium aboard.\textsuperscript{129}

But while this news was being written, there occurred one of the most famous incidents at Canton involving the Chinese and an opium-carrying ship; an affair which disrupted most of the China trade and which had an important effect upon the nature of the opium-smuggling operations. On September 23rd of 1821, the Chinese accused a Sicilian sailor aboard the American ship "Emily", Francis Terranova, of killing a Chinese woman fruit vendor by knocking her off of her sampan with an
olive jar.\textsuperscript{130} The "Emily", owned by a Baltimore merchant, arrived at Whampoa in May of 1821. There the supercargo sold the ship's opium in regulated quantities much to the satisfaction of Cushing. After the alleged murder incident, the Captain of the "Emily", William Cowpland, allowed the Chinese to try Terranovia, even though he opposed the action. Consul Wilcocks had suggested previously that Cowpland pay the usual bribe to the local officials which might have placated them in this case; but this Cowpland refused.

Terranovia was tried twice aboard the "Emily" by the Chinese, found guilty, and strangulated October 28th. Few of the Americans and British aggressively attempted to prevent the action for fear that their trade would be stopped completely by the Chinese. Later, as a result of this affair, opium was found aboard the "Emily" and others, and once again the embittered Chinese authorities unleashed edicts upon the foreign community at Canton, denouncing their illegal trade, "which flows and poisons the land."\textsuperscript{131}

But only a modest amount of opium was imported by the Americans during the 1821 season, with Cushing's agency holding sway over the quantities sold each month and thus controlling the supply and prices. In April of 1821, Cushing reported to his Boston partners that they could expect a return of $50,000 from the sale of the "Augusta's" opium.\textsuperscript{132} Cushing was not very disturbed by the increased Chinese interference; his response to the edicts after the "Emily Affair" was;
Altho the Co-Hong are pretending to make a serious business we are of opinion that it will end like all their other acts of a similar nature. It may be acted upon for two or three months & they will then relax & suffer the article to be imported as openly as hitherto has been the case.\textsuperscript{133}

Cushing had a great stake in the opium trade and found his returns from his sales of the article large. He pretty much ignored the Chinese and their edicts. Russell, on the other hand, had no interests in the trade and yet was being cautious about the business. Just two days before Cushing had written to Boston boasting of the profits from the "Augusta", Russell wrote Captain Solomon Townsend of the ship "Panther" at Batavia (a ship owned by the Providence Concern which Russell later loaded at Canton);

Our advices from Batavia are to the 25th Jan'y last and prices of Coffee were then such as to prevent our loading them at the limits stated to us [by the Providence merchants] as given you, and it appears there was no prospect whatever of a decline in the article, that there were a great number of Vessels there after Coffee & but little to be had, even at the then high prices, that many had determined to await the coming in of the new crop which circumstances will doubtless keep up the price.

Apparently, because of the depressed nature of the Canton markets, many of the Concern's ships made their way to Batavia and Manila in search of possible trade there rather than at Canton. By such means as the above would Russell direct the movement of the Providence ships to the best markets. He continued to Townsend;

Should you come to Canton we shall be obliged to keep the Ship for new Teas. The Washington, Capt. Page arrived here last month & is to wait for a cargo of new Teas. We hand you herewith our P[rice] Current & hope you may find some article or other
that may answer better than Dollars to bring here.

Russell warned him, however;

Opium has been extremely high [in price] here, but is now rapidly declining & in the course of three or four weeks, the Bengal ships will begin to drop in, when we shall expect to see the article opium very low. We should recommend your not purchas'g opium, it's just now too precarious an article to meddle with.\textsuperscript{134}

This interesting advice may mean several things. It may demonstrate that the Providence Concern had no policy regarding the carriage of opium in their ships, thus making it necessary for Russell to judge himself whether the drug should become an article of his trade or not. Russell may have implied that opium should not be touched because of the recent Chinese interference. Or, and it seems more likely, Russell was merely telling the Captain to stay away from a commodity that, within a short time, would have little value in the market. In any case, Russell was being decidedly cautious with regard to opium. But there may have been another reason for his caution. In light of his earlier statement that Perkins & Company were the "only persons to do anything of importance" in the American drug trade; the fact that Cushing, at this time, was attempting to further his monopoly and regulation of the flow of Turkey opium into China; in light of the fact that Cushing had recommended that Russell might succeed to the Perkins' outside opium commission business at Canton, and in view of Russell's growing friendship with Cushing\textsuperscript{135}, it is very possible that Russell advised Townsend not to bring opium to Canton so as to follow advice
from Cushing or allow him no further competition. It can only be speculated, however, whether there existed any tacit agreement concerning the marketing of opium between Cushing and Russell.

viii. Disruptions of Trade

As a result of the "Emily Affair" and the subsequent Chinese investigations of American and British ships at Whampoa where large quantities of opium were found, the Canton trade was severely disrupted during the late fall and winter of 1821-22. The attendant difficulties annoyed Russell frequently. On November 24, 1821, he wrote Providence;

We have been disappointed in packing the Bohea tea for the Panther as soon as we expected in consequence of the Hong Merchants being compelled to wait every day on the mandarins relative to the Opium business which circumstances seems to have deranged their business very much, so completely have they been occupied in the City [Canton] that we have been able to see our security Merchant but twice for the last ten days & that in the evening.137

In the same letter he noted that the opium-carrying ships were ordered out of Whampoa "in Ballast", that the, "Hong Merchants had determined in good earnest to stop the Importation of the article...the Mandarins having accused them of conniving at it [smuggling of opium] & have already squeezed them severely", and that the bonds required of the incoming ships would be "strictly adhered to for awhile".138

Almost a month later Russell had yet to successfully
load the "Panther", narrating the reasons why;

We had made arrangements for shipping you by the Panther upwards of Seventy cases Silk goods, & we did not despair of being able to get them on board, till within the last two days. Three has a new Hoppo come into office this fall & one would suppose that he did not calculate to remain there long & had commenced with a determination of making the most of his appoint-ment, he has already squeezed the Hong roundly & has got to work upon the outside men. We bought our goods of outside men which is the reason of our not being able to get them off. all outside trade is stopped for the present. how long it will remain so is im-possible to say...we have tried various ways to get our silk down to Whampoa & once since this trade was stopped, we really thought we would succeed. We had the goods unpacked, took off the papers which were stamped with the Seller's name & sent them down to Faunqua's Hong, as single pieces, that they might be shipped off as his goods but unfortunately for us, on the same day a similar attempt was made by another per-son...& had his goods put into a boat to send round to the Pack House & they were seized. This alarmed Faunqua so much, that he is unwilling to go on altho' he had arranged with one of his Mandarins to do it, fearing that it might be a trap to extort money from him. We were compelled to get them back to the Factory as soon as possible & had them repapered again anew & packed up a second time & they must remain until this affair is so arranged as to admit their being sent off. We hope to be able to send them by the Gen'l Hamilton, but we can make no calculations whatever now a days, one day you may do business & the next you are stopped, & in this way the trade has been interrupted this fall, the oldest residents here say that they have never met with any the like of it.139

It was his first and only recorded attempt at "smuggling" goods and he failed. On January 3, 1822, Russell felt the effects of the opium problems in another way. He wrote Providence;

We have latterly discovered in Faunqua, a disposition to be a little crooked, & very hard with all, he at times appears quite indifferent, & if he does anything he seems to act as if he were conferring a great obli-gation. This Change in him, we have no doubt arrives from his embarrassments in a great Measure. he to be sure has been harassed more than usual this fall...He has been
obliged to pay a considerable sum to the Viceroy in consequence of some Opium being introduced in a Parcel of Sailor's belonging to one of the Company's ships, which he had secured, & immediately upon this, the Company's trade was stopped, on account of an affray at Lin-tin between a boat's Crew of the English Frigate Topaze & the Chinese on that Island, in which two or three Chinese were killed and thirty or forty wounded, this happening too at the time when about half the Company's Teas have been shipped & the residue not weighed. Besides the Company not having yet paid the Hong Merchants a dollar [for the teas], on account of them, renders the situation of the Poor Hong Merchants particularly at this time, really embarrassing, all the Circumstances combined no doubt makes Pauqua, and many others, do things, which at another time, they would be ashamed to do.140

But interestingly, Russell also saw the leaving of the British ships in another light, for he believed that as a result of their departure, "some good speculations in Teas (for these times) may be had Shortly".141 Yet he later reported that the Hong Merchants were about to effect a compromise with the British, in which case, he noted, "we fear Matters will finally be arranged & the [British] Ships return again,...we shall not look for any material change in the Tea Market."142 While his first anticipation had turned sour, he further noted that:

The Hong Merchants are so much embarrassed, generally speaking, that it is infinitely more difficult to obtain Credits than it formerly was...& we have no hesitation in saying that we fully believe, it would be much more for your interest to send out larger funds in your Ships & make more frequent remittances.143

But the many and minor disruptions of his trade due to the opium controversy of the 1822 season; problems that caused difficulties in packing and shipping off teas and silks, dealing with a security merchant suddenly turned a "little
crooked", speaking with the Hong Merchants, or obtaining the necessary credit from them, were soon forgotten. For on November 23rd, 1822, Russell wrote to the Crommelins in Amsterdam:

Canton has been visited by one of those distressing Calamities which it has been the lot of but few places to experience to the extent that has befel the City. On the 1st inst. [November] a fire broke out about a mile north of the Factories in the night, during a strong gale of Wind from the Northward & razed with such violence that it became impossible to arrest its progress, such was the rapidity of the Flames, that by 8 o'clock in the morning all the foreign residences were on fire, thus in one moment were English, Dutch & American & all other foreigners deprived of their dwellings & compelled to seek shelter wherever they could find it. the destruction of property has been immense...The number of Houses, Shops, Hongs etc. destroyed is ascertained to be over Thirteen thousand, about 30,000 4 Chests of Teas of various descriptions have been burnt. The confusion has been so great since this distressing event, that there has been little regularity in business. 144

On January 1st, 1823, Russell reported to Providence that he had rented ground where the Swedish Factory had stood and was going to rebuild the factory (to be three stories), renting out the offices to the American merchants, Ogden (No.1), Olyphant (No.2--the new "Zion's Corner"), and J.P. Sturgis (No.4), who by this time was doing some of Cushing's commission business. Russell would take the No. 3 rooms. He viewed the factory as an investment by the Providence Concern; the cost being altogether $4,600, which he asked to be insured in America against fire. Almost a year later, in anticipation of the end of the first establishment, Russell sold the factory for $5,500,
noting however that the sum it was sold for was;

to be paid for on the first of July next, at which
time possession is to be given; We could have obtained
the same price cash could we have given immediate
possession of it, this we could not do, having taken Mr.
Ammidor into the House [Factory] on the first of Sep-
tember last at a rent of Seven hundred dollars for the
term of one Year.145

No opium was imported into China by Americans during
the 1822 season. Strict Chinese enforcement of the edicts which
followed the "Emily Affair", forced Americans to sell their drug
at Manila and Java. The Perkins' brig "Cadet" arrived in 1823
for the sole purpose of acting as a permanent storeship to
receive the opium cargoes from other ships before they passed
on to Whampoa. From the storeship could the opium be dis-
tributed to the Chinese smugglers in quantities that allowed
a regulation of high prices for the drug. Once again, the
Perkins' were leading the Americans with new approaches to the
opium trade.146

Between January 1st and December 23rd, 1823, the last
year of his first establishment at Canton, Russell more fre-
quently reported information regarding the opium trade in his
letters. His interest in the trade was undoubtedly high, his
many remarks during this period demonstrating that increased
interest;147

(January 1st)
all opium ships now days remain between the Bocca Tigris
& Macao, they are not being permitted to come to Whampoa.

(May 6th)
Opium has of late been heavy at our quotations, & the
stock on hand is quite large. there is not however much
Turkey opium remaining on hand.
(June 4th)
The Cadet of Boston arrived below [at Lintin where the storeship would be stationed] a few days since. We learn that she will not come up but is waiting merely for an opportunity to send up some tin she has on board, & then will proceed to Manila with her Opium. There are now nine of the Country ships in the neighborhood of Lintin with Opium, which seems to excite a good deal of uneasiness among the Hing Merchants.

(December 23rd)
The Nautilus [another Perkins ship] still remains at Lintin and will probably continue there for some time. She is employed as a receiving ship [temporarily replacing the Cadet] for Opium &c.
Samuel Russell's partnership with Carrington, Butler, and the Hoppins of Providence, expired on December 26, 1823. He wrote his partners on February 28, 1824 that he had closed the books of the firm, sold the furniture, and added that, "It is my intention when I return to the U. States, which I contemplate to do next year, to take with me the books of S. R. & Co. for your inspection..." While his partnership with the Providence Concern had expired by the beginning of 1824, Russell would not return to America until almost three years later, for very important reasons.

Surely Russell must have looked back upon his first experience in China as a success and a failure at the same time. Perhaps, like many of his elaborate balance sheets, with their credits and debits, "Contra" and "Dr", Russell viewed those years, 1819-1823, in terms of successes and failures.

There were many successes. He had been chosen, at the age of 29, by a powerful and well-known group of Providence merchants to be their agent in the Canton market. He had arrived at a strange and foreign outpost of his times and had become very familiar (at times scientifically) with the commercial wonders of that place. He had met and befriended an important and powerful man in John Cushing, as well as establishing a myriad of connections at Canton, New York, Amsterdam, Boston, Gibraltar, and Manila. He had come very close to obtaining the outside commission business of the very important Perkins brothers of
Boston, gaining the trust and confidence of not a few men, most notably Cushing. He had rebuilt a factory and made a profit on that. And he had obtained return cargoes of at least eleven ships between August of 1819 and May of 1823; the "Fame" (Captain Joshua Rathbun), "Integrity" (Captain William Russell—no relation), "George" (Captain James Esdall), "Lion" (Captain Meger), "John Brown" (Captain Elderkin), "Mary Ann" (Captain Bowers), "Trumbull" (Captain Rathbun), "Panther" (Captain Solomon Townsend), "Trumbull" again (Captain Farnham), "George" again (Captain Rea), and the "Integrity" again (Captain Rathbun). It cannot be said, however, what kinds of profits these ships brought to the Providence Concern, although it can be speculated that they were not large, when it is remembered that profits from the China trade during this period were relatively small in general.

The failures perhaps outweighed the successes. His partners were unhappy with the returns of the early cotton sales, while those of another ship, the "Panther", had been good. Russell had often to endure the often humiliating advice and guidance from those in Providence who had probably lost some of their confidence in his abilities. He had found difficulties with his Dutch agent; the broker questioning his ability to judge qualities of teas, a great blow to any Canton agent. Also, perhaps, on the failure side of the ledger was his inability to gain commission business outside of his own dealings with his partners.

It is difficult, however, to discern exactly where any
praise or fault may be placed when the successes and failures of Samuel Russell & Company, 1819-1823, are appraised. It appears that Russell endured most of the reprimands from Providence without rebuttal, except for one—the question of his partners financial support. Russell's complaints of a lack of specie with which to invest freely and appropriately, continued through to the end of the connection. And apparently on this account, Russell was in the right, for one-half of the Providence merchants--B. & T.C.Hoppins & Company--agreed with his views on this subject, as evidenced by a letter of May, 1822, which Russell wrote to them and in which he remarked;

You intimate to us that some in the Concern do not manifest as great an interest in the establishment as you think they ought to do. We confess our ideas on that subject coincide perfectly with yours. We think we have pretty good reasons for entertaining such an opinion, but should be much pleased to find we were mistaken on this subject. If there is not a mutual corresponding disposition among us all to promote the Interest of our Concern, it can hardly be expected it will thrive as it ought. when our part manifests a ready willingness to make an effort to promote the United Interest of the Whole, & the other an indifference to its good or ill success, it becomes very discouraging even to those who have its welfare at heart.151

The Hoppins, also in a confidential letter, offered an interest to Russell in a "regular trading ship to China", the 'Superior' (Captain Peter W. Snow), noting that they had not offered the same to the other members of the Concern, detecting "the multiplicity of Messrs. Carrington & Co. Concerns" and the "indisposition of Mr. Butler".152 But it is not known
whether Russell agreed to this plan, as will be seen.

Even after the Agreement had ended was there a tension between the partners. Russell argued about the commission he charged for the sales of the cargo of the "George" with Carrington;

whereas we charged you 3% on sales and investments, this charge you appear to think is 'too much' and observe that you know 'that it has been a customary practice to charge that rate of commission to transient traders at Canton'. In this particular we believe you are under a wrong impression. The Customary Charge of Commission to transient traders is 3-1/2% when Merchandise is sold & the proceeds are to be invested, and this charge is made on the sales exclusively.... In the transaction of the George I considered that the charge of 3% was placing it on the most favorable footing and that it would be perfectly satisfactory to you, particularly when you consider that you are as much benefitting by the Comm's as I am.\(^{153}\)

At the conclusion of the partnership, Russell noted that each of the original five investing parties would receive between fifteen and sixteen thousand dollars. Anticipating the termination of his association with the four Providence merchants, Russell wrote candidly in November of 1823, "It would be gratifying to us, if we could flatter you with an expectation of recovering a large dividend of our Concern; it will be smaller than perhaps you anticipated at the Commencement, but I assure you more money ought to have been made."\(^{154}\) As far as Russell was concerned, the failures of the establishment and any blame for missed opportunities, should have rested with Carrington and Butler.

At the end of this connection Russell was still a commission merchant. He had never really been a "free" agent, not
bound to the capital investments and thus the wills of partners and merchants in other places. He had little capital to invest himself most likely, and he had succeeded nominally in gaining profits with the capital of others. He was a follower of orders, yet had learned the intricacies of a new market. But just as he wrote to Providence in 1822, that, "It's rather provoking to stand by and be an idle spectator to the good bargains which our neighbors are picking up, & which we might participate in, but for the Want of Means", so must he have felt of his life at that moment. However, if there was anything that might have overcome his feelings of impotence as a result of the failures of the first establishment, it would be the opium trade. His increased attention to the trade, probably due in large part to the greater facility and regularity afforded by the Perkins' new marketing mechanism at Lintin Island, undoubtedly signalled that he was planning something for himself; looking for that something "upon which money may be made".
CHAPTER III

SECOND CHINA EXPERIENCE, 1823-1831:

WITH MEANS

"Mr. S. Russell, the China Merchant, belonged to that set of Americans who went to China some years ago and made money so fast they had to provide themselves with a barrel and shovel to shovel in the guineas, they came so fast."

- Edward Everett

i. Expanding Operations

In Macao, just days before Russell's five-year contract with the Providence Concern was to expire, Philip Ammidon wrote a very important letter to his brother. This letter has gone previously unnoticed but becomes the key to understanding Russell's second China experience during the years 1823-1831, years where there exists very little documentation of his activities. Ammidon began, "You will probably be a little surprised when I inform you that I am now on my way to Calcutta & that I shall likely visit Bombay before I return here, 6 or 7 months hence."²

Ammidon, it will be remembered, was the Canton agent of Bown & Ives of Providence. He probably had dealt in opium sales at Canton before 1812 and perhaps after that time also. He
(and Cushing) had been highly recommended to Russell by members of the Providence Concern for the "sincerity" and "attention" they believed that he would demonstrate in any inquiries that Russell may have had. Russell and Ammidon had shared their offices and living-quarters, the former probably learning much about the Canton marketplace from the latter. Ammidon had also rented office space in Russell's rebuilt factory, perhaps again sharing rooms with Russell.

Ammidon's important letter continued;

You may recollect that Mr. Sam'l Russell (who was formerly in business with Messrs. Hoppins of Providence) has been nearly five years, as Agent of Messrs. Carrington & Co., Butler & Hoppins & a partner of theirs in all Com's [Commission] business procured here. Mr. Russell's engagement with these Gentlemen expired yesterday, & at the strong recommendation of Mr. Cushing, Mr. Russell & myself have formed a Copartnership to go into operation the first of next month. 3

Cushing's involvement in the new copartnership of Russell and Ammidon did not end at a "strong recommendation". Cushing had inspired the agreement, but as Ammidon continued;

Mr. Cushing thinks Mr. R[ussell] one of the best men who has ever been in this Country & made known his opinion of him to Messrs B[rown] & Ives--these Gentlemen I know have always entertained a high opinion of Mr. R. & I am persuaded the connexion will be quite agreeable to them, & Mr. R. has no doubt of continuance of Mr. Carrington's business. 4

That a man of Cushing's stature should name the commission merchant from Middletown, "one of the best men who has ever been in this Country", was no small distinction. Ammidon intimated that he and Russell would continue to represent their former associates of Providence, but of course, the relationships would now be different, for as Ammidon explained the
motives for his going to India;

Our object is Com's business from Amer'[America],
or from any other part of the World. Mr. Cushing has,
during his long residence here made many acquaintance
in Bengal & Bombay & since he has declined doing Com's
business, has been urged to receive large Consignments
from these places, but has always refused them. Houqua
has also had large Cargoes of Cotton sent to him to
take at his own price, or dispose of, but has declined
the business--The English Houses here do most of the
India business & it is said those native houses[of India]
are not much pleased with them--Mr Cushing has that it
is a most favourable time for us to attempt procuring
some part of that business & it has been advisable for
me to go on to these places to endeavor to procure
business. 5

Russell, with the aid of his new partner, Philip Ammidon, had
finally decided to advance to a more sophisticated level of
commission business, that of the commission agent; not tied to any
one or group of merchants and their capital, but rather free
to solicit business from a wide group of merchants in many
different locales. But if the step was an advance, it was a
very cautious and calculated advance, for not only had it de-
pended on Cushing's recommendation, but it also involved the
guidance of Cushing (and Houqua) from the very beginning. Ammi-
don further defined Cushing's role;

Cushing and Houqua both give me most powerful letters
to their numerous correspondents in India & said
everything in our favor which we would have wished.
To some of the principal native houses, Mr. Cushing
has guaranteed the proper management of their concerns
committed to us--(this please not speak of) he also
offers us any Sum of money to advance (when it is neces-
sary to procure Consignments) at a moderate interest,--
In Sum determined that we shall have business, & is in
fact doing every thing for us. 6

Cushing was practically guaranteeing the success of the new
firm. Thus at the age of 35, Rusell had acquired a partner, a new commission agency, and an important benefactor. While the new venture in commission business was an advancement towards greater wealth and security for Russell, it still had all the marks of his past involvements. He was again following someone else's lead, cautious and calculating, and demonstrating again the need for constant assurances against risk, with the attendant desire for planning and order.

Ammidon anticipated the business of the firm;

The Consignments...are very heavy, particularly in Opium, 2 or 3 houses are believed to make by their Com's $100,000 & upwards a year--I feel encouraged that I will procure at least a part of the business & it will not interfere with our Am'a business.7

In his absence, Russell was to complete the loading of the Brown & Ives ship "Ann & Hope", and Ammidon noted to his brother, "leaving the business with my partner, I am certain they [Brown & Ives] will not think it improper". The letter continued;

As I cannot think of remaining a great while in this Country (& as Mr. R. is willing to) the arrangement I have made, is, that as soon as I return from India, Mr. R. is to go to Am'a & as soon as he returns, I am to go home for good, this [the trip to India] will keep me from everything dear to me too long, but I cannot help it, my duty to my family requires the Sacrifice --I shall however endeavor on my return, to persuade Mr. R. to let me go home, instead of himself--8

As will be seen, arrangements were later made to allow both Ammidon and Russell return to America at the same time.

Russell's own business while waiting for Ammidon to return from India was suspended. In reply to the Hoppins' offer
to invest in a ship for the China trade Russell wrote, "I can only say at present that when Mr. Ammidon returns from Bengal & Bombay, we will take your suggestion into serious consideration and write you fully on the subject at a later day." He had rejected the offer for the moment until he could know better what the size of his new agency's business would be, again cautious and calculating.

Between 1818 and 1828, English importation of Bengal opium increased from about three to five thousand chests annually, at a total value of about three to five million dollars. Malwa opium, opium from the interior states of Central India and Rajputana which the Portuguese had previously exported to Macao from Bombay but which the English were taking over at this time; imported by the English, increased from about 1500 to 4400 chests at a value up to five million dollars a year. In the period between 1824 and 1826, when Russell and Ammidon went into business to sell opium at Canton, about fifteen million dollars worth of Bengal and Malwa opium was imported into China by the British ships. As a comparison, American importation of Turkey opium, between 1825 and 1829, ranged only from 1,000 to 1,500 chests yearly.

Philip Ammidon, in his letter to his brother, had reported that there was a dissatisfaction among some of the "principal" Indian "native houses" with the British agents of the East India Company in India, who bought the opium from these houses. It was from these houses that Russell and Ammidon would
seek consignments of opium.

One of the earliest incidents of American dealings with Indian opium dealers occurred when in 1825 the Perkins' ship "Nile", Captain Robert Bennett Forbes, carried some opium (Indian) from Canton to Manila. Interestingly, Ammidon, in the December, 1823 letter, had stated:

I take with me to India in Comp'y's Bills [bills on on the East India Company] $130,000 to invest in Bengal for Perkins & Co. & if I cannot make the purchase at their limits (which I can probably) I am allowed to advance it on consignments to my House [Russell & Co.] --this will have rather a favorable appearance for a man soliciting business.13

What was done exactly with these funds from Cushing is not clear. But through Ammidon and the newly-formed commission agency of Russell & Company were made among the first sizable American investments in Indian products for the Canton market (either for Russell & Company or for Perkins & Company, but in any case, financed by the Perkins), perhaps the funds spent in India for the opium shipments of the "Nile".

Unfortunately, Ammidon had not specified which of the "2 or 3 houses" at Canton had the large commission businesses in the Indian products of cotton and opium. But there is a little known about early American involvement in the Persian-China trade. The first Americans were there for the purpose of carrying the Indian products, which was against the restrictions of the East India Company. The first there were either one of the Philadelphia merchants, George Blight and Benjamin C. Wil-
cocks, sometime around 1810. In 1824 Wilcocks, like Ammidon at the same time (although Ammidon left early in 1824), had gone to India to stimulate commission business for the Canton markets. Wilcock's commission agency at Canton, headed by another Philadelphia man, John R. Latimer while Wilcocks was in India, did over 113,000 dollars worth of commission business with the Bombay opium merchant, Hormuzjee Dorabees, in 1824 alone. In the following years of 1825, 1826, and 1827, the Wilcocks-Latimer agency netted commissions from Alexander & Company (of Calcutta) of almost 22,000, 45,000, and 26,000 dollars respectively. Thus at least one of the houses at Canton that Ammidon referred to as doing a commission business with India of $100,000, was that of Wilcocks and Latimer.

American imports of opium from Turkey were very small compared with the increasing British importations from the Persian Gulf. But indirectly American traders at Canton benefitted from the British Persian trade by substituting bills of exchange on London for specie brought there (the English always seeking specie for their Indian opium operations). The bills were used at Canton for tea and silk purchases; the bills then circulating back to the English through the Chinese who purchased Persian opium. Between 1825 and 1826, American importation of specie at Canton declined from five to two million dollars. But the real American benefits from the English trade in Persian opium came from the consignment business sales of the opium in Canton; the Linton marketing device facilitating this aim.
ii. Connections at Lintin Island

Indian opium consigned to Russell & Company was most likely stored on one of the Perkins' receiving ships at Lintin Island. Since neither Russell nor Ammidon owned their own ships, and since Cushing, who had led Russell and Ammidon in the formation of their firm, directed the Lintin smuggling operations, it is very likely that Russell used that mechanism for the marketing of the opium brought to him at Canton.

English country ships, or those licensed by the East India Company to carry Indian products to China, were restricted by that Company from meddling in the carriage of Turkey opium, their biggest competition at Canton. This fact gave the Americans a complete monopoly of the carriage and sales of the Turkey variety at the outer anchorages where the drug was sold.\(^{17}\) Between 1824 and 1830 the Lintin operations were almost wholly controlled by Cushing's agency.\(^{18}\) James P. Sturgis handled all of Cushing's outside commissions, while the firm of Bryant & Sturgis, also of Boston, owned and directed the manuevers of the ships at Lintin.\(^{18}\) Into this operation was poured the capital of the "Boston Concern", a constellation of Boston families, including the Cabots, Forbes', Sturgis', Paines', Higginsons, and Bates', who were all tied together by bonds of "blood, marriage, business, friendship, and politics".\(^{19}\) Samuel Russell of Middletown had surely connected with an impressive combination of New England families when he gained the confi-
dence and support of Cashing.

Russell recognized the fact that the Perkins controlled the sales of Turkey opium at Canton. On July 28, 1824, Russell, who had received a small consignment of 2-1/2 piculs of Turkey opium from John H. Andrews, a Salem merchant, wrote the same that it had been sold profitably as, business entirely held by one House [Perkins & Company] the price [of Turkey opium] has consequently advanced."20 This sale was probably one of Russell's first at Canton. By August of 1825 the Perkins had controlled at least 60% of the Turkey opium at Canton and had the power to control the prices of the remaining sold by other independent merchants there.21 Perkins & Company, while they were in business, probably sold at Lintin between one-half and one-third of the whole yearly Turkey crop bought by Americans at Smyrna.22

The only description of Russell & Company's relation to the Perkins & Company marketing operation is that written by an employee hired by Samuel Russell in 1830, William C. Hunter, who later wrote:

Although during the southwest monsoon [just prior to the tea season] little general business went on, transactions in Opium were very active. It was the period when the new drug arrived. Sales were made to brokers [Chinese] for cash only against orders on the receiving ships. The orders would be sent down to Lintin by 'smug-boats'... On delivery of the Opium, the receiving ships were paid five dollars a chest... and two dollars for 'demurrage' if the order was not presented within seven days. It [opium] was always repacked, before being taken from the ship, in mat bags, and then marked with the owner's private sign and the weight. At times, as many as one hundred chests, in bulk, would form a single cargo, whose market value was from $150,000 to $200,000. The Canton agent received five, afterwards reduced to three, per cent commission on sales.
The time occupied in unpacking, weighing, and re-packing would occupy but a few hours. The crews of the receiving ships were mostly Manila men and some lascars, while the shroffs [money-dealers], carpenters [to build the chests etc.], boats' crew, cooks and servants were Chinese.

iii. The Firm

On November 14, 1826 Samuel Russell and Philip Ammidon signed an Agreement to continue their copartnership (the first Agreement is lost). Ammidon had probably just arrived from India and Russell was about to depart for America. The Agreement is the only evidence that Ammidon's trip to India for the purpose of soliciting consignments of Indian opium and raw cotton had been a success. The Agreement noted that the first copartnership of Russell and Ammidon was due to expire December 31, 1827. As Ammidon had noted in the letter to his brother that the copartnership commenced on January 1, 1824, the first establishment between the two men lasted four years. The latest Agreement stated that the second copartnership (a continuation of the first) between Russell and Ammidon was to begin the first day of 1828 and also last four years. That the first Agreement expired on December 31, 1827 while the second Agreement was signed by the two men in Canton on November 14, 1826, suggests that Russell left China sometime soon after November of 1826 and had returned by January of 1828. Russell had to be back in Canton by the latter date as the Agreement stated that, "Said Russell agreeing on his part to remain in
Canton and attend to the Concerns of the House the two first years [i.e. 1828 and 1829] of the abovementioned term, & said Ammidon who is now about leaving Canton for England [?and the United States, agreeing on his part to return hither and devote himself to the business of the House for the last two years of the aforesaid terms."

The Agreement of November, 1826 also stated explicitly that the "profits and emoluments which may be derived from the business shall be divided (after deducting the expenses) equally between Russell and Ammidon, as well as the final division." 25

Unfortunately, very little is known of Samuel Russell's return home after this Agreement was signed. This is regretted as he made, during this return, some important decisions. His wife, Mary Osborn, had died on September 4th, 1819 (age 23), which was about the time of his first arrival at Canton. 26 Surely Russell was informed of this although there is no record. About seven years had transpired between her death and Russell's return home and unfortunately little can be concluded about this fact. Russell had appointed a friend, William Johnson, a manufacturer of Middletown, the trustee of his family in his absence and he drew on funds from Providence. Russell's family lived in the "Old Mansion House" on High Street; 27 that family including an addition--Russell's second son, John Augustus, born to Mary in 1819, perhaps the cause of her death. 28 Frances Ann, Mary's sister in Middletown, pos-
sibly became the children's guardian. In any case, Russell, during his return to Middletown in 1826 and 1827, married Frances, and she later bore him a son, Samuel Wadsworth Russell, Jr.. 29

In Providence on April 12, 1826, Russell signed a promissory note of agreement with the Hoppins brothers, purchasing 1/32nd of a "Dorrance Street Estate" there, for an undisclosed amount of money. The document stated that once "all the contemplated improvements are completed...as soon as the amount can be ascertained", Russell would on his second arrival in Canton "on account thereof...make shipment in goods of sufficient amount to cover the probable Amount of the Cost and Interest...and such installments as may be hereafter called for...".30

As will be seen, Russell probably also made a decision to have a new dwelling house built for him at this time. Considering that a voyage between China and America took about four or five months and the fact that Russell could not have left China before November of 1826 (as he signed the Agreement there at that time) and had to be back at Canton by the first day of 1828, Russell could not have been in the United States more than a few months, certainly not much time for a marriage and the many other decisions he made then.

In more than one way did Russell place his "House" in order and returned to China.

Just as little is known of the exact nature and size
of the business of Russell & Company between 1824 and 1830. There exists for this period very little documentation except the descriptions written by William C. Hunter. Since Hunter joined the Firm in 1830 and as his descriptions of the China trade were compiled many years later, his additions to our knowledge of this period are less than satisfying. In fact, the accuracy of his accounts have been doubted. 31

Hunter arrived in Canton in 1825 for the purpose of learning Chinese. Previous to that time he had been employed in the countingroom of the New York merchant, Thomas H. Smith. Finding his education at Canton difficult, as the Chinese did not allow intercourse between the foreigners and the people, he was sent to the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca. Originally intending to earn a position as a translator and clerk in Smith's Canton House, Hunter became proficient in Chinese at Malacca. But the bankruptcy of Smith's business left Hunter in Canton without employment. After a brief return to America, he was employed by Russell as a clerk in 1830. 32

Hunter's description of Samuel Russell is valuable; the only description by a person who personally knew Russell that is known. As Hunter became a partner in the House in 1837 and was able to retire a wealthy man in 1842, Russell had opened up a great opportunity for him. 33 Hunter wrote:

Mr. Russell was a native of Middletown, Connecticut, a person of singularly gentle and benevolent disposition. There was about him a suavity and charm of manner which under no circumstance ever deserted him. Throughout a long life he enlisted the esteem and respect of all who knew him. Of his considerate forbearance under great
provocation I can vouch from personal experience. From my first entrance in the office he was desirous that I should make myself acquainted with book-keeping. Its mysteries he first taught me. However incorrectly the tyro appreciated the relative bearing of successive transactions or bungled in recording them, he was corrected with a patience and kindliness of manner that knew no bounds, and the encouragement he thus received at length led him to a clear idea of the respective values of debit and credit, as well as to the knowledge that they were 'the two factors which formed the base of all mercantile transactions'.

While Hunter may of course be exaggerating as he owed Russell a great deal, it is still possible to note a certain characteristic which he had found dominant in Russell, specifically that of a "patience...of manner". Hunter paints the picture of a kind and gentle man. Such traits would describe well a man who was most likely cautious, calculating, careful, and methodical in all of his dealings and bookkeeping. Russell was probably very rarely impulsive, rash, or excitable; most likely at ease with any venture that involved order and assurances against risks and extravagances. In a sense, he had built, slowly and with determination, a certain reputation for his business. That reputation, in the commission business, rested on the confidence and trust that he could inspire of his consignors. Dependability and stability, factors necessary in his business, perhaps were the best words to describe his personality.

While there exists very little hard evidence, there is enough circumstantial evidence that the partnership of Russell and Ammidon was very profitable. Sometime between 1824 and 1830, Russell's agency gained the commission business of
two important houses, James P. Sturgis and Company and
Russell, Sturgis & Company, the only American house at Manila. With these windfalls, Russell & Company was assured much of
the outside commission business of the Perkins' and their
many Boston associates. Besides Perkins & Company, who were
mainly interested in bringing their own opium to Lintin and
operating the storeships there, the only major Houses at this
time were Olyphant & Company, formed in 1828 by D.W.C. Olyphant
from the business of the ruined Thomas H. Smith, and that of
John R. Latimer, who inherited the trade of B.C. Wilcocks.
36 As the former establishment refused to deal in opium, Lati-
mer was Russell's only real competition among the resident
Canton agents for opium sales. Russell's many ties to the
"Boston Concern" however, undoubtably gave him the edge. By
1829 the Perkins group controlled about one-half of the entire
American China trade. Speculation of the importance of
Russell's trade is confirmed, as later in 1831 Latimer had
written Ammidon that his commission business at that time (1831)
from the opium trade was, "equal to what theirs [Russell & Company's]
was when you left." As Ammidon probably left Canton for
home sometime in late 1827, when Russell returned from America,
this would suggest that the Russell & Company's business in
1827 equaled that of Latimer's four years later. And as it
was known that Latimer made upwards of $25,000 a year before
1830, it can only be guessed what Russell and Ammidon were
making.
While there is much circumstantial evidence that suggests that the establishment of Russell & Company, between 1824 and 1830, did a profitable business in commissions, especially those in Indian and Turkey opium, there is only one solid piece of evidence to prove this. A copy of an account titled, "Sales by Russell & Co of Turkey Opium Received per Ship Panama on account and risk of John Jacob Astor Esqre of New York." This document, dated Canton, November 18th, 1828, shows that on October 18, 1828 Russell sold to three Chinese brokers (noted with different symbols) a total of 23 cases of Turkey opium for a total of $17,835. There are other such accounts with Astor that show that Russell also sold large amounts of quicksilver and cochineal (a red dye), and procured teas and silks for Astor during 1828.

When Russell returned to America, sometime during the winter of 1826 most likely, he apparently had spoken to Astor in New York, enlisting these consignments from him. On October 12, 1830 Astor wrote to Russell & Company:

when I had the pleasure to see your Mr. Russell here I distinctly asked him, whether, if, I made any consignments to your house, you would not be content with 3 per Cent [commission] for selling and buying, to which he observed, that it was less than your usual charge, but agreed to do it for 3 per Cent, you however charge me 2 on investment and 2 on Sales, which is 1 per Cent more than the understanding, and more than any of my other friends charge me. I trust therefore that you will be good enough to give me Credit for the difference.

After noting other errors (or what he believed to be errors) in his accounts with Russell & Company, Astor concluded;
you will readily conceive that I cannot submit to such deviations [in the accounts], and that unless some attention is paid to my Instructions, in regard to the Selling of my own Goods, it might subject me to disadvantage so as to preclude me from all benefits of your Market. I fully confide in your justice and liberty and doubt not that you will do what appears right. 42

Whether or not Astor's threat worked or not, is unfortunately not known. But while it has been presumed that Astor had completely abandoned the opium market in China after 1818, this evidence proves the contrary, for Russell was his agent in Canton and sold at least 23 cases of Turkey opium for him there. 43

It is very likely that Russell's opium consignment from John Jacob Astor was only a small part of his total commission business between 1824 and 1830. The fact that the Concern hired other partners and associates for the Canton House during this time, suggests that the operations were expanding. The Agreement between Ammidon and Russell contained an article stating that if Edward Augustus Russell, Samuel's brother, was in a fit enough health, that he would be allowed into the House as a copartner or as a salaried employee. 44 It cannot be said whether Edward Russell joined his brother in Canton or not, however. In Boston on March 4, 1828, Ammidon drew up a contract for a Samuel H. Monson to go out to Canton for a term of one or two years as a salaried clerk. 45 And on September 5, 1828 Ammidon signed an Agreement, also in Boston, admitting William Henry Low, a Salem merchant, into the House
as a full partner for a term of four years. But Hunter and others have attested to the importance of the opium commission business of Russell & Company often. Hunter's remarks concerning the morality involved in the opium trade was typical and probably can be assigned to Russell himself;

While the opium trade was going on, discussions often occurred as to the morality of it, as well as to the effect of smoking on the Chinese. None of the Hong merchants ever had anything to do with it, and several of the foreign houses refrained from dealing in it on conscientious grounds. As to the influence on the inhabitants of the City and suburbs at large, they were a healthy, active, hard-working, and industrious people, withal cheerful and frugal. They were intelligent in business, skilful in manufactures,...These traits are inconsistent with habitual smoking, while the costliness of the prepared drug was such as to render a dilution of it (to bring it within the means of the masses) utterly harmless. Amongst the wealthier classes, no doubt, it was more or less common, this we knew; but I myself, and I think I may safely say the entire foreign community, rarely, if ever, saw anyone physically or mentally injured by it. No evidence of a general abuse, rarely of the use of the pipe, were apparent...In fact, smoking was a habit, as the use of wine was with us, in moderation. As compared with the use of spirituous liquors in the United States and in England, and the evil consequences of it, that of opium was infinitesimal.48

Between 1824 and 1830 Samuel Russell, from the scanty evidence that exists, had directed a successful trading house of his own in Canton. While it certainly was an advancement of sorts for him (from a commission merchant to agent), and while, as evidenced by Ammidon's important letter, it was a part of an innovation in American Far Eastern trade, the move was sponsored, guided, and backed (at least initially) by someone else. His connection with John Cushing had finally paid off. Russell & Company had absorbed two Perkins-related trading
establishments, most likely utilized the Perkins' Lintin facilities, thus gaining by the Perkins' regulation of the opium trade, and Russell was surely making his fortune.

Up until this time, Russell, who was approaching his fortieth birthday (August, 1829), had not made a single investment of any worth for himself. He had of course reinvested his commission earnings in the firm and had not spent much time in the United States, where investments would be better made. But importantly, Russell's first large investment of any note was that of land and a dwelling house in Middletown. After years of venturing outwards from home; to Coruna, Gibraltar, Savannah, Havre, Amsterdam, and Canton, as an agent for other investors in New York and Providence, Russell was about to become his own investor in something other than the China trade. He decided to invest in Middletown and this first "dealing" at home takes on a symbolic significance in the life of the commission agent Russell.

iv. The House: Beginnings

Samuel Russell's decision to have a new dwelling house built for him in Middletown was probably made in 1826 or 1827 when he returned home from China. This decision signified that Russell had intended to make his permanent residence in Middletown, even though he had not lived there for any great length of time since 1816. It also suggested that he
intended to leave China, possibly for good, in the near future; and had made enough, or expected to make enough, money so as to retire from the China trade. The decision to build his house in Middletown while he remained in Canton presented the unusual situation where one of his friends was appointed to superintend the planning and construction of the house in his stead. Finally, the decision marked a certain confidence in his professional achievements as a China agent and began the process which resulted in the construction of one of the most notable surviving American architectural accomplishments of the early 19th Century. 49

During his return to Middletown in 1826-27 and his subsequent remarriage, Russell probably felt the necessity of moving his family out of the "Old Mansion House" on High Street. Even during his first few years at Canton as a commission merchant, Russell recognized a deterioration in the old house. His friend and appointed trustee of the family, William Johnson, submitted to Russell various bills paid, "for House repairs" and wrote Russell;

In regard to building a new Necessity[Outdoor toilet] for the Old Mansion House—your family thinks that the Old One as it is now fixed will answer very well—I have therefore thought best not to have one built until I hear from you again. Please in your next to write me upon this subject—And say if you wish—notwithstanding your family's opinion upon the subject to have one built—if so I will attend to its being built as soon as I hear from you. 50

Apparently Russell, more so than his family anyway, had early recognized the necessity of repairs to the old house and per-
haps also the need for a more modern and distinguished residence. Russell, as the eldest surviving male of the family, apparently was leading his family from afar. His father had died long ago. Edward Augustus, his brother, was in business at New York. Thus it was probably that his second wife, Frances Ann, his two sons by his first marriage and a third by the second, his mother, and probably his two younger sisters, Julia and Lucy Warner, all lived together in the old homestead. They were certainly a large responsibility for Russell and probably the reason for his thoughts of retirement from the China trade.

In 1827 Russell obtained the services of his friend, Samuel D. Hubbard, to superintend the planning and construction of the new house in Middletown. Samuel Dickinson Hubbard (See Figure 5) was born in Middletown in 1799, making him ten years younger than Russell. Hubbard represented the sixth generation of his family in Middletown. At the age of nine he was sent to a boarding school in Rocky Hill, Connecticut, about the same time that Samuel Russell was working in a store in Middletown. Under tutorship at Rocky Hill Hubbard was prepared for college. Around 1819, when Russell had entered the China trade, Hubbard graduated from Yale where he was deeply influenced by the theology of the Reverend Timothy Dwight. After studying law with his Uncle, Judge Dickinson, of Troy, New York, Hubbard returned to Middletown where he intended to open his own practice. The idea was abandoned, however, with the death of his father and the necessity of settling the estate. Hardships drove Hubbard into a business partnership with John R. Watkinson
of Middletown when they established a very successful mill for the manufacture of woolen goods there. At this time Hubbard also built the "Mansion House", a brick row of four-story buildings on Main Street, renting space to store owners and hotel proprietors. It was perhaps with the knowledge of Hubbard's experience with construction in Middletown that Russell asked him to oversee the building of his own house.

On October 3, 1827 Samuel Russell wrote Hubbard, "since you have so kindly volunteered to take upon yourself so troublesome a task as that of erecting a dwelling house for me, I am induced to 'take you at your word'." There was no mention of any financial renumeration, evidence of a friendship between the two men. Russell probably repaid Hubbard for the "troublesome task" with small favors. In one case, he provided Hubbard with information of particulars concerning the broadcloth markets at Canton in which Hubbard had expressed an interest.

The planning and construction of Russell's House thus began. It was to be his first sizable investment and as will be seen, much larger than he at first anticipated. He would attempt to control the final product of that first investment, just as any merchant would send explicit instructions to his agent along with his capital. Ironically, however, Russell would not be allowed that control in the end; his investment taken and "reshaped" by his "agents" in Middletown. But unlike, say, the Providence merchants who had, almost ten years ago,
reprimanded their agent Russell for his decisions concerning their investments. Russell was to accept happily the alterations of his instructions, gladly furnishing the extra capital required for those changes. For what others were planning for him, suited him very well.

v. The House: The Site

Russell ordered Hubbard to purchase a site for the new house; "you will consult with Mrs. R[ussell] in regard to a suitable site for a House and purchase it for me." After listing some sites and their probable values which might be available in Middletown, Russell noted that, "in speaking of the probable value in one or two of them...you must not consider it any guide for you in the purchase, as you are much better acquainted with the value of real estate in Middletown than I can possibly be", and requests of him to use his "own judgement in this entirely". Regarding the buying of a lot, Russell mentioned;

I write you early on the subject, by a vessel going to Phila[delphia]. She leaves here earlier than any of the regular season ships, but probably will not, altho' she leaves this Canton near two months before Dekoven [a Captain from Middletown who was in Canton apparently gets off, arrive in the U.States more than two weeks before him, that you may have the opportunity of making the purchase before anyone finds out for whose account it is, for if it was known that it is for me, they might ask a higher price than they otherwise would do."
By this time Russell had gained a certain reputation for his wealth of means in Middletown.

Russell's decision to purchase land and build a house in Middletown may have been spurred by a certain spirit of expansion and improvement that characterized the community in the 1820's. That spirit was echoed in an editorial in the town newspaper, the "Sentinel", in July of 1827. (and Russell was probably in Middletown at the time of this.):

While other towns in the different sections of our Country are rapidly advancing in wealth and population--some indeed springing into existence as it were in a day--Middletown, as well as most of the towns in our State of steady habits, maintains only a steadily progressive march in improvement. Still, however, the improvement is very perceptible. Within the three years last past our city has put on an appearance much livelier and it is still going on in refitting and erecting...a number of dwelling houses are erecting [sic] and attention has been paid in many instances to the planting of shade tress along the walks. The scenery around us is unrivaled...we only want an impulse to business and we should enjoy all the advantages of a city and of the delights of the country. 97

With the advice of Captain Henry Dekoven, Russell listed a number of "situations" in the town that he believed might be suitable for the house:

the Factory lot next Judge Homers may be made a pleasant place. I understand that the Middletown Bank will probably come in possession of that property, which Dekoven thinks was appraised at about $2000 and is of opinion that it can be purchased for about that sum. there is another lot next to Capt. Alsops [his old employer most likely] which I believe belongs to him...that could be had at about $1000. the next situation I have in view is the Old Wetmore estate east of Mr. Nobles but am apprehensive there are too many proprietors, and getting a deed of it would be attended with too great delay. it has been intimated to me that Mr. Noble might leave
Middletown & be desirous of selling his estate, which I understand he paid $1700 for. If this should be the case, this is one of the situations I should like. A building lot might perhaps be bought of Mr. Wolcott say next west of his dwelling house. Now I come into Paradise Row [High Street], that lot of Mr. Dana's between his dwelling & Mrs Miles' is a very pleasant situation and in my opinion one of the most desirable on the list. If you could contrive to get the old Court House burnt down, I should like that situation as well as any by getting land enough of Mr. Wadsworth & removing the School House. I have omitted mentioning the Huntington lot on the corner. That is pleasantly situated but I believe the property is encumbered, and the ideas of the heirs are pretty well raised in regard to the value of it.58

With this detailed list, Russell sent a sketch of the house he envisioned for himself, "that you [Hubbard] may form some idea of the plan, which was made, placing it on the lot of Mr. Dana's."59 But even from the start, Russell did not get his way, for on July 5, 1828, Hubbard bought a parcel of land at the corner of High and Washington Streets on Russell's account for $2500. The 2-1/2 acre site was purchased from Henry and Mary Ward and ran from High east to Pearl Street.60

vi: The House: Russell's Plan

Russell's enumeration of possible building sites was almost as detailed as the plan he submitted to Hubbard for the house itself. He began, "my plan is 44 feet square, two stories high, the rooms on the first floor to be 12 feet high in the clear and 11-1/2 feet high on the second floor."61 And
he continued;

there is to be a two-story kitchen appended to the main building, but not so high...if the walls be through- out 1-1/2 brick thick, it will be strong enough as I intend that the partition walls in the House shall be of brick from the cellar to the garret...I would observe however, that I should like a bathouse, and if it could be contrived as to join the kitchen, so that hot water could be conducted from the boiler on the side of the kitchen fireplace, into it, it would be preferable to having it remotely situated, it might be placed in one part of the woodhouse to be built of brick, and both may be placed under one roof...this last mentioned building need not be large as I understand you have all got the Lehigh fever in Middletown.62

Of the work within the house, Russell planned, "there will be little woodwork in the interior...that about the windows and doors will form the principal part of it and which I wish to have done neatly", and regarding the chimney pieces, he remarked;

the fireplaces on the lower floors to be marble not very expensive...I do not limit you in this particular or any other. the style of the fireplaces may be varied a little those in the front rooms might be a little more expensive than the others, that in the dining room to cost less & that in the library still less, you can regulate these things as you and Mrs R. may think best.63

He also specified the size of the window glass to be 12 X 18 inches but noted that he would attempt to get the glass in Hamburg where it would be more expensive but "much superior". He also asks in the same letter for, "door locks...the best that can be procured...to all the windows there must be shutters inside, to close the whole [or] a half the window at pleasure...Blinds outside will be wanted."64 That he desired to please his wife and her tastes is evidenced when he discussed the interior
wall surfaces;

The plaistering I wish to have well done, hard &
smooth with as perfect a surface as possible, for
the walls are all to be painted. I do not want any
of them papered, unless my wife should prefer paper,
in which case I of course have nothing to say. 65

Regarding the construction of the House, Russell
noted to Hubbard that, "Dekoven says the House can be built
for $5000 complete", but added later in the same letter, "From
what I have said in regard to the size of the House, height of
the rooms etc. etc. perhaps you can form some estimate as to
the probable cost of it completed, if you could get the Mason
& Carpenter to unite and agree to build the House for a specific
sum, all complete, with the exception of the window glass,
fireplaces (marble) & door locks, which I prefer furnishing, it
would be most advisable, but do not build it by the day on any
account." On the last point Russell was adamant for he had
"seen the effects of such operations too often." What Russell
demanded above all, however, was that the House be, "well built,
strong and substantial, the work in and around it, to be well
done, but plain and neat." 66

By the ship "Panama" (and Captain Dekoven), which departed
from Canton in December of 1827, Russell shipped to Hubbard a
draft of the house, a model he had had built in Canton, and a
"quantity of Merchandise addressed to Geo. N. Talbot Esq. of
New York whom I have requested to advance you thereon Seven
thousand five hundred dollars for the purpose of enabling you
to purchase a building lot & erect a brick House thereon", adding
that should that amount be insufficient, Hubbard should draw
on Mrs. Russell for the remainder. 67

On January 29, 1828 Russell wrote Hubbard, "I will
make no further remarks respecting the House, having, I believe,
given you my ideas on the subject except that I wish every part
well built & furnished in a plain handsome neat manner." 68

vii. The House: The Form

Upon receipt of Russell's plans and model, probably
sometime during the spring of 1828, Hubbard went about acquir-
ing an architect. However, Russell had never mentioned the
possibility of engaging the services of an architect, expecting
that between his detailed plan and a "Mason & Carpenter", the
House could be built. What Russell had most likely envisioned
was the necessity of the traditional builder-architect; a man
who could build directly from his own drafts based on the de-
sires of the client. Hubbard, however, solicited at least two
designs from the designers Henry W. Titus of New York, and Ithiel
Town, of New Haven and New York. He chose the design of the latter;
perhaps because he had known Town personally as Town was at
this time designing the Presbyterian Church in Middletown and
referred to the project in his early letters to Hubbard. 69 In
June of 1828, at about the same time that he bought the corner
lot, Hubbard received the final drafts for the House from Town's
New York office. 

Ithiel Town, the famous Greek Revival architect, lavished a great deal of attention on Samuel Russell's House. It is quite clear from his detailed correspondence with Samuel D. Hubbard, concerning the planning and techniques of construction that Town felt obliged to act solely on Hubbard's (and Russell's) behalf, especially regarding relations with the builders. Town regarded the commission for the design of the House with importance, most likely because he envisioned it as a significant statement of his strict neo-classical inclinations and as the latest example of the most sophisticated uses of the Greek Revival taste. Perhaps Town's knowledge of his client's great wealth and esteem as a China trader also spurred him to create an exquisite dwelling—one that would gain a reputation beyond Middletown, enhancing his already important status as one of the foremost architects of the Northeast, and inviting other commissions from wealthy clients as well.

It is most likely that Town secured the builders of the House, David Hoadley and his partner Curtis, for Hubbard. Hoadley (1774-1839) is regarded as one of the most distinguished master-builders of late 18th and early 19th Century Connecticut, the designer and/or builder of numerous meetinghouses, private dwellings, a bridge, hotel, and obelisk monument (in Groton, Connecticut), and a collaborator with Town in many projects, most notably the three churches on the New Haven Green (1813-1815) and Eli Whitney's Greek Revival home, "Bel-
-135-

mont" in New Haven (1825). In many ways, Town and Hoadley constituted a very successful working team. Hoadley was the local builder and artisan with more traditional (i.e. Georgian) tastes, while Ithiel Town was the "gentleman" architect with a nationally famous reference library and art collection, international traveller; always proposing and demonstrating the most advanced tastes, especially that of the Greek Revival, of his age. Thus Samuel Hubbard had secured perhaps the best talent that could have been obtained in the Connecticut region for Samuel Russell's House in Middletown.

In September of 1828 Town informed Hubbard that the builders, Hoadley and Curtis, would take the contract at $7000 which included the west-end portico at a cost of $1000. But Russell had most likely never intended a portico for his House. Town had sold Hubbard on a temple-plan design, one of his "suburban villas" in the Greek mode, which type Town was always promoting for his wealthier clients. Russell had only sent home $7500 and since Hubbard spent $2500 for the lot, the estimate from Hoadley was far above Russell's original intention. Apparently Hubbard made Town aware of this problem, for he suggested that the portico be dropped, for the moment, from the plan; the work continued on the house until Hubbard could hear of Russell's decision respecting the portico. It is likely that Town would not have been pleased if the portico were abandoned, for he was a perfectionist when it came to creating a building in the Greek vein; every proportion exact, every ex-
terior detail consonant with the temple form, unified with pediments, entablature, and a perfect order. These concerns are manifested throughout his involvement with the House.

Besides the portico, other facets of Russell's original plan were being altered. The plan was widened four feet and the general height raised to restore the proportions of the pediment. This particular alteration was very probably the result of Town's securing six wooden columns from his unfinished Eagle Bank project in New Haven for Russell's House, thus necessitating the alterations to match the proportions of the columns. The Eagle Bank was incorporated in New Haven in 1811 and Town was later commissioned to design a structure at the corner of Church and Chapel Streets to house the bank. His plan was an exact copy of the Temple of Erechtheion on the Acropolis at Athens, with an Ionic order. The structure, begun in 1824, went uncompleted as the Bank failed in 1825. After that the building was demolished and the materials sold. The Eagle Bank's wooden columns were transported to Middletown for use on the Russell House, although it is not known when this was actually accomplished. Thus ironically, yet perhaps fittingly, those who were altering Russell's original plan for his own house--Town, Hubbard, Frances Ann, and Hoadley--had managed not only to increase its overall size, enclose his plain Georgian concept with a mantle of the fashionable Greek temple form, but also had managed to incorporate in the most dominant aspect of its appearance--the portico--that which was original-
intended for a business establishment. In fact, Town's original plan for the ground floor level included the margin advice, "Needs a fence to give it [the House] a domestic character." (See Figure 6); thus the fence parallel with High Street serving to denote the structure it surrounds a private residence rather than a public or commercial structure.

In October of 1828 Hoadley submitted a revised contract, including the alterations of size, for $8500.78 While Hubbard awaited a decision from Canton, planning went ahead. Hubbard, in an attempt to cut costs, suggested to Town that the elaborate Corinthian order be replaced by the less expensive Tuscan order. But Town replied that, "this is an order I do not acknowledge", and apparently convinced Hubbard that since the carving of the capitals had already begun, any change would be to his disadvantage.79 During the winter of 1828-29 there was much confusion and tension between Town, Hubbard, and Hoadley. It seems that Hoadley had calculated his estimate for the contract too low and was thus being bitter in the affair.80 Here it was evident that Town was acting on Hubbard's behalf, as he reported;

I have found quite lately, that H & C's [Hoadley and Curtis'] --are afraid that they did not estimate the extra height of the building high enough, in price & this I suppose accounts for the sharp manner they have treated the business lately in writing to you and talking to me as they have--I took their contracts at the time in writing, which they understood was to be sent to you, & without any conditions or fear of revision & transmitted it to you word for word as their best terms--this paper of the estimate I shewed [sic] them yesterday & they say they have lost their estimate, but I think they will not say much on the subject as I advised them not to even if they had made a mistake.81
There were many innumerable ways that Town helped Hubbard to oversee the progress of the House. He suggested that special attention should be given to many small, but important details, especially of construction and ornament. The Corinthian capitals had to be specially painted, puttied, leaded, and bradded, "for the Carver had a hard bargain & also used much glue in putting the work together." The exterior wood pieces were to be sanded and painted irregularly and thus shaded so as, "to imitate long blocks of marble about 3 ft, wide." The architraves or moulded finish around the windows and doors in the interior should be, "put up after the plaistering is done, contrary to the common practice in this state—it will be much better work." And Town took particular attention to send different sketches of designs for the interior wall painting, "to exhibit to Mrs. Russell, from which she and her friends may be enabled to form an opinion of what may be advisable for...her Parlours."

And while there were many alterations made on the exterior of Russell's plan, the interior floor plans that he suggested were basically adhered to; his simple, central-hall concept fitting nicely into the rectangular form of the imitation temple.

Russell's Decision

By April 22, 1829, Hubbard received the awaited judge-
ment of his actions on the House from Russell. The lot had been purchased, floor plans, elevations, and drafts had been got out, some of the woodwork begun in New Haven, and yet it was likely that no ground was broken until the word of approval came from Canton. Russell wrote Hubbard:

In sending you a plan of the House, it was not my intention or wish that you should strictly adhere to it, but that any improvement or alteration which you & Mrs. R. might suggest, should be acted on, without reference to my plan. My knowledge of the art or science of building is very imperfect, & of course it could not be expected that I should display much taste, or pay much regard to proportions. The lot you have purchased, I am much pleased with, the situation evidently requires a different House, and I am highly pleased with your determination to adopt an entire new plan, that which you propose to build after pleases me much & I readily release you from any responsibility that you may have felt under regarding it. My first wish was to please my wife, both in the location & style of the House & I am pleased to find you have consulted more her taste & wishes than my ideas on the subject.

Apparently, not only did Russell approve of the new plans, humbling himself and his knowledge of the "art or science of building" before its logic, but he completely acquiesced to the realization that the House would cost him a good deal more than he had originally intended. He understood that;

The House on its proposed plan will probably cost more than the sum I named in my former letters. whatever may be the excess you will call on Mrs. R. for. I am sending property by this conveyance and in case of accident thereto, she may not have sufficient funds to meet at the moment your demands, in that event you will oblige me by advancing whatever may be required for its completion, till she may be in possession of means to repay you.

Russell was very grateful to Hubbard;

Being fully sensible of the trouble I have already
given you, and of the obligations you have placed
me under by your kindness in undertaking the trouble-
some business, as well as the desire you have manifested
throughout to please Mrs. R. and myself in every par-
ticular, I can only for the present express my acknow-
ledgement of a debt which I fear I can never satis-
factorily to myself discharge.⁶⁹

Samuel Russell was happy with what had been planned for his
future residence. He had originally attempted to control from
afar the nature and the quality of the country seat he had en-
visioned for himself, found such control impractical and im-
possible, and acquiesced gratefully.

vixi. The Inheritance

At the same time that Hubbard, Town, and his wife
were altering his originally modest proposal for a new House
on High Street—enlarging his plans and altering his instructions
to include a Greek mantle of exquisite beauty, simplicity, and
proportion; a House more grand yet subtle in its dignity—
Samuel Russell became, literally, the unexpected heir to all
of the commission business of Perkins & Company in Canton.

On March 31, 1830, in the same letter to Hubbard ex-
pressing his approval of the new House built for he and his
family, Russell wrote;

It was my intention to have left this Country this
winter but owing to events which occurred here in
August last I had an additional burden placed on my
shoulders and at the same time lost a valuable assis-
tant in our business and consequently was obliged en-
tirely to abandon the idea of returning home this year,
much to my regret. I however do hope, if my life is
spared, to have the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing you next Spring, when I will in person express my acknowledgements of the many obligations I feel myself under to you in which Mrs. R. will heartily join me. 90

Most likely, Russell was depressed here somewhat for he was not allowed to return home as he had anticipated to do at the end of his agreed stay in Canton for the firm. But, and he was either understating or hiding the matter here, Russell and Ammidon had suddenly come into a great fortune because of those "events that occurred here August last."

Because of his ailing health, John Cushing began to terminate his affairs at Canton during the winter of 1827-28. At the end of August of 1828, Thomas Tunno Forbes, a relative and employee of the Boston Perkins, arrived in Canton to take over as Cushing's successor. On September 17, 1828 Cushing arrived at Boston after twenty-five years in China. At Boston Cushing rejected an offer from Thomas H. Perkins to invest heavily in another trading concern at Canton and was apparently through with business in that quarter. But in July of 1829 Cushing along with Perkins himself were aboard the "Margaret Forbes" and sailing for England, accompanying the Perkins' ship "Bashaw" in which the two men were to load a large shipment for Canton. While Perkins returned back to Boston and Cushing's health grew worse in Paris, the "Bashaw" was being loaded with opium at Smyrna and British goods in England. Cushing noted that he expected a return on this, his last China venture, of between 150,000 and 250,000 dollars. But in February of 1830 (a month
before Hubbard received the notice from Russell, the Perkins received the bad news from Russell & Company. In an attempt to return to Lintin from Macao, after he had been notified of the possibility that the Perkins were going to abandon his agency, Thomas Forbes, along with an English sailor and Samuel Monson, the Russell & Company clerk, drowned in a hurricane off of Macao.

As William C. Hunter wrote;

On this sad event taking place, amongst his [T.T. Forbes'] papers was found a sealed letter addressed to Russell & Company. It requested them, in case of accident to himself, to take charge of the local business of his own firm, as well as that of J. and T.H. Perkins.

Cushing (in England), upon hearing this news, first recommended that Thomas Forbes' brother, Robert Bennett Forbes, be sent to Canton to represent the "Boston Concern" in the transferal of the commission business to Russell & Company; noting, "I should have every confidence in Bennett himself, but it would be desirable to have the benefit of Mr Russell's experience." But after he was notified that Russell intended to leave China, Cushing decided to leave for Canton himself and thus departed on the loaded ship "Bashaw" on April 15, 1830. Meanwhile, R.B. Forbes declined the offer to replace his dead brother at Canton, but rather purchased the barque "Lintin" with the idea of making it an opium storeship at the place the ship was named for. The day after Cushing's departure, a letter arrived in England for him advising Cushing that because of the latest developments Russell would delay his departure. Cushing, longing
to return to China anyway, did not regret that he had gone out however. At Canton Cushing officially terminated the Perkins & Company agency; a huge profit of well over a million dollars was returned to the Boston backers; Cushing estimating his wealth in July of 1830 at more than $700,000.  

The "Boston Concern" chose the Boston merchant, Augustine Heard (from Ipswich, Massachusetts) as their continuing representative within the Russell & Company firm. As Russell's term of duty at Canton expired at the beginning of 1830, an Agreement was signed between Ammidon and Heard in Boston in June of 1830.

But while Russell and Low were in Canton at this time attempting to put together the pieces of Perkins & Company, bringing their business into their own firm, Philip Ammidon, who should have replaced Russell, was still in Boston. On December 6, 1830, Ammidon wrote Russell from there:

By the several arrivals from Canton—sometime past, I have not received a line from yourself or Mr. Low which I account for from the reason you had to Suppose I should have left this Country for Canton—Would to God it had been possible for me to do so—lest my good friend, I opine you it has not. of this you will be fully satisfied when you get home. Mrs A_mmidon has seemed to be somewhat better for 3-4 weeks past, but a week since, her maladie re-turned, and I have been at a loss at what I should do— it appears impossible that she can remain with the family through the Winter—I am very sorry to trouble you so often with this melancholy story, but you can have no idea of the unhappiness of myself & my Dear Daughters—& God only knows when it will end...If on your return there be a time when you think I can properly leave home for Canton, I pledge myself that I will at once go.

But even before this reached Canton, Russell had written his brother (January 28, 1831);
we let Mr. Ammidon out of the Concern on the 31st ulto. [December 31, 1830] & have made new arrangements with Mr. Low and Mr. Heard. Mr. A. will, I know be highly displeased, but he must bear it like a Philosopher."

When he wrote this, Russell had been at Canton more than a year than he had originally planned to and agreed to with Ammidon. Ammidon, as far back as 1823, in his letter to his brother, had expressed his intention to leave Canton for good as soon as he could, and had given the impression that Russell did not mind staying there further. Russell was very likely in the right for discharging Ammidon. Apparently quite angered by Ammidon's response to the action, Russell later wrote to Ammidon from Middletown:

I confess to you that I have always thought your conduct towards me was cruel, and fancied from the outset a disposition on your part to avoid if possible, ever going to Canton again. Your subsequent actions have only tended to confirm me in that opinion. When I expressed to you an unwillingness to renew our connexion in 1826 for more than three years, I had no other object in view (your insimulation to the contrary notwithstanding) than to lessen the period of my residence in China & return as soon as possible to my Wife & children who have in fact needed my presence, as much as yours have you. If you had gone out to Canton as you agreed to do and as you ought to have done, there never would have existed any unpleasant or unfriendly feeling towards each other.....

Thus by 1831, Russell had lost a partner yet gained an important merger with the business of Cushing. Into the combine of Perkins and Company and Russell & Company poured the largest amount of business that any American House in China had ever enjoyed. Realizing that when they left, the firm of Russell & Company would be in the relatively inexperienced hands of the younger partners, Cushing and Russell approached John
R. Latimer, the only other remaining opium commission agent unconnected with Russell & Company, about joining the firm. But Latimer felt that Russell's terms were too low, was afraid of his health, and was offended by Low's abrasive personality, desiring to quit China anyway.  

John P. Cushing and Samuel W. Russell sailed together from China in March of 1831 on the ship "Bashaw". Russell had written his brother in January of 1831 that he and Cushing "shall no doubt pitch on the Bashaw, Capt. Pearson, and probably be off about 1st March." Cushing and Russell retired from the Canton trade personally with undoubtedly great fortunes, the recognized "Merchant Princes".

Samuel Russell was an agent in Canton for twelve years, between 1819 and 1831 except for one of those years when he returned home. The first four years had involved very little profit for him, much aggravation, afforded him many important connections, and taught him much. The following years allowed him the opportunity to engage all of the resources he gained from the first establishment in a very profitable commission agency of his own. It was during this second establishment that Russell was, probably for the first time in his life, making money. At what must be considered an apex or turning-point of his career--the inheritance of Cushing's old business at Canton--Russell was placed in the situation where he could finally, at the age of forty, turn the good money that he was making as an agent back into investments. The transition occurred when he was
both an agent and investor. Interestingly, his first major investment as an agent, an investment in something outside of his own business, was the House in Middletown. Russell, as a commission merchant had invested in his own reputation, so to speak, for that was his one great resource and with it he could gain the trust of important merchants. That "investment" was successful as he was left an heir to a virtual monopoly. And suddenly also was he the owner of a house many times more beautiful and dignified than what he had ordered. Such things "fell" to Russell for others thought very highly of his abilities and dignity and trusted him.
CHAPTER IV

LATER YEARS, 1831-1862:

INVESTMENTS AT HOME

"Not magnitude, not lavishness,
But Form—the Site;
Not innovating wilfulness,
But reverence for the Archetype."

— "Greek Architecture"¹
by Herman Melville

1. Withdrawing from China

On March 31, 1831, William H. Low, senior partner of Russell & Company at Canton, prefaced a letter to Samuel Russell: "This I trust will find you happy amidst your family ... on the highest hill in Middletown City."² After twelve years in China Russell returned to live out the remaining years of his life in Middletown as an active investor and community leader.

Before he began to make investments of any real consequence, Russell extricated himself completely from all of his Canton connections. Between 1831 and 1836, when he finally withdrew from Russell & Company, Russell was kept constantly in touch
with the activities of the firm that he had established in China years ago.

In the early 1830's Russell & Company secured for itself the largest American opium consignment business in China. This was accomplished, not only by the merger effected by Russell and Cushing previous to their departure, but also by buying out those Americans who continued to speculate occasionally in the drug, by building an elaborate system of price supports with the largest British opium dealers, Jardine Matheson & Company, and by cutting deeply into Indian opium dealings of the English houses of Magniac & Company and Dent & Company, which was done by offering to the Indian Parsi dealers of opium at Calcutta and Bombay more attractive contracts. Prior to the Opium War of 1839, Russell & Company was third only to the Magniac and Dent combines in the sales of Indian opium to China, although they were beginning to lose their monopoly over Turkey opium as early as 1834 when the monopoly of the East India Company in India was successfully shattered by the private English houses there.

Besides the increased growth of competition and the increasing regularity of the Anglo-Chinese hostilities over the question of opium importation, Russell & Company was also beginning to suffer from organizational difficulties. Ammidon had been fired in 1830. Russell and Cushing had departed in 1831, and while they had left William Low as the senior partner there,
Low quickly became unpopular among the foreigners for his "abrasive personality". Low had badly alienated John Latimer and James P. Sturgis, the last remaining traders at Canton with long experience in the opium trade. Heard, while popular, was always a captain and had little experience as a merchant. A lack of organization, resulting from discord, had the effect of causing a poor distribution of work-loads which also indirectly caused illness and forced retirements for many.

When John C. Green led the House in 1834, it was seemingly becoming better organized. He had made sure that everybody had assigned duties, that correspondence was always business-like and prompt, and that no ship's officers were allowed to dally in the Factory. But by the time of Green's much-needed leadership, the Company was losing its importance in the opium trade. Their Turkey opium monopoly began to split and a new House, Russell & Sturgis was established in May of 1834.

On June 3, 1836, Russell notified Green of his "intention to discontinue...connection with the House of Russell & Company", and asked Green to have his "affairs in China bro't to a close", his dividends to be invested either in "Bills of Exchange on London" or teas. It is not exactly clear what Russell's reasons were for quitting the firm. Perhaps it was Russell's knowledge of the disorganization of the firm, its lack of experience, or its reduced power in the opium trade that moved Russell to sever ties.
But oddly, most of these problems were being remedied by 1836 and Russell & Company was anticipating better business in the near future. Apparently, Russell & Sturgis were hurt more than Russell by the greater entrance of free British traders in the opium markets in 1834. The size of Russell & Company's opium business between 1835 and 1839 was double that of the years 1828-34. Russell & Company also by 1836 was operating a very large and important system of opium deliveries along the China coast and had bought the first opium clippers. Thus by 1837 Russell & Company was expecting expansion and greater facility of the opium operations. Surely Russell knew that there could have been greater returns had he wished to stay his investments with the firm. But most likely he had been badly discouraged by the earlier organizational difficulties. On March 12, 1835 he had written R.B. Forbes from Middletown:

things are I trust, getting into a good train again in "No.2 Swede" [Russell & Co.] and would fain hope, that all parties, who may have, for a moment, harbored any unpleasant feelings towards me; in consequence of the measures, which I at the time, felt under the necessity of proposing, will ere long be convinced that they misapprehended & misconstrued my motives and conduct.

It cannot be said, but there most likely was some misunderstanding in this case which might have forced Russell to consider an earlier retirement from the firm.

But more importantly, Russell at this time was cultivating other interests and investments in Middletown. Perhaps he wanted to be able to devote his whole time and attentions to these domestic affairs rather than be constantly worrying about opium
dealings at Canton. This may be so for a number of reasons. Firstly, most of his important home investments began around 1836, the year that he gave notification of his extrication from the Canton Company. Secondly, he was developing a number of investments that would require much of his time. And thirdly, it was not generally like Russell to have a large number of different investments at the same time. It was during this time that Russell was able to enjoy the life of the leisurely investor. And it was during this time that Russell began to demonstrate that he would always personally decide and control his estate.

Russell withdrew silently and modestly from the Canton business. He wrote to Green;

In making the above request [investment of his profits] I hope it may not give you too much trouble. If it should interfere with any arrangements you may have in contemplation, I would beg the favor of you, to transfer this to Mr. [R. Bennett] Forbes, or any one else who may be placed in charge of the Concerns of the House. 15

Unlike John Cushing, who had intended to end his connection in the China trade with record profits of the "Bashaw", Russell withdrew without clamor; demonstrating a gentleness with the agents in Canton very much unlike that of, say, a John Jacob Astor.

On January 14, 1837 Houqua, the famous Chinese merchant wrote Russell;

I have heard of your withdrawal from your China connection with a good deal of regret, for your name is connected with the origin of the house and has been associated with it during the whole course of its exis-
tence. However, as you have a competent fortune there is no reason why you should not retire if you feel so disposed; and I can only add my congratulations on your success in life, and my sincere wish that you may live long to enjoy the fruit of your industry.16

11. Investments

There are only two distinctly discernible qualities to Samuel Russell's later investments of the fortune that he had earned in China as an agent. He always kept a very tight control over these later investments, never trusting them completely to an agent, and most of his investments were made outside of New England. As a comparison, John Cushing, after his return from China did just the opposite as Russell. His entire fortune of $700,000 in 1831 was parlayed into a very respectable two million dollars at the time of his death, but this entire process was controlled by one agent, William Sturgis of Boston.17 And secondly, almost all of Cushing's investments were made in New England and the Boston vicinity, with absolutely no speculation in Western lands.18

At the time of his death in May of 1862, Samuel Russell's property and dwellings in Middletown (including a block of land bordered by High, Washington, Pearl, and Court Streets) was valued at $34,000. His "Personal Estate" which included, "Furniture, Library, Pictures &c in Dwelling House", and "Horses, Cattle, Harnesses, Coahes, & Carriages" was
assesed for $6500. The remainder of his "Estate in Middletown", including book debts, notes and mortgages, bank and other stocks, and bonds, were worth almost $220,000. Along with "Property in Chicago, Ills, Ind. & Mich'in" (valued at about $323,000), and "Property in Covington City & Kenton Co., Ky."($52,000), Russell's total estate, at the time of his death, was worth almost $630,000. Samual Russell was certainly not an Astor, Wadsworth, nor a Cushing. But surely his estate, when market value is considered, made him one of the wealthiest men in Connecticut during his later lifetime.

What is important, however, is how he chose to invest the funds he had made in Canton. For the most part, Russell, after his return from China, became a heavy speculator in railroad stock and Western lands. While his early ventures and later investment in the opium trade represented a flow of energy, capital, and interest outwards from his home, his later speculations typified a turning inwards towards the interior of the Continent. If there is a reason for this shift, it still remains unclear. But while his holdings in Middletown were substantial, they were much smaller than his speculations outside of New England.

Russell held more than $74,000 worth of bonds in the Chicago and Northwest Railway and Chicago & Milwaukee Railroad Companies. Calculated with his property holdings in three Illinois counties, two Indiana counties, and two Michigan counties, which included lots, buildings and mills; and his
land and tobacco warehouses in Covington City and Kenyon County, Kentucky, Russell's investments outside of New England, at the time of his death were valued at about $450,000 or roughly seventy percent of his total estate.  

Certainly, as the records show, Russell employed land agents in the West to purchase and sell for him. But, unlike Cushing, Russell always kept a very close watch over his properties, not choosing to have one agent control all as Cushing had done. This fact, along with the fact that these large investments by Russell were really speculative (whereas Cushing invested only), suggests that Russell not only desired to control his estate personally, but also was involved in risk-taking ventures.

iii. Conclusions

Unlike such men as Jeremiah Wadsworth, John P. Cushing, the Chinese merchant Houqua, and John Jacob Astor, Samuel Russell was never made into legendary stuff—a figure larger than he was. It is forgotten, however, that Russell was affected by these men or came into important contact with them, and yet has still remained an unknown personality. It is forgotten that he was related to Wadsworth and was that man's namesake. But it is quite possible that Wadsworth may have inspired him during his early life. It has never been shown just how close Russell was to John Perkins Cushing and the orbit of the famous "Boston Concern"; that he was very often inspired, recommended, and
backed financially by Cushing. And while Russell had many dealings with the important figure of Houqua, he passed up Houqua's offer to be his personal agent, letting Robert Bennett Forbes have that opportunity, while if he had, it certainly would have given him a certain greater esteem, as it had to Cushing. 22 And finally, it has never been known that John Jacob Astor dealt in opium after 1818, but in fact Russell was his agent and sold some opium for him in 1828 at Canton, and had known Astor in New York.

Russell was connected to many "important" figures and yet was not of the same mold. Samuel Russell was, above all, a man of order and proportions. For the most part, his China experiences were challenges to his powers of order and assurance-building. For the Canton market was, as he said, "the most fickle market in the world." But the commission merchant or agent did not have to make the risks as did their investors. They merely received a percentage of the success or failure, so to speak. And Russell had experienced both success and failure at Canton.

Robert Oliver, a Baltimore merchant, once said, "before you can expect much business in the Commission line, you must establish a reputation for real industry & prudence & quit visionary schemes." 23 Up until his later investments in the West, Russell had lived a sort of "commission life", always willing to settle for an assured percentage of the wealth of other men. The successful commission agent handled the greatest
volume of consignments and thus was attracted to the biggest
distributors of those consignments. Perhaps it was that Rus-
sell was successful because he did not imitate these men (or
could not), but rather had built a reputation for "real industry"
that made such men depend on him for their own greater wealth.
If this is so, then Russell's China experience was not only
a challenge to his ability to invest in the market, but also
a challenge to invest in himself, by making his services needed
by wealthy investors and by advancing his experience and repu-
tation. The venture out to China was not a voyage of risk-
taking and adventure, but rather a calculated and ordered in-
vestment in himself.

If percentage is proportion then Samuel Russell was
a man of proportions. He reached certain limits and withdrew;
was always planning and calculating and investigating; never
extravagant or impulsive; calm, assured, perhaps very wise.

It may seem quite odd that a man of assurances, order,
and calculation; a man always tied to the investments of some-
one else; a commission man who followed orders; would speculate
so heavily as Russell did in his later years; buying and selling
and risking. But there is the possibility that the man who
must invest in his own reputation, industry, and self-confi-
dence becomes more self-assured and would be inclined to the
risks of speculating in something so volatile as Western lands
and railroads. It might be likely that a man like Russell would
enjoy more the risks of speculation than a man like Cushing
who allowed an agent to do all of the risking for him.

Samuel Russell's only "investment" over which he had none or little absolute control, was that of his House. And it is ironic that that investment has survived all of Russell's others. And even though its columns are wooden, it still symbolizes, in many ways, the life of its first owner, with its simplicity and subtle grandeur; its self-assurance.
ILLUSTRATIONS


Figure 1: Captain Joseph W. Alsop, one of Samuel Russell's early employers in Middletown. From The History of Middlesex County, Connecticut, opp. p. 156.

Figure 2: Samuel Russell's Handbill of Commission charges, signed and dated December 10, 1812. Lib. Congress.

Figure 3: A rare view of Canton before the fire of 1822. Russell's offices were at the rear of the Swedish factory, the dark-fronted building in the center. From Foster Rhea Dulles, The Old China Trade, frontispiece. The map of the factories is also of the area before the fire. From William C. Hunter, The 'Fan Kwae' at Canton, opp. p. 24.

Figure 4: Ship manifest for the "Fame", the first ship that Russell loaded at Canton. From the Library of Congress.

Figure 5: Samuel D. Hubbard, who superintended the planning and construction of Russell's House in his absence. From The History of Middlesex County, Connecticut, opp. p. 159.

Figure 6: "Planned Residence for Russell by I. Town, Esq." The original plan, with the note at bottom, "Needs fence to give it a domestic character."

Figure 7: Russell's House. From Honors College bill.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I: EARLY YEARS (1789-1819): VENTURING OUT

1. Ancestral Heritage

1  Henry David Thoreau, Walden, p276
2  Genealogy of the Russell family is from Beers, History of Middlesex County, p169; Louis Eugene Richter, The Faithful Remnant, pp136-40; Herbert Thoms, Yale Men and Landmarks, pp50, 156, 351.
3  Beers, p169
4  Ibid., p133
5  Ibid., p133
6  Thoms, Yale Men, p351
7  Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee, pp150-55, 219
8  Beers, p152
9  Ibid., p179
10 Richter, The Faithful Remnant, p132
11 David D. Field, A Statistical Account of the County of Middlesex in Connecticut, p44
12 Middletown Land Records, vol. 24, p1472

ii. Childhood in Middletown

13 Reproduced in Beers, p35
15 Ibid., p61
16 Beers, p169
17 Richter, p189
18 Richter, p189; Martin, pl99, 236
19 Beers, p157;
20 Joseph A. Scoville, The Old Merchants of New York City, pp294-5
21 Robert Bennett Forbes, Personal Reminiscences, pp27-8
22 Smith, p103
23 Ibid., p103

iii. A Model of Success

24 Ibid., pp74-5
25 Ibid., p75
26 Beers, p85
28 Ibid., pp79-87
29 Richter, p175
Footnotes (con’t)

iv. Supercargo to Spain

31 Scoville, p261, William Armstrong Rairburn, Merchant Sail, vol VI, p3690
32 Margaret S. Dart, pl6
33 Scoville, p261
34 John Griswold to Samuel Russell, N.Y. April 3, 1812, L.C.
35 Ibid.
36 Hull & Griswold to Alex. Hamilton, N.Y. April 12, 1812; to S.C. Blodget, N.Y. April 3, 1812, L.C.
37 Alex. Hamilton to Samuel Russell c/o Benitos Santos, Lisbon, May 30, 1812, L.C.
38 Thoreau, pp275-76

v. The Middletown Store

39 Middletown Land Records, vol. 39, p509
41 Ibid.
42 This information and that which follows is from Smith, pl16-19
43 Ibid., pp121-22
44 Handbill, signed by Samuel Russell, Dec. 10, 1812, L.C.
45 Thomas Boggs to SR, N.Y., Aug. 30, 1814, L.C.
46 Richter, pl39; Beers, p170. Beers claims, however, that her parents were from Stratford.

vi. A Providence Connection

47 John Griswold to SR (Providence), Oct. 21, 1815, L.C.
48 Ibid.
49 Richter, p138
50 Smith, pp67-71
51 "Misc. bills and accounts for Brig Mary", L.C.

vii. The Providence Agreement

52 Stuart Bruchey, "Success and Failure Factors".
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Tyler Dennett, Americans in Eastern Asia, p63
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
Footnotes (cont'd)

64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 SR to Edward Augustus Russell, Havre, Feb 12, 1819, MHC
68 Thomas Dickason & Co. to SR, London, Feb 12, 1819; Welles, Williams & Green, Havre, to SR, Havre, March 5, 1819, L.C.

CHAPTER II: FIRST CHINA EXPERIENCE, 1819-1823: WANT OF MEANS

1. Arrival in China

1 SR to EC & CO, C.B., B. & T.C. Hoppins, Canton, Jan. 15, 1822, L.C.
2 The general descriptions of this section are from: Maurice Collis, Foreign Mud, pp 20-56; Foster Shea Dulles, The Old China Trade, pp 13-25; Dennett, pp 46-51 - unless otherwise noted.
3 SR & CO., to EC & CO, C.B., Canton, Sept. 28, 1819; Sept. 27, 1819 (SR & CO to Hill & Blodget, Gibraltar), L.C.
4 Collis, pl. 12
5 Dennett, pp 47-48
7 J.K. Fairbarks, "Tributary Trade and China's Relations with the West", pp 129-137
8 Ibid., pl. 37
9 Ibid., pl. 39
10 Ibid., pl. 49
11 cited by Collis, p 42
12 Dennett, p 48, Collis, pp 43-45
13 Collis, pp 47-8
14 Collis, p 51; Dulles, pl 17
15 Dennett, p 49; William C. Hunter, Fan Kwae, Map opp. p 24; Collis, p 51
16 Collis, p 56
17 Ebenezer Townsend, "The Voyage of the Neptune", p 93, 97
18 Collis, pl 85

ii. Connection at Canton

19 Carl Seaburg and Stanley Paterson, Merchant Prince of Boston, p 137
20 Ibid., pp 156-57
21 Ibid., pl 63
22 Ibid., pl 66
Footnotes (cont'd)

23. EC & CO., C.B. to SR, Prov., March 6, 1819, L.C. 
24. Ibid. 
25. Ibid. 
26. Ibid. 
27. Ibid. 
28. Ibid. 
29. See Bruchey, "Success and Failure Factors". 
32. Ibid. 
33. Ibid. 
34. Ibid. 
35. EC & CO, C.B. to SR, Prov., April 27, 1819, L.C.

iv. Charges and Duties

36. SR to EC & CO., C.B., Canton, Sept. 28, 1819, L.C. 
37. SR & CO. to EC & CO., C.B., B. & T.C. H., Canton, Jan. 1, 1823LC 
40. Ibid. 
41. Bennett, pp 95, 106, 124 
42. EC & CO, C.B. to SR, Dec. 26, 1818 
43. See Stuart C. Miller, "American Trader's Images of China" 
44. Townsend, p 94 
45. Hunter, p 96 
46. Miller. 
48. H.B. Morse, International Relations of the Chinese Empire, p 65 
49. Op cit. 
50. SR to EC & CO., C.B., Canton, Sept., 28, 1819, L.C. 
51. SR to EC & CO., C.B., Canton, March 20, 1820, L.C. 
52. H. Cameron Forbes, "Houqua: The Merchant Prince of China" p 11 
53. Ibid. 
54. Hunter, p 48 
56. Dennett, p 60 
58. Ibid. 
59. Ibid. 
60. Hunter, p 97
Footnotes (cont'd)

vii. Interest in Opium

102 General information regarding the opium trade is from Jacques M. Downs, "American Merchants and the China Opium Trade, 1800-1840"; Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820" and "American Trade in Opium To China, 1821-39".
103 Stelle, "Prior to 1820", p427
104 SR & Co to EC & Co, C.B., Jan 14, 1820, L.C.
105 Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "John Jacob Astor", p600
106 Ibid.
107 Stelle, "Prior to 1820", p439
108 Ibid., p438
109 Ibid., p438
110 Ibid., p438
111 Ibid., p439
112 Ibid., p439
113 Ibid., p440
114 Op cit., p405
115 Op cit., p441
116 H.B. Morse, Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, vol III, pp 323, 339
117 SR & Co to EC & Co, C.B. Jan 14, 1820
118 Porter, p600
119 Ibid., p600
120 Stelle, "Prior to 1820", p438
121 Seaburg, p288
122 Ibid., p288
123 Ibid., p155
124 Stelle, "Prior to 1820", p439
125 Porter, p605
126 SR & Co to EC & Co, April 22, 1822
127 Stelle, "1821-39", p57
128 SR & Co to EC & Co., C.B. June 30, 1821
129 Ibid., April 22, 1821
130 Morse, Chronicles, pp10-15
131 Stelle, "1821-39", p58
132 Ibid., p57
133 Ibid., p59
134 SR to Capt. S. Townsend, April 13, 1821
135 Seaburg, p369

viii. Disruptions of Trade

136 Morse, Chronicles, vol IV, pp13-19
137 SR & Co to EC & Co., Nov. 22, 1822
138 Ibid.
Footnotes (cont’d)

139 SR & C0 to EC & C0, C.B., Dec. 14, 1821
140 Ibid., Jan 3, 1822
141 Ibid., Jan. 4, 1822
142 Ibid., Jan. 16, 1822
143 Ibid.
144 SR & C0 to D.C. & Sons, Nov. 23, 1822
145 SR & C0 to EC & C0, C.B., Hoppins, Jan. 1, 1823; Nov. 23, 1823
146 Stelle, "1821-39", pp60-61
147 SR & C0 to EC & C0, C.B.; Hoppins, on the days listed
148 SR & C0 to EC & C0, C.B.; Hoppins, Feb. 28, 1824
149 From "Disbursement Book", L.C.
150 Downs, pp435-36
151 SR & C0 to Hoppins, May 30, 1822
152 Hoppins to SR, July 20, 1822
153 SR & C0 to EC & C0, Feb 2, 1824
154 SR to C.B., Nov. 4, 1823

CHAPTER III: SECOND CHINA EXPERIENCE, 1823-31: WITH MEANS

1. Expanding Operations

1 From article of the "Connecticut Courant", no date
2 Macao, Philip Ammidon to his brother, Dec. 23, 1823
3 Ibid
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 SR to Hoppins, Feb. 3, 1824
10 Morse, International Relations of the Chinese Empire, volIV, Appendix Chart, "Opium 1818-27".
11 Stelle, "1821-39", 68
12 Ibid., p69
13 Ammidon to brother, Dec 23, 1823
14 Downs, p434
15 Ibid, p434
16 Stelle, p68
17 Ibid., p61-62  ii. Connections at Lintin Island
18 Ibid., p63
19 Op cit., pp429-30
20 Op. cit., p64
21 Stelle, pp64-5
22 Downs, p432
23 Hunter, p20  iii. The Firm
24 Agreement signed by SR and PA, Nov. 14, 1826, L.C.
25 Ibid.
26 Richter, p138
27 William Johnson (Middletown) to SR, Jan 8, 1823
Footnotes (cont’d)

28 Richter, pp138-9
29 Ibid.
30 Promissory note for "Dorrance Street Estate" signed by SR
31 Ph de Vargas, "William C. Hunter’s Books on the Old Canton Factories"
32 Ibid., p459
33 Ibid.
34 Hunter, p123
35 Dennett, p34
36 Ibid., p72
37 Dennett, p18
38 Downs, p435
39 Finding Aid to John R. Latimer MSS, L.C.
40 "Accounts of John Jacob Astor", L.C.
41 Astor to R&Co., Oct. 12, 1830
42 Ibid.
43 Porter says that, "Astor's trade in opium practically ceased after 1818, never having been an essential feature of his commerce with China."p605 Between 1823 and 1823, he says that, "...we have no evidence that the Astors were simultaneously engaged in sending the drug to China..."p 605.
44 1826 Agreement signed by SR and PA
45 Contract with Samuel H. Monson, signed by Ammidon, L.C.
46 Agreement with W.H. Low and PA of 1828, L.C.
47 Stelle, p70-1, Downs p435
48 Hunter, p80
49 See Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America, p176; Roger Hale Newton, Town & Davis, pl25; Samuel Green, American Art, pp191-2.
50 William Johnson to SR, Jan 3, 1823
51 Beers, p160
52 SR to SDH, Oct 3, 1827
53 SR to SDH, Oct 3, 1827

v. The House: The Site

54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 "Our City", editorial, "Sentinel", July 4, 1827 as cited by K.P. Harrington, The Background of Wesleyan, pp1-2
58 Op cit.
59 Ibid.
60 Middletown Land Records, v ol 56, p511

vi. The House: Russell’s Plan

61 Ibid.
Footnotes (con't)

62  Ibid.
63  Ibid.
64  Ibid.
65  Ibid.
66  SR to SDH, Oct. 26, 1827
67  SR to SDH, Dec. 9, 1827
68  SR to SDH, Jan. 29, 1828

vii. The House: The Form

69  Town to SDH, New Haven, Aug. 14, 1828
70  Thomas Rust to SDH, June 21, 1828
71  Roger hale Newton, Town & Davis, pp 31, 201
72  Town to SDH, New Haven, Sept 6, 1828
73  Ibid
74  Ibid.
75  Op cit, ppl23-55
76  Newton, p48
77  While this is a family legend there is no reason to doubt it. It has not been proven that the columns do not come from the bank/
78  DH to SDH, New Haven, Oct, 20th, 1828
79  Town to SDH, N.H., Jan 16, 1829
80  Town to SDH, N.H., Feb 4, 1829
81  Town to SDH, March 3, 1829
82  Ibid., Aug 14, 1828
83  Ibid., Aug 29, 1829
84  Ibid.
85  Ibid., July 29, 1829
86  Ibid.
87  SR to SDH, Dec 13, 1828
88  Ibid.
89  Ibid.

viii. The Inheritance

90  SR to SDH, March 31, 1830
91  Seaburg, pp359-68
92  Forbes, Reminiscences, ppl28-30
93  Hunter, ppl8
94  Seaburg, p370
95  Ibid.
96  Ibid, pp370-2
97  Agreement signed by PA and A. Heard, L.C.
98  Boston, Dec 6, 1830, PA to SR
99  SR to EAR, Jan 28, 1831
100  SR to PA, Middletown, Sept 2, 1831
101  Downs, p435
102  Ibid, pp437-8
103  Seaburg, p374
Footnotes (con't)

CHAPTER IV: LATER YEARS: (1831-1862): INVESTMENTS AT HOME

1. Withdrawing from China

1. Herman Melville, *Selected Tales and Poems*, ed Carl Bode, p412
2. Low to SR, March 21, 1831
3. Downs, p436
4. Ibid, p438
5. Stelle, "1821-39", pp71-72
6. Ibid, pp72-74
7. Op cit., p436
8. Ibid, pp436-37
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid, p439
11. SR to JCG, June 3, 1836
13. Ibid.
14. SR to REF, March 12, 1835
15. SR to JCG, June 3, 1836
16. Houqua to SR, Jan, 14, 1837
18. Ibid., p355
19. Middletown Probate Records
20. Ibid.
21. Letters to C.G. Hubbard, EAR Collection, MHS
22. SR to EAR, Canton, July 3, 1830
23. as cited in Bruchey, p 274
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources


"The Samuel Russell House Correspondence, compiled and transcribed from the originals in the Library of Congress", Alain D. Munkittrick, May, 1972

Edward Augustus Russell Papers, Middlesex Historical Society, Middletown, Connecticut

Secondary Sources (Books)


Harrington, Karl Pomeroy. The Background of Wesleyan, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1942.

Bibliography (con't)


Secondary Sources (Articles)


Bibliography (con't)


Townsend, Ebenezer, Jr. "The Voyage of the Neptune" (Diary), Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, vol.IV.

"The Addresses Delivered at the Dedication of Indian Hill Cemetery", Charles C. Pelton (Printer), Middletown, Conn., 1850.

Vargas, Ph. de. "William C. Hunter's Books on the Old China Factories", Yenching Journal of Social Studies

Sources Consulted

Brown, Elizabeth Mills, The United Church on the Green, Published by the United Church, 1965.


Bibliography (con't)


Morse, Hosea B. The International Relations of the Chinese Empire, (Publisher not given).


Richter, Louis Eugene. The Faithful Remnant: Church of the Holy Trinity (Middletown, Ct.); From Archives and Records, 1724-1874, And Other Middlesex County Data, 1959-68, vols. I, II.


Other Sources Consulted


Dictionary of American Biography