

## SAMUEL WELLS

1754 - 1830

By Dennis J. Hahn

(Six Times Great Grandson of Samuel Wells)

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Samuel Wells was born in Stafford County, Virginia in 1754. He was the oldest of the 10 children of Samuel Wells and Ann Farrow Wells; and he was the third generation born in the Colony of Virginia. The Wells family came from Wales, England to Virginia in 1635. Samuel Wells' parents, and family, moved to Pennsylvania in the early 1770's and to Jefferson County, Kentucky in 1775 and 1776. Samuel Wells outlived his first two of three wives, Mary Rebecca Pope and Mary Spear (my 6 times great grandmother). His third wife was the widow Margaret Audrain Hoffmann. Samuel Wells and Mary Pope had one child, Samuel, who died at birth. Samuel Wells and Mary Spear had seven children: Margaret, Mary Elizabeth, Rebecca, Samuel, Levi, George and Ann Farrar. Samuel Wells and Margaret Audrain Hoffmann had six children: Peter, Fanny, David Barton, Caroline, Charles and James. The first nine children were born in Jefferson County, Kentucky. The last five children were born in St. Charles County, Missouri.

Samuel Wells and his father, Samuel Wells, Sr. both served in the Revolutionary War in the western regions. His father was killed in battle by Miami Indians aligned with the British in 1781 in Jefferson County, Kentucky. This battle is known as the Long Run Massacre. A monument was erected to honor those killed, and is still standing today.

Records in the Virginia State Archives indicate Samuel Wells served in the Revolutionary War as a Lieutenant under Col. George Rogers Clark in 1780. The "History of Kentucky" by Lewis Collins in 1882 indicates Samuel Wells served in the Revolutionary War as a Captain under Col. John Floyd in 1781. It is recorded that in 1781, 25 men under the command of Col. Floyd were attacked by approximately 200 Indians. About half the men were killed and Col. Floyd was on foot being pursued by Indians and near exhaustion when Captain Samuel Wells dismounted his horse and gave it to Col. Floyd, and ran by his side to support him as they made their escape. In the 1780's, Samuel built a station known as Capt. Samuel Wells' Station near Squire Boone's Station (now Shelbyville) Kentucky.

After the Revolutionary War, Samuel Wells and family lived in Jefferson County, Louisville, Kentucky until 1817. Samuel was appointed a Major of Kentucky mounted volunteers in 1792. He served in the House of Representatives of Kentucky representing Jefferson County in the years 1795, 1796 and 1799. In 1799, he was appointed a Brigadier General in the Kentucky Militia. In 1804, he was appointed a Major General in the Kentucky militia.

In the book entitled "Kentucky In The War of 1812" written by Anderson Chenault Quisenberry between the years of 1912 and 1915, it is stated that upon declaration of war (the War of 1812) by the President of the United States, James Madison, the President called for a militia of 100,000 men and assigned a quota of 5,500 men for Kentucky. 7,000 men enlisted in Kentucky. Samuel Wells recruited a regiment of "regulars" in Kentucky and was appointed its Colonel by President Madison. The regiment was known as the 17<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry. -- This military service is shown on Samuel Wells' tombstone. -- The 17<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry saw significant action in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Canada. Colonel Wells went on to command the 11<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment in 1814.

Samuel Wells and his brothers William and Charles, son Levi, and sons-in-law James H. Audrain (for whom Audrain County, MO is named; and husband of Samuel's daughter Mary Elizabeth (Polly) Wells) and Nathan Heald (commandant of Fort Dearborn; and husband of Samuel's daughter Rebecca Wells) served in the War of 1812. In the book entitled *The Battle of Tippecanoe* by Richard J. Reid, EdD it is stated that several Kentucky militia officers, including Major General Samuel Wells, enlisted as privates to serve with William Henry Harrison on the Tippecanoe expedition; and upon learning about Samuel Wells, William Henry Harrison appointed him a Major with the command of a provisional battalion of mounted riflemen. This book further states that Major Wells lived up to his reputation as a first class Indian fighter by correctly assessing the situation to his front. He married up the dragoons and the dismounted troops and ordered a counter attack. They killed Indians with bayonets, knives, sabers, and bare hands. This counter attack caused the Indians to quit the battle and melt away. Samuel Wells was presented a sword by William Henry Harrison (who became President 30 years later) for his bravery and military tactics during the Battle of Tippecanoe. The Battle of Tippecanoe took place on November 7, 1811.

Shortly after the Battle of Tippecanoe, there was some criticism of William Henry Harrison accusing him of mishandling the forces at Tippecanoe and for not pursuing the Indians when they fled. Six field officers that served under William Henry Harrison signed a statement certifying that "the Governor was clam and deliberate – that his orders were precise and distinct – that he performed duties that might have devolved upon subordinates – that he directed and marched reinforcements to points where aid was necessary and posted them himself – that he never avoided danger. That the victory was obtained by his vigilance and activity. That in a word his conduct in every respect was worthy the General and the soldier." Samuel signed as "Samuel Wells, Major General of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division of the Kentucky Militia, now Major of the mounted Riflemen, Indiana Territory".

In January 1813 the Battles of River Raisin took place at Frenchtown, now known as Monroe, Michigan. Participating in the battles was the 17<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry under the command of Col. Samuel Wells. Samuel Wells reported to General James Winchester who in turn reported to General William Henry Harrison. To the alarm of William Henry Harrison, it was reported to him that General Winchester on January 17, 1813 decided to go to Frenchtown to protect the inhabitants from the Indians and the British. Fighting starts during the afternoon of January 18. To no avail, Samuel Wells took issue of the positioning of troops with General Winchester. To the dismay of Samuel Wells and others, General Winchester took up evening quarters in a house away from Frenchtown. Samuel Wells leaves camp to go see General Harrison. Unfortunately, on the morning of January 19, the British and Indians attack the American troops in Frenchtown. The result is a massacre of the American troops. The Indians killed many of the wounded survivors the next day. Included among the wounded that were killed by the Indians was Ensign Levi Wells, son of Samuel Wells. This defeat resulted in the battle cry of "Remember the Raisin".

Samuel Wells' brother, Capt. William Wells, was killed at Fort Dearborn (now Chicago, IL), son Ensign Levi Wells was killed at the Battle of Raisin River (today Monroe, MI), son-in-law Major Nathan Heald was the commandant of Fort Dearborn and was severally wounded (he was shot through the hips, and never fully recovered), and daughter Rebecca Wells Heald was severally wounded (shot 6 times; and some accounts also say she was scalped). Nathan and Rebecca both survived their wounds, were taken prisoner, and escaped. A friendly British Officer helped Major Heald escape and a friendly Indian Chief purchased Rebecca Wells Heald's freedom. Nathan and Rebecca came to St. Charles County in 1817 with Samuel Wells and family and purchased Fort

Zumwalt; and called it home until they died. — Major Nathan Heald's and Rebecca Wells Heald's tombstones are located right by Samuel Wells' tombstone.

In the Jefferson Memorial Building in Forest Park in St. Louis, under the auspices of the Missouri Historical Society in 1915, two bronze tablets were erected bearing the names of Distinguished Missourians. Among the names listed on the bronze tablets are Samuel Wells, Nathan Heald and Rebecca Wells Heald.

In 1816, Samuel Wells purchased land in St. Charles County. At the age of 63, Samuel and his wife, Margaret, departed Kentucky for St. Charles County, Missouri in March, 1817. They lived the remainder of their lives in St. Charles County. The Wells home was located where the Fred Weber quarry is located today at I-70 and Brian Road near O'Fallon. Samuel Wells in St. Charles County was a farmer and stock raiser. Samuel Wells prospered in St. Charles County and ended up owning over 1,400 acres north of Peruque Creek, nearly 1,000 acres west of Peruque Creek, and 350 acres in Lincoln County near Troy. He served as a St. Charles County Court Judge in 1826 and 1827. He served as a Missouri State Representative for St. Charles, County in 1824. Throughout his life, Samuel Wells served his country and local community.

This dedicated son, brother, husband, father, soldier and statesman died at his home in St. Charles County on July 25, 1830 at the age of 76 years old. He was buried on his farm. His grave was relocated in 1966 to the Mount Zion Cemetery, O'Fallon, Missouri.

Wellsburgh, MO, which was located near St. Paul but is no longer in existence, was named by German immigrants of the 1840's for Samuel Wells who had previously owned over 1,200 acres of land in that area. Today, there is an area near the site of Wellsburg called Wells Bottoms.

Descendants of Samuel Wells have been active in the Daughters of The American Revolution (DAR) through the years. The Organizing Regent of the O'Fallon Chapter, Rebecca Heald McCluer, and the Organizing Regent of the Cornelia Greene Chapter in St. Louis, Frances Otey Heald Ottofy, were descendants of Samuel Wells. Early members of the St. Charles Chapter were descendants of Samuel Wells. The St. Charles DAR Chapter presently has two descendants as members, Carrol Geerling and Joan Koechig.

The author, Dennis J. Hahn, is a descendant of Samuel Wells and is a charter member of the Fernando de Leyba, St. Charles, Missouri Chapter of the Sons of The American Revolution (SAR).



Col. Samuel Wells  
Founder of the 17<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry  
War of 1812