

Samuel Newell 04Nov1754 – 17Feb1841

Born on the frontier in the Shenandoah Valley in 1754, Samuel Newell grew up among a family oriented Scotch Irish Presbyterian enclave. His older half-brothers Joseph Black and Thomas Newell and his mom's younger brothers Andrew and Samuel Colville were his nearest contemporaries. Cousin Samuel Vance, the Blackburns, the Craigs and neighbor Benjamin Logan were all of like circumstance and philosophy. They learned the value of hard work and the rewards of developing capital to make life better. They shared the Presbyterian philosophy of the brotherhood of mankind. They saw the change of the Indian tribal culture influenced by French missionaries so that plundering was gradually replaced by trading and helping all the people to live better.

Discomforts with the British King's and his colonial governors' grant of exclusive franchise to the Anglican Church of England were exacerbated when the pastor of their meeting place (since they could not have a church) was penalized for performing his ministerial duties. Disdain for far away rulings from London, Williamsburg, Fredericksburg, and Orange was increased by the slow pace of organization in Winchester. They saw that they could keep their own peace and records better locally. The Red Coats came to provide security, but George Washington surrendered the fort. It was their militia which would end up getting the job done. The militia learned the tactic which could defeat the Red Coats on the frontier.

The Frederick County neighbor and family structure prospered. The proclamation of 1763 prohibiting settlement beyond the mountains added to their disrespect for King George. The grants of the same land by the royal governor and by the king to two different people made decisions from afar a laughing stock. When the sparks of discontent from the Boston Tea Party and the battles at Lexington and Concord arrived on the frontier, the flame of liberty had fuel ready to be fanned.

Dr. Thomas Walker's expedition to Kentucky opened new opportunities. He was selling unsettled land on the new frontier at Wolf Hill at bargain prices through Daniel Smith, his agent in Winchester. The Cedar Creek folks could sell their developed plantations to profit from their labors and buy new space at a cost of more sweat, blood, and tears and fewer shillings. Their caravan took some planning, preparation, and organization. They would have to leave the comforts of property, people and places they knew and loved. Instead of subdividing farms among ten heirs, they could have the same or more space on the frontier for the next generation. Homestead claims instead of land purchases required no cash, just fortitude and determination.

Newell's (1754) parents, Samuel (SN1713) and Elizabeth Colville Black Newell, took good care of their own business and their children. When SN1713 moved to homestead near Dr. Walker's Wolf Hill tract, SN1754 enrolled in college near Raphine in what would become Liberty Hall at Lexington, now Washington and Lee University. He could leap frog his family and friends in classical science, philosophy, and language skills, then rejoin them in southwest Virginia. He could meet the elite of the educated young men who would join him in taming the frontier while simultaneously removing the yoke of bad government and overcoming the abuses from the ungoverned Indians.

Half-brother Thomas Newell remained in Frederick County (now Shenandoah) with Uncle William Newell. They would spread to Fort Pitt, Ohio, Vincennes, and Kentucky. SN1713's brother Joseph had moved to James River and brother James to New River between their Opequon (o PECK un) beginning and the new Wolf Hill start.

Uncle Samuel and Aunt Agnes Colville were the nearest of the prior generation to SN1754. Their unknown demise en route to the tract they bought from Dr. Walker certainly

shaped the lives of all their friends and family who established what would become Washington County VA.

After college, SN1754 took his part in the urgencies of the season. He became a ranger with deputy sheriff and militia duties drawing on his country upbringing more than his formal education. SN1713 was the elder organizer who contributed the reading, writing, and arithmetic skills to the new community. Uncle Andrew contributed some political influence. Joseph Black jumped in as a builder to make the forts, courthouse, and jail in what would become Abingdon. Craig, Vance, and Blackburn cousins helped to establish and improve roads to connect the new community to Blacks Fort and to neighboring communities.

SN1754 joined Sheriff James Dysart's law enforcement and Captain Andrew Colville's security units. He was assigned to the territory toward Cuttawa (Cumberland Gap) where his patrols took him near Sapling Grove (Bristol), Long Island (Kingsport), and Martin's Station (Jonesville). He developed a long term friendship with Isaac Shelby, another ranger around his dad Evan Shelby's homestead east of Bristol and Shelby pastures in Scott and Lee counties. They, like so many of their family and neighbors, were unassuming, reliable, practical, get 'er done, trusting outdoorsmen. They were also among the indoors people who could read, write, and organize. Horses were so vital to frontier life that horse theft brought the same penalty as murder and horse abuse was a misdemeanor at a minimum. SN1754 did not list so many horses as SN1713, Uncle Andrew, and many others. He did keep two or more horses and would later breed and sell horses. SN1754, unlike his brother, his uncle, and his boss Sheriff Dysart, was not indicted for horse racing after a monstrous party at Blacks Fort celebrating the surrender of Cornwallis.

Various sheriff and militia duties ranged around Washington County, into North Carolina, along boundaries to determine and mark them, across boundaries for duty, through Cuttawa, through Cranks Gap, through Mulberry Gap, to New River, to Kings Mountain, to Chota, and to Boyds Creek. The most significant among SN1754's duties was the expedition to the Battle of Kings Mountain memorialized by historical markers in Abingdon and the national park in SC and by Thomas Jefferson's "turned the tide of the war" description of the first total whuppin of the Red Coats' Tory and Provincial troops. After the call to public service subsided, SN1754 took some time for himself. He claimed some land in lieu of payment for military service from a near bankrupt Virginia. He married Jane Montgomery in Raphine (RAY fine), perhaps above his station.

Following the example of his family and friends, SN1754 left the comforts of Washington County such as they were, to start anew at Boyds Creek. Like his brother and his classmate David Campbell, he built a fort, Newell's Station. Other BKM vets and family connections in his caravan and settlers to soon come made Seymour TN a strong community on the southern flank of the proposed new state of Franklin. McGaughey's Fort, Andrew Evans' ferry, Fort Craig, White's Fort, Campbells Station, and Blacks Blockhouse spread out from Newell's Station. Instead of southern flank, they became the center, not as Newell had hoped, of the aborted state of Franklin. Ultimately, a new state of Tennessee free from the whims of the other side of the mountain became the 16th of these fifty united states.

The feds redrew the boundary of the Cherokee Nation giving the Indians back the Little River watershed. The deal helped settlers on the east side of the Appalachians at the expense of about 1500 families in Blount, Sevier, and Cocke counties. Full-fledged free holder status was too slow coming to the families south of the French Broad just outside the new state's boundary. Frustrated to wait or to pay again, about half of them left. Samuel Newell led a caravan through

Cuttawa to form Clio KY. Organizing Pulaski and Wayne Counties, SN1754 reduced his public service from federal and state to local matters. He spent his time working on church, family, farm, and business. On the banks of the Cumberland River, he was near a Cherokee center not far downstream, but lived in brotherhood and diplomacy without a fort.



The Kentucky boys answered the call from General William Henry Harrison and Col Isaac Shelby. They put another whuppin on the Red Coats at the Battle of Thames in the War of 1812. Samuel Newell stayed at home taking care of business. His lead mine could supply bullets to Andrew Jackson. His good name could provide certificates for local producers to sell their products in interstate commerce. Liberty Hall mathematics could measure and keep accounts. His Liberty Hall mechanics and architecture could erect a three story house instead of a log cabin. His warehouse could store, his barges could deliver. His Liberty Hall chemistry and physics could produce pine tar, turpentine, and coal oil.

Social pressures convinced four SN1754 children to acquire slaves. "You have plenty of money and your poor wife has all those children. You are scum if you don't get her a cook and a housekeeper." They had no field slaves, but household servants. Ole Loge became family to Joseph Black Newell. Oral history says that Sam and Jane offered refuge to abused slaves. They hid the oppressed in their cave until the offending slave owner abandoned the search. Then they directed them to a faraway better master or to freedom.

Sam and Jane's youngest son, William Tell Newell, was convicted that it was wrong for his brothers to have even household servants. He decided that the Presbyterians were hypocrites in Kentucky and moved with his brothers in law, Jesse and James Evans to Indiana where SN1754 had bought three new frontier tracts from James Monroe's agents in Terre Haute.

Having handed off to their children in KY and IN, Sam and Jane made a trip back to Newell's Station, Abingdon, and to a Revolutionary War veteran Julius Saunders's funeral in Lynchburg VA. George Saunders was a neighbor in Bronston, but could not make the trip for his father's funeral. Officials from Richmond saw Newell, and thinking that he was still in Abingdon or Powell Valley, began vetting him for a position in the General's Council.

Tell Newell and his sisters had made a comfortable place to retire near Gosport IN. Sam and Jane moved to Indiana where they lived out their years. They joined Bethany Presbyterian. Tell was sympathetic and supportive, but refused to join the church. SN1754 had flags and bunting from the Harrison presidential campaign. In his old age, he mourned the premature death of the president who championed small central government and strong local control. Perhaps it was a campaign rally which led to the Montgomery County Indiana DAR monument with Newell's name.

Joseph Black's fort and Newell's Station have highway historical markers. Kings Mountain and Seymour TN have monuments recognizing SN1754. Somerset KY DAR has a monument similar to Crawfordville IN listing Samuel Newell among the veterans.

