

## Samuel Wright

### Born

20 Jan 1828, Harrison Co, Indiana

### Entered Service – Civil War

15 July 1861

Fort Snelling, Minnesota  
Company H  
Minnesota 2nd Infantry

### Citation for Medal of Honor

"Was one of detachment of 16 men who heroically  
Defended a wagon train against the attack of 125  
Cavalry, repulsed the attack, and saved the train."

### Died

07 Jul 1918; Tribune, Greeley Co, Kansas

### Early Years

Samuel Wright and his twin, Alexander, were born 20 Jan 1828 in Harrison Co, Indiana, probably in Posey Township. (1) According to the bio information found with BillionGraves, his parents were Joseph Wright and Catherine McRae. (2) The 1850 census states that widowed Catherine Wright was the head of the household that included the twins, one additional son, Joseph, and one daughter, Nancy. All four of the children were born in Indiana while Catherine was born in South Carolina.(3) Later census records state that Samuel's deceased father was born in Kentucky.(4 & 5) ,ne occupations of brotners Alexander and Joseph were identified as farmers, while Samuel is listed as a carpenter.(5) It is not known what type or how much schooling Samuel had, but he could read and write. (6)

Sometime after 1850, Samuel married Susan F. Armstrong. They began their married life In Webster Twsp of Harrison Co, Indiana but she died sometime before 1857 in New Albany, Indiana. The cause of her death is unknown. They had no children. (7)

Probably at loose ends after the death of his young wife, Samuel Wright is next found in Blue Earth Co, Minnesota in September 1857. Living in the same boarding house with Samuel were a number of young, unmarried men with various occupations that would be useful in developing the area that was soon to become a state. The anticipated statehood promised a bright future for all. Samuel is listed as being 29 years old and a carpenter. (8)

In 1860 Samuel was the only boarder in the home of George W. Wolf in Nicollet Twsp of Nicollet Co, Minnesota. Samuel was probably attracted to the family since, they too, came from Indiana. (9) Nicollet County is an adjacent county of Blue Earth County.



Samuel Wright's enlistment papers state that his home was in the now extinct town of Swan Lake, Blue Earth County, Minnesota. The lake from which the town received its name is known for its attraction for ducks. (10) It is wondered if Samuel enjoyed shooting them?

## **The War Years**

According to the Muster-Out rolls of Captain Beaty,(11) Samuel Wright enlisted for three years in the Union Army at Mankato on 23 Jun 1861 by Captain Dickinson. He was mustered into the 2nd Minnesota Volunteer Infantry on 15 July 1861 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota with other men from Blue Earth and Ramsey Counties making up Company H. (12). He was promoted to Corporal on 01 Jan 1862. (13)

Company H, Minnesota 2nd Regiment took part in many battles but it is not known which of these Samuel Wright participated. During the time that Corporal Wright was a part of Company H the Regiment is known to have been at the Battle of Mill Springs, Siege of Corinth, Battle of Perryville, Battle of Stone River, the Tullahoma Campaign, Battle of Chickamauga and the Siege of Chattanooga. (14)

It was after the Battle of Stone River on the 15th of February 1863 while Company H was stationed outside of Murfreesboro in Nolensville, Tennessee that Corporal Samuel Wright participated in the action that was worthy of receiving the Medal of Honor.

According to historian Roger Norland as reported in the Mankato Free Press, "It was Feb 15, 1863 in Tennessee, a group of men went to forage for food for their mules. They stumbled upon a corncrib and began to load up the contents when Confederate soldiers surprised them. Greatly outnumbered and essentially surrounded, the men hid in the crib and opened fire. By the time the rest of the Union group appeared to help, over 100 Confederate soldiers were firing at the men. The men crawled out of the crib and continued to fight. They captured three Confederate soldiers, rounded up seven of their horses and confiscated many weapons. The Confederates retreated, leaving three wounded soldiers and a dead mule." (15)

It is known that Samuel Wright was in Chattanooga (Sep 24-Nov 23, 1863) since the only picture known to be of him was taken on Lookout Mountain with a group of his buddies. The buddies were seen sitting in the background while each man took his turn standing on a mountain ledge in the center to have their picture taken.

On the 14 March 1863, Samuel Wright was detailed for extra duty under Lt. Col. Bishop.(16) His great granddaughter stated that he was a wheelwright and was detached from Company H apparently to serve as the Brigade wagon maker until he was mustered out of the service on the 14th of July 1864 when his three years enlistment was over.

## **The Post War Years**

Corporal Wright did not return to Minnesota after his service was over, but instead to his birthplace of Harrison County, Indiana. There on 25 April 1865 he married Permelia A. McRae. Permelia was "the girl next door" having been born on 16 Jun 1842 on a neighboring farm. (17) The couple lived in Indiana for the first years of their marriage. They had four children: Lorah, who had a twin that died in infancy, Charles and Nellie.

Nellie was the youngest child and she was born in June of 1882. Sometime after her birth, the family moved to a farm on the Sedgwick-Harvey County line in Kansas. According to the 1880 Federal Census record of Harrison Co, Indiana and the 1900 census of Sedgwick Co, Kansas, Samuel now earned his living as a farmer. It is noted in Samuel's obituary that he was a member of the Garfield Post of the GAR. (18)

After his wife died on 05 Oct 1899, Samuel lived with various children. In 1900 Charlie and Nellie were living with him, but by 1910 he was living with his daughter Lorah Wright Baird and her family in Wichita. By 1915 he had moved in with Nellie Wright Kohl and her family in Furley, Kansas. At the time of his death at the age of 90 on 07 Jul 1918, he was living once again with the Sydney family in Wichita, Kansas. He died at the home of his son C. F. "Charlie" Wright in Tribune, Kansas while visiting. (19)

He is buried next to his wife at Maple Grove Cemetery in Wichita, Kansas. Besides their twin marker, there is a second marker denoting that Corporal Wright was a recipient of the Medal of Honor.

In 2012 Christian Kramer, a Past Department (State) Commander for the Disabled American Veterans of Kansas contacted Lois Nixon to obtain information about Corporal Wright to be included in his presentations before schools and civic groups. He was investigating recipients of the Medal of Honor who were buried in Kansas with future intentions of writing a book.

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## Sources

- (1) Personal communication with granddaughter. Lois Nixon, [doukabil@gmail.com](mailto:doukabil@gmail.com)
- (2) BillionGraves
- (3) 1850 census, District 45, Harrison Co, Indiana
- (4) 1880 census, Posey Twsp, Harrison Co, Indiana
- (5) 1850 census, District 45, Harrison Co, Indiana
- (6) 1900 census, Grant Twsp, Sedgwick Co, Kansas
- (7) Personal communication with Lois Nixon
- (8) Minnesota, Territorial and State Censuses, 1857
- (9) 1860 Census, Nicollet Twsp, Nicollet Co, Minnesota, page 70
- (10) Dalby, John, Minnesota Civil War Soldiers, online
- (11) Muster out roll of Captain Beaty
- (12) Family Search Research Wiki
- (13) Minnesota Civil War Records, 1861-1865
- (14) 2nd Minnesota Volunteer Infantry
- (15) "Marking their mettle with honor." Mankato Free Press, 31 Mar 1999.
- (16) Minnesota Civil War Records, 1861-1865
- (17) Personal Communication with Lois Nixon
- (18) "Obituary of Samuel Wright," The Wichita Daily Eagle, Wichita, Kansas, 9 July 1918
- (19) Ibid
- (20) "Obituary of Samuel Wright," The Wichita Beacon, Wichita, Kansas, 9 July 1918

