

Samuel Jamison II

The Revolutionary War

The deadly conflict had begun. Shots rang out in the town of Boston on March 5, 1770. British soldiers shot, point blank, into an angry crowd of citizens gathered to protest the stamp act taxes and mandatory quartering of British soldiers by the townspeople. Five protesters were killed and others wounded. The incident known as the “Bloody Massacre on King Street,” and later referred to as the “Boston Massacre,” was just the beginning of a new era of violence.

When this news reached Pennsylvania, Samuel II, fifteen years old at the time, asked his father Samuel, “Why do these acts of violence happen? Can we not go to a town for fear of violence? You told me that in Scotland, the Vikings tried to kill our ancestors, the neighboring clans tried to kill our ancestors and the English tried to kill them too. In Ireland, the Irish Catholics tried to kill our people and the English tried to kill our people. Here in the American Colonies, the Indians have tried to kill us, the French have tried to kill us and now the English are trying to kill us. The French and Indians succeeded with our relatives, the Jemison’s, in Marsh Creek. I have seen the horror of these killings in the faces of the refugees and the bodies after a massacre. Why does this continue? Will our family be attacked next? Father, you have always told me of our family’s bravery. I shall be brave and stand with you and fight to the end. But I am afraid for our family, for mother, my sisters and brothers and relatives. Father, please tell me, why do all these people want to kill us?” His father replied, “Samuel my son, our clan has been on a long journey from Norway to Scotland to Ireland to America. We have moved from one country to another searching for a land of peace. We have been dreadfully disappointed each time. You are an insightful young man and pose a very good question – one of greater maturity than your years. My mind

is weary from too many years trying to comprehend this utter disregard for human life – trying to understand mankind. I have reached a sad and troubling conclusion. The common thread through this fabric of violence and horror is this. We, Clan Jamison, and many like us, have a strong belief in peace, moral conduct and freedom. We have always been forced to fight to defend our beliefs and many times we have lost. Our adversaries have their own strong belief, but it is in greed and dominance which often prevails. They have always aggressively exploited our morals, destroyed our peace and taken our freedom. I feel shamefully naïve to have taken this long to have learned that wherever there are moral, peaceful, free people in this world, there will be greedy, aggressive people, ready to destroy them, take from them and dominate them through violence. We earned our land in Scotland by purchase and marriage but it was taken from us. We rented our land in Ireland but our peace and freedom were being taken away. We bought this land in Pennsylvania, but the Indians and French want to take it from us. Now the English want to take away our freedom. I am sorry to say, just as it was in Scotland and Ireland, we have not seen the last battle here. We have not seen the last war. We have not seen the last of greed, violence and dominance. Yes, Clan Jamison will be forced to fight again. But we must be resolute. We must take our stand here and fight for what we believe in - for there is nowhere else to go from here. Remember our clan motto, Either Peace or War.” Although Samuel II and his father had good conversations routinely on a variety of topics, this was the last “man-to-man” conversation Samuel II had with his father as his father passed away August 20, 1771. His father was laid to rest in Morrison Cemetery, Drumore Township, in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Samuel II developed more than an idle curiosity about the British and Colonist’s escalating tensions and altercations. He followed the developments closely. Soon he began to realize that the citizens in the Colonies were split between the fight against additional taxes without representation versus blind obedience to the British Crown. This split was causing serious infighting in the Colonies and it became difficult, if not impossible, for either side to know who they could trust. Samuel heard that the anti-tax representatives from the Colonies drafted appeals to King George III regarding the injustices but to no avail. He also heard that Benjamin Franklin, well respected in both countries, traveled to England and made a personal appeal to the Parliament advising that the injustices could lead

to an open revolution. Then, as an appeasement, the Stamp Act Tax was repealed by the Parliament only to be replaced soon afterward with a new set of burdensome taxes known as the Townshend Act.

More news made its way throughout the Colonies that a Continental Congress had been created and made up of representatives from the Colonies. They met September 1774 to debate the issues and formulate a plan for the future. They adopted a declaration opposing all the coercive acts by Great Britain. Samuel II, now nineteen years old, knew where this was headed. This would no doubt escalate tensions and lead to even greater control over the Colonies enforced by more British soldiers. That is exactly what happened. The Governors of the Colonies were ordered to enforce all British laws and taxes and seek out and destroy any arms and ammunition cached by the Continental Congress. Hundreds of British Soldiers were dispatched to various suspected locations of bands of minutemen and warehouses of weapons to preempt any rebellions. Invariably, battles and skirmishes would ensue. Some of these battles in Massachusetts would become infamous later such as the Battles of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill (actually Breed's Hill). The outcome of these continued hostilities was inevitable. The Declaration of Independence for the United States of America was signed by the Continental Congress on July 4th, 1776. A war, whether declared officially or unofficially, was now on.

The inevitable also came to pass for the patriotic men in the Colonies. Many were recruited and many volunteered for military service. On August 15, 1776, Samuel II must have heard his father's words echo in his ear, "We must take a stand here and fight for what we believe in..." as he voluntarily enlisted and was "mustered in" the 9th Pennsylvania Regiment of Militia. Four months later in late December, his unit of Militia was requested to assist General Washington's Continental Army for approximately one week. First, they were to assist in the Battle of Trenton. In this battle, the Delaware River was crossed in the fog and freezing weather after which a surprise attack was launched upon a Garrison of Hessian soldiers hired by the British. A battle ensued and the American's quickly captured the entire Garrison. Secondly, they were to assist General Washington's Colonial Army in the battle of Princeton. In another successful surprise attack on a British Garrison, many of the British fled to join British General Sir William Howe and the rest of the British troops were captured. After the success of these two

engagements in one week's time, the Militia unit in which Samuel served was permitted to return back to Lancaster County. On March 1, 1777, Samuel was promoted to Sergeant and after serving well for four months was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant for which he served two months.

Late in his last tour, Samuel and Margaret Ross were married. Clan Jamison and the Ross family, as Township land owners, had known one another for a number of years but her family had recently moved to Baltimore, Maryland. Samuel and Margaret corresponded and planned to marry after his last tour of duty. The Ross family planned to have the wedding at their new house in Baltimore. They soon decided it was not all that important to wait until Samuel was discharged as all the family members and the minister were available August 19, and this also meant Samuel could be married in his officer's uniform which pleased Margaret. So the wedding was scheduled for August 19, 1777. Samuel arranged for a one week leave of duty which gave the couple time to visit with friends and family in Lancaster County after the wedding in Baltimore.

Immediately after Samuel's one week of leave, he was pressed back into action. As part of the British campaign to capture the American Capital in Philadelphia, British General Howe covertly sailed up the Elk River in Maryland with 13,000 soldiers. Then after landing, they began the eleven mile march toward Head of Elk (modern day Elkton) to position themselves for the attack on Philadelphia. General Washington learned of the plan and dispatched Militia troops to harass and snipe the British soldiers, and report Howe's movements back to his headquarters. The troops dispatched by General Washington included the unit in which Second Lieutenant Samuel Jamison was an officer. After their mission, Lt. Jamison returned to Lancaster County and was honorably discharged as scheduled on August 31, 1777, with appreciation for his three tours of duty. In the military in that era, each tour of duty was officially defined as two months.

At this time, even though the war waged on and Philadelphia was seized by the British which forced the Continental Congress to escape to the City of Lancaster briefly and then on to York, there was otherwise no threatening war activity in or around Lancaster County. Samuel and Margaret were able to work their farm and begin growing a family. Their first child, Mary, born June 19, 1778, unfortunately died in infancy, but was followed a few years later by John, then

Samuel, Polly, Katherine, Elizabeth, Margaret, Adam, Jane and finally their last, Joseph Cowden, born April 25, 1803. In the meantime, after a crucial defeat of the British in Yorktown by General Washington, the Treaty of Paris was signed by the British in 1783 recognizing the sovereignty of the United States of America and ending the war.