

Bill for making shoes by Samuel Jackson Light

Samuel J. Light of Simpsons (Locust Grove area) was a shoemaker, per information of his descendants and from census records. He was also a schoolteacher, and, according to his oldest son Brownlow Light, "a devout Christian and one of the greatest grammarians and arithmeticians that I ever knew".

During the Civil War, he was known to have hid under a rock shelter on a steep mountainside in order to evade Confederate agents who routinely rounded up young men for army service. At some point he went in the service, however, serving in the 54th Virginia Infantry. But he deserted near Strawberry Plains, Tennessee. It is unknown whether his hiding was before or after his service and desertion.

Here is a bill from Samuel to one Sebastian Wygall for four pair of shoes, dated just after the end of the Civil War. And, a followup request to Wygall for payment of the bill. These papers were found among old documents which had been in the home of James I. McNiel. It is unclear why McNiel had these papers, perhaps Samuel felt in some way he could induce Mr. Wygall to pay up. It is unlikely that Samuel ever collected this bill – Sebastian Wygall is in the Floyd County census only year, 1860. In 1870 he had relocated to the Christiansburg area.

