

Guide to the Wells Family Papers

Scope and Content Note

The papers, which have been received by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association as gifts from various sources, number approximately 400 items and date from 1692 to the 1930s. They relate for the most part to descendants of Hugh Wells, who is thought to have come to this country from England in the *Globe* in 1635. He settled in Wethersfield, Connecticut, where he died about 1545. Included also are a few papers of persons whose surnames was Wells, but who are not known to have been descendants of Hugh Wells. The numbers that appear in the notes below, are those assigned by George Sheldon in the genealogical notes on the Wells family in volume 2 of his *History of Deerfield* (1895).

Biographical Notes and Description of Series

John Wells¹, son of Hugh¹, was born about 1628. He came to this country with his parents as a young boy, eventually settled in Hatfield, Mass., and died there in 1692. He is represented by one paper, a "distribution" of his estate, March 2, 1699.

Thomas Wells² son of Hugh¹, was born in 1620. Married to Mary Beardsley of Hartford, Ct., he was one of the "engagers" who settled the town of Hadley, Mass. He died in 1676.

An agreement between his widow and her children, March 29, 1692, is the earliest item in the collection.

Thomas Wells⁸, son of Thomas³ and grandson of Thomas² and Mary (Beardsley) Wells, was born about 1678. He was a trader, surveyor, and selectman, and played a prominent role in the settlement of Fall Town (Bernardston, Mass.). He married Sarah Barnard, lived on lot 8 in Deerfield, and died without issue in 1750. He left a great deal of real estate to a niece and nephew, and a silver tankard to the church.

His papers consist of deeds and surveys of land east of Green River in Deerfield from 1719 on, and a copy of his will, 1750. With these is a cash account of his widow, 1755.

Jonathan Wells⁴, son of Thomas and Mary (Beardsley) Wells, was born in 1659. He was a boy hero of the Turners Falls fight. He married Hepzibah Colton of Springfield, Mass.; the couple had two sons, one of whom died in infancy.

A plat of his land east of the Green River, in 1736, is in the collection.

Jonathan Wells⁹, a son of Jonathan⁴ and Hepzibah (Colton) Wells, was born in 1684. He was a trader, an ensign in Father Rasle's War, and a selectman. His first wife, Rebecca Barnard, died in 1718. He married Mary Hoyt in 1723. He died in 1735.

Included in the collection are a plat of his land east of Green River and an inventory of his estate, 1735; two surveys of land of his widow, Mary, 1736; and a sheriff's warrant in favor of their son Samuel¹⁵, 1756.

David Wells,¹⁶ son of Noah¹⁰ and great grandson of Thomas², was born in 1723. He moved to Shelburne, Mass., in 1772, served as colonel in the Revolutionary War, as county commissioner, and as representative to the General Court. He married Mary Taintor of Colchester, Vt.; the couple had ten children. David died in 1814, his widow in 1815.

He is represented by a newspaper clipping detailing meetings of several towns in Hampshire County in 1778, where he served as chairman.

Henry Wells and **Caroline Wells**, son and daughter of Henry⁵¹ and great grandchildren of David¹⁶ and Mary (Taintor) Wells, were born in 1845 and 1850, respectively. He died in 1891; her death occurred in 1876.

Both are represented by tax bills in Greenfield in 1876, and Caroline by a number of school exercises of the 1860s, many of them pertaining to botanical studies.

Mary Prudence Wells Smith, daughter of Dr. Noah Wells⁵² and great granddaughter of David¹⁶ and Mary (Taintor) Wells, was born in 1840 in Attica, New York, but moved with her parents to a farm near Greenfield, Mass., in 1849. She became the wife of judge Fayette Smith and the author of children's books, including the *Jolly Good Times* series and *The Boy Captive of Old Deerfield*. She and her husband lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, until his retirement in 1896, then in Greenfield, where Mrs. Smith died in 1930.

Her papers include a typed transcript of a letter from her father in 1877, from the original in the Greenfield Historical Society. This relates to early days on the family farm. There are also two letters she wrote to Mrs. Dana Pearson of Northampton, Mass., in 1906 and 1910, and printed material relating to her writings. See also Historic Deerfield's collection.

Charles Wells,⁵³ grandson of David¹⁶ and Mary (Taintor) Wells, was born in 1816. He was a farmer in Shelburne, Mass. In 1842, he married Mary Smead; the couple had five children.

He and his wife are represented by accounts for household goods, 1842-1845, and one account of this kind (1873) is that of their son, Edward.

Ebenezer Wells, son of Ebenezer⁶ and Mary (Waite) Wells, and grandson of Thomas², was born in 1691. He married Abigail Barnard in 1720 and died without issue in 1758. He left the bulk of his estate to his nephew Ebenezer¹⁸.

His papers include two deeds to land acquired from his cousin Thomas Wells⁸ and a copy of his will, 1757, by which he left a "Good Silver Tankard" to the church.

Thomas Wells,¹¹ son of Ebenezer⁶ and Mary (Waite) Wells, was born in 1693. He lived in Deerfield on Lot 14, was a cordwainer, and later was referred to as "doctor." He married Sarah Hawks in 1726; the couple had ten children, two of whom are mentioned below. Thomas died in 1744, his widow in 1783.

He is represented by a deed, dated 1734, and papers relating to the settlement of his estate.

Ebenezer Wells,¹⁸ son of Thomas¹¹ and Sarah Hawks Wells, was born in 1730. In 1757, he married Mercy Bardwell. He inherited the bulk of the estate of his uncle Ebenezer. Five of the couple's nine children are named below. Ebenezer died in 1783, his widow in 1801.

His papers include deeds to land in Deerfield, Conway and Shelburne, and papers relating to the settlement of his estate.

Ebenezer Wells, a son of Ebenezer¹⁸ and Mercy (Bardwell) Wells, was born in 1758. He was a silversmith who had a shop in part of Col. David Field's store on Lot 35 and another in his father's homestead. He married Anna Sexton. He died without issue in 1793.

His papers consist of deeds, promissory notes, warrants and material relating to the settlement of his estate.

Quartus Wells,³⁵ another son of Ebenezer¹⁸ and Mercy (Bardwell) Wells, was born in 1764. He was a farmer who was known for his great strength, but he had severe heart and lung trouble for years. His first wife was Rhoda Benjamin; his second, Lucy Barnard. Quartus died in 1824, his widow in 1854.

He is represented by promissory notes, a report on the autopsy performed on him in 1824, and papers relating to his estate.

Fidelia Wells, a daughter of Quartus³⁵ and Rhoda (Benjamin) Wells, was born in 1797. In 1827 she married the Reverend Luther Wilson of Petersham, Mass.

She is represented by a poem "From a friend/a Token," dated 1818.

William Johnson Wells, a son of Quartus³⁵ and Lucy (Barnard) Wells, was born in 1821. He took his life in 1850.

Papers relating to his considerable estate are in the collection.

Joel Benjamin Wells,⁵⁴ a son of Quartus³⁵ and Rhoda (Benjamin) Wells, was born in 1795. A farmer, he married Sarah Mirick of Conway, Mass., in 1825. The couple had four children, three of whom are named below. Joel died in 1841.

He is represented by a paper relating to the settlement of his estate. Filed with this are letters from his son Curtis B. Wells to his mother Sarah (Mirick) Wells, Joel's sister Helen, and his

brother George⁷¹. Most of these were written during the time Curtis served in the Civil War. One letter to Helen was written by Austin Rice in 1878.

Curtis B. Wells, a son of Joel Benjamin⁵⁴ and Sarah (Mirick) Wells, was born in 1833. He was a printer who lived in Springfield, Mass.

His papers consist of school exercises, an almost illegible Civil War diary [May -June 1862?], discharge papers, and newspaper clippings.

Thomas Wells,³⁶ a son of Ebenezer¹⁸ and Mercy (Bardwell) Wells, was born in 1770. He lived in Deerfield on Lot 16. In 1795, he married Fanny, daughter of Seth Catlin.

His papers consist of promissory notes and sheriff's warrants brought against him by Richard Catlin.

Samuel Wells,³⁷ a son of Ebenezer¹⁸ and Mercy (Bardwell) Wells, was born in 1772. He is said to have been a man of great muscular strength. He settled on his father's homestead and married Esther Arms. His death occurred in 1816.

His papers consist of an "intention of marriage," an indenture for the apprenticeship of Rhoda Ballard, a court summons as a witness, letters from Elihu Hoyt (1805), deeds and other land records, a copy of his will (1815), and papers relating to the settlement of his estate.

Augustus Wells,⁵⁵ a son of Samuel³⁷ and Esther (Arms) Wells, was born in 1798. He was a farmer on the old homestead and the husband of Miranda (Arms) Wells. He died in 1861.

His papers include an invitation to a National Ball in Deerfield (1841), receipts, deeds and other land records - including a release by his brother George of property formerly owned by their father.

Samuel F. Wells,⁷² a son of Augustus⁵⁵ and Miranda (Arms) Wells, was born in 1828. A farmer, he lived on the old homestead. He married Lurane Bradford of Ashfield, Mass., in 1857. One of their children is named below. He died in 1873, his widow in 1882.

His papers consist of a listing of the ages of those present at a dinner party at his father's house, items relating to the settlement of his father's estate, insurance policies, a paper relating to a reunion of the Franklin Cadets in 1871. With these is an account book kept by his wife.

Lincoln B. Wells, a son of Samuel F.⁷² and Lurane (Bradford) Wells, was born in 1861. A farmer, he married Abby Whitman. Lincoln died in 1943; his wife two years prior.

His papers include a letter with his name outlined on scrim, received when he was two years old; a 1901 account; blank forms for Oak Grove and Stockade Farm; two guest books of the Stockade Tea Room (1911-13), which he and his wife owned; and a guest book at their 50th wedding anniversary. The last three items were received as a gift from their daughter, Mary Winifred (known as Mollie) Wells. With these is an undated letter to his wife from Margaret Whiting.

George Wells,⁵⁶ a son of Samuel³⁷ and Esther (Arms) Wells, was born in 1800. He was a tailor who lived in Pittsfield, Troy, NY, Northampton, and Bernardston, Mass., where he died in 1887. His wife was the former Sophia Reed of Chester, Mass.

He is represented a receipt for his quarter bill at Deerfield Academy, February 1817.

David Wells,³⁸ a son of Ebenezer¹⁸ and Mercy (Bardwell) Wells, was born in 1774. He was married to Sally Burt of Conway, Mass.; the couple lived in Waterbury, Vermont, for a time. They returned to Deerfield in 1815, and in 1845 he took his life. His widow died in 1856.

He is represented by two items, a bond signed by his brothers Benjamin, Quartus, Thomas, and Samuel in 1801, and a mortgage deed for land in Deerfield in 1811.

Rufus Wells,²¹ a son of Thomas¹¹ and Sarah (Hawks) Wells, was born in 1743. He was a graduate of Harvard College (1764) and served as longtime pastor of the church at Whateley, Mass. His first wife was Sarah Porter of Ashfield, Mass.; his second wife, Temperance Shepard of Sharon, Ct. He died in 1834, his wife Temperance in 1830.

His one paper is a document relating to land in Shelburne, Mass., in 1770.

Joshua Wells,¹² a son of Ebenezer⁶ and Mary (Waite) Wells, was born in 1695. He lived in the Green River district of Deerfield, and married Elizabeth Smead in 1720. He died in 1768.

He is represented by a deed to land in Greenfield, Mass., from his sons Joel and Abner. Filed with this are papers of three grandsons: Ebenezer Wells,⁴¹ Rueben Wells,⁴² and Simeon Wells. These include land records, sheriff's warrants and an account for boarding and food.

Levi Wells,⁴³ a son of Ebenezer²³ and grandson of Joshua¹² was born in Greenfield, Mass., in 1758. He married Mehitabel, daughter of Agrippa Wells.

There are two of his papers in the collection, sheriff's warrants brought against him by William Wise of Montague, Mass., and Hepzibah Strong of Deerfield.

Elisha Wells,⁴⁵ a son of Elisha²⁴ and grandson of Joshua,¹² was born in 1759. In 1782, he married Tirzah Severance. He died in Deerfield.

His papers include land records and a document in the case of Wells *vs.* Jones and Robbins.

Elisha Wells,⁶¹ a son of Elisha⁴⁵ and Tirzah (Severance) Wells, was born in 1792. He was a blacksmith, who settled in Leyden, Mass. His first wife and the mother of his children was Mary Allis. His second wife was widow Achsah Eudy. Elisha died in 1866.

His papers consist of land documents, Achsah (Eudy) Wells' dower land, and deeds of land from Elisha Wells to Isaac Abercrombie.

Isaac Wells,⁶⁰ son of Elisha⁴⁵ and Tirzah (Severance), was born in 1788. He removed to Pittsfield, Mass., about 1820, where the family founded the Maplewood Institute. He married Filana Smith. He died in 1867.

His papers consist of 2 writs (legal documents for money).

Elisha Wells,⁷³ a son of Elisha⁶¹ and Mary (Allis) Wells, was born in 1821. He lived on Lot 23 and was active in town affairs, serving as selectman, town clerk and treasurer, assessor, and captain of the Franklin Cadets. He was a farmer and introduced tobacco culture. In 1849, he married Lois Hare who died in 1882.

His papers consist mainly of correspondence that relates to the Federal Union Gold Mining Company in Colorado 1859-1875. There is also a letterbook covering the years 1863-67. Gift of David Rinardi of Montague, Mass.

Joel Wells (1764-) and **Ephraim Wells** (1772-1818) were sons of Joel Wells²⁵ and grandsons of Joshua Wells¹². Ephraim was a tavern keeper in Greenfield Meadows; his tavern sign is now in Memorial Hall.

The brothers were appellees in 1790 to a plea of ejectment, and parties to a deed to land in Shelburne, Mass., in 1794.

Abner Wells, a son of Abner²⁶ and grandson of Joshua¹² was born in 1780 and died in 1840. He is represented by a deed to land in Deerfield Meadows.

Daniel Wells,⁴⁷ a son of Samuel²⁷ and Elizabeth (Allen) Wells, was born in 1760. He moved to Greenfield, Mass., then to Guildford, Vermont. He died in 1815.

His papers consist of two orders to pay amounts to David Smead in 1783.

Samuel Wells,⁶⁴ a son of Samuel⁴⁸ and grandson of Samuel²⁷ was born in 1792. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1813, became a lawyer and settled in Northampton, Mass. He died in 1864.

He is represented by one paper, by which the Deerfield selectmen certified him as qualified to keep a school in Deerfield (1810).

Horatio Wells,⁶⁶ another son of Samuel⁴⁸ was born in 1796. An inventory of property left by him in 1833 is included in the collection.

John Wells,²⁸ a son of John Wells¹³ and grandson of Ebenezer Wells,⁶ was born in 1734. He settled in Shelburne, Mass., where he served as longtime selectman and town clerk. He married Tamar Rice of Charlton, Mass.

He is represented by a sheriff's warrant brought on his behalf against Ebenezer Allis, Jr. in 1788.

Prudence Wells, daughter of John⁴⁹ and Mehitable (Skinner) Wells, and granddaughter of John Wells²⁸ was born in 1812.

She is represented by an 1812 letter from E[lizabeth?] Childs of Deerfield.

Elijah Wells, a son of John¹³ and Sarah (Allen) Wells, and grandson of Ebenezer Wells,⁶ was born in 1740. He lived in Conway, Mass., and possibly in Shelburne, Mass. He died in 1794.

His one paper is a sheriff's warrant on his behalf vs. Phinehas Bartlet of Ashfield, Mass.

John Wells,³⁰ a son of Jonathan¹⁴ and Abigail (Dickinson) Wells, was born in 1756. He was known as "Bottle John."

He is represented by a judgment brought against him by John Worthington of Springfield, Mass.

Horace Wells, a son of John³⁰ and his first wife Desire (Elliot) Wells, was born about 1785. His papers consist of a promissory note and a sheriff's warrant brought against him by Isaiah White of Montague, Mass.

Obadiah Wells was born in 1716. He was a trader and a glazier who lived in Essex County, New Jersey, New York City, Brattleboro, Vermont, and finally in Montague, Mass., where he died in 1800. His first wife, Mary, was the mother of his two children, Mary and Henry. His second wife, Abigail Hodge of Glastonbury, Ct., came to Deerfield after her husband's death and died here in 1817, a pauper, at the age of 89.

The earliest of his papers is a creditors' license (to trade in New York City?) in 1740. Other papers include a power of attorney granted him; a will of his brother Henry of Southold, NY; a copy of his own will, dated 1761; and land records, among them a lease of land in Brattleboro by his son Henry; and an agreement between Henry and his father's widow.

Henry Wells, son of Obadiah and Mary Wells, was born in what is now Union, New Jersey, in 1742. He graduated from Princeton in 1757 and received a medical degree from Yale in 1760. He moved from New York City to Brattleboro in 1767 and from there to Montague, Mass., in 1781. He married Hannah____: they had one daughter, Hannah, who died in 1812. Mrs. Wells died the following year, and Dr. Wells in 1814.

His papers include a power of attorney from his father in 1792, the year his parents leased land from him in Brattleboro. His other papers consist of deeds and other land records.

Sarah Wells is represented by a gathering of poems dated Boston, 1832.

Thomas Wells of Leyden, Mass., is represented by a letter he received from Joseph Babcock of Norwich, Vt., a sheriff's warrant brought against him, and a promissory note.

Container List

Box 1

Folder 1	John Wells paper, Mar. 2, 1699	(1 item)
Folder 2	Thomas Wells ² paper, Mar. 29, 1692	(1 item)
Folder 3	Papers of Thomas Wells ⁸ and his widow, 1719-1750, 1755	(11 items)
Folder 4	Papers of Jonathan Wells, ⁴ Jonathan Wells, ⁹ and Samuel Wells, ¹⁵ and David Wells (son of Jonathan ⁹ and brother of Samuel ¹⁵)	(5 items in all)
Folder 4a	David Wells ¹⁶	(1 item)
Folder 5	Papers of Caroline May Wells and Henry Wells, 1760s, 1796, and undated	(34 items)
Folder 6	Mary P. Wells Smith papers, 1877, 1906, 1910	(10 items)
Folder 7	Papers of Charles Wells, ⁵³ his wife Mary (Smead) Wells and their son Edward Smead Wells, 1842-145, 1873	(9 items)
Folder 8	Ebenezer Wells papers, 1715, 1717, 1757	(3 items)
Folder 9	Thomas Wells ¹¹ papers, 1734-1785	(5 items)
Folder 10	Ebenezer Wells ¹⁸ papers, 1753-1793	(24 items)
Folder 11	Ebenezer Wells (1758-1793), papers, 1786-1801	(20 items)
Folder 12	Quartus Wells ³⁵ papers, 1809-1858	(12 items)
Folder 13	Fidelia Wells paper, 1818	(1 item)
Folder 14	William Johnson Wells papers, 1850-1860	(22 items)
Folder 15	Joel Benjamin Wells ⁵⁴ paper and papers of his widow, daughter and son, 1843-1863	(26 items in all)
Folder 16	Curtis B. Wells, 1862-1886	(12 items)
Folder 17	Thomas Wells ³⁶ papers, 1815-1818	(7 items)
Folder 18	Samuel Wells ³⁷ papers, 1794-1823	(30 items)
Folder 19	Augustus Wells ⁵⁵ papers, 1825-1855	(9 items)
Folder 20	Samuel F. Wells ⁷² papers, 1858-1877	(11 items)
Folder 21	Lincoln B. Wells papers, 1863, 1901, 1920s	(6 items)
Folder 22	George Wells ⁵⁶ papers, 1817	(1 item)
Folder 23	David Wells ³⁸ papers, 1801	(2 items)
Folder 24	Rufus Wells ²¹ paper, 1770	(1 item)

Box 2

Folder 1	Papers of Joshua Wells ¹² and his grandsons Ebenezer Wells, ⁴¹ Reuben Wells, ⁴² and Simeon Wells, 1750-1791	(6 items)
Folder 2	Levi Wells ⁴³ papers, 1802, 1803	(2 items)
Folder 3	Elisha Wells ⁴⁵ papers, 1837-1856	(6 items)
Folder 4	Isaac Wells ⁶⁰ papers, 1818, 1820	(2 items)
Folder 5	Elisha Wells ⁶¹ papers, 1831-1856	(5 items)
Folder 6	Elisha Wells ⁷⁵ papers, 1859-1875 and undated	(71 items)
Folder 7	Joel, Ephraim, and Abner Wells papers, 1794, 1819	(3 items)
Folder 8	Daniel Wells ⁴⁷ papers, 1783	(2 items)
Folder 9	Samuel Wells ⁶⁴ and Horatio Wells ⁶⁶ papers, 1810, 1833	(2 items)
Folder 10	John Wells ²⁸ paper, 1788	(1 item)
Folder 11	Prudence Wells paper, 1812	(1 item)

- Folder 12 Elijah Wells paper, 1773 (1 item)
- Box 2**
- Folder 13 John Wells³⁰ and his son Horace Wells papers, 1800, 1810 (3 items)
- Folder 14 Obadiah Wells papers, 1740-1801 (12 items)
- Folder 15 Henry Wells Papers, 1767-1792 (8 items)
- Folder 16 Sarah Wells papers, 1832 (1 gathering)
- Folder 17 Miscellany (11 items)
- Folder 18 Correspondence relating to the Wells Family, 1869-1977
- Folder 19 Wells Genealogical lists and other records

Box 3

- Letter book of Elisha Wells⁷³ 1863-1867 (1 vol.)
- Guest books of the Stockade Tea Room, Deerfield, 1911, 1912 (2 vols.)
- Guests of Lincoln B. Wells and Abby (Whitman) Wells, 50th wedding anniversary (1 vol.)
- (Corrected) Thomas Wells Genealogy (1629-1676) excerpted from Deane's "Wells Families & the Settlement of the Conn. Valley," *NEHGR* vol. 46; pedigree chart.