



THE STORY OF

"Uncle Sam"

GODFATHER OF AMERICA

About the cover: The photo on the cover is that of Edward A. Wachter, of Troy, New York, one of America's best known athletes in the 1920's, who is widely known for his work on behalf of American youth. He was basketball coach at Harvard University for 13 years, also served as coach at Williams College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and New York State Teachers College.

Born in 1883, 29 years after the death of "Uncle Sam" Wilson, Mr. Wachter bears a striking resemblance to the late Mr. Wilson, and to the artists' conception of "Uncle Sam" as drawn by famed cartoonists.

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The Story of
UNCLE SAM
Godfather of America

By
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The author is indebted to "The Troy Record Newspapers," the "New York Daily News," the "Daily Oklahoman," "Grit" and other publications for permission to use material on "Uncle Sam" Wilson he wrote and published therein. A staff member of "The Record Newspapers," he has written on early American history for many years. He served on Albany's "Cradle of American Union Committee;" was awarded a Gold Medal and Certificate of Merit by the Poor Richard Club of Philadelphia for publishing magazine and newspaper stories on the life and times of Benjamin Franklin, under the auspices of The Franklin Institute of Philadelphia, Pa. He won commendation from Dr. Dennis C. Kurjack, Chief Park Historian at Independence National Historical Park, Philadelphia, Pa., for feature stories "that brought understanding and inspiration to millions of people" on the \$50,000,000 restoration of America's foremost shrine, which were published in the "Baltimore Sun," the "N. Y. Herald Tribune," "Kansas City Star," "Columbus Dispatch," "Buffalo News," "Pittsburgh Press," "Daily Oklahoman," "Portland Telegram," besides other newspapers serviced by the Kings Feature Syndicate and the Newspaper Enterprise Assn. He is the author of two books: "Franklin's Legacy to America" and "Haunted Chords."

INTRODUCTION

At a time when the enemies of the United States, within and without, are belittling the measure of America's greatness, it is time that we rally around our Nation's symbol of "Uncle Sam," and protect the strength and meaning of the heritage it embodies.

American children must be taught to appreciate the fact that "Uncle Sam" is not the product of a cartoonist's idle dream, but that the Nation's symbol is based on the hopes and accomplishments of a flesh-and-blood American who helped to create the American Dream, and had a hand in its realization.

Published during 1959, New York State's "Year of History," this booklet is intended to provide a running look into the life of "Uncle Sam" Wilson, whose personality and sobriquet captured and dramatized the American tradition. The booklet consists of excerpts from a standard, interpretive biography of Samuel Wilson now being researched and written by this author. His book will contain a full list of acknowledgments and references to source material.

The author is indebted to the Greater Troy Chamber of Commerce and to the "Veterans for Uncle Sam" for permitting him to work with them in striving for federal recognition of Samuel Wilson as the progenitor of our Nation's symbol of "Uncle Sam." He specially singles out the efforts of Edward J. Perreault, chamber president; John F. Roy, chairman of the Merchants' bureau; David C. Turner, executive director of the chamber; and notably the following officials of the "Veterans for Uncle Sam": Frank J. Mealy, board chairman, and member of the state legislative VFW committee; Benjamin Chuckrow, director, and former state commander of the Jewish War Veterans; Martin G. Mahar, president; Julian R. Mason, vice-chairman and national aide-de-camp of the VFW; Abraham Goldstein, board member, and Thomas L. McGovern.

SAMUEL WILSON

Sees A Nation Born

Today we can be proud that one of our citizens has been immortalized as the embodiment of the American spirit. Though "Uncle Sam" Wilson died 105 years ago, he lives with us daily, for all of us, as Americans, are privileged to breathe the air of freedom he symbolizes.

What is the geneology of our national symbol of "Uncle Sam?"

The figure who serves unmistakeably as the unifying, heart-warming symbol of the United States of America had his origin in Samuel Wilson of Troy, N. Y.

The story of Sam Wilson's life, from his early Colonial background to his rise to prominence and great public affection and esteem in Troy, where the sobriquet of "Uncle Sam" was given to him, is an abridged story of America.

For Samuel Wilson of Troy is recognized today not only as the originator of our national symbol of "Uncle Sam," but also as a Great American who helped to unify his country, who personified in his lifetime the qualities that helped to build this Nation.

The period of his life from 1766 to 1854, the years in which Sam Wilson lived and triumphed as the symbol of America, witnessed the birth and progress of the United States, spanning as they did the period before the Declaration of Independence to the emergence of the United States as a world power.

When Samuel Wilson was born on Sept. 13, 1766, in the village of Menotomy, now Arlington, Mass., the British North American colonies contained an estimated 1,800,000 persons

clustering around the seacoast and the broad tidewater rivers. Local jealousies and conflicting interests kept the colonies apart. *They desperately needed the symbol of "Uncle Sam" to unite them, to pull them together.* But "Uncle Sam" in the person of Samuel Wilson, was busy being born with liberty in his heart and growing with the dream of patriots.

When Samuel Wilson died on July 31, 1854 at his home at 144 Ferry St., Troy, N. Y., all this was changed. The colonies Samuel Wilson knew in his youth had achieved independence, and formed a nation on principles of freedom and tolerance that Europeans viewed with mingled awe and envy. The population of the United States exceeded 29,000,000.

Samuel Wilson's life thus covered the years when the colonies matured and the American political union was formed. His life and actions reflected those great movements.

"Uncle Sam" Wilson, as he was later affectionately called, was the most representative man of all average Americans. He began life as the son of a farmer, one of 11 children, in an area 8 miles northwest of Boston that became part of the battleground during the Revolutionary War.

OF SCOTCH-IRISH DESCENT

Sam's father, Edward Wilson, stemmed from a progeny of Wilsons of Scotch-Irish descent who had settled in the Massachusetts area. Like most early settlers, they had been given grants of land outright by the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Edward Wilson, Sam's father, was born in Menotomy on Aug. 31, 1735. Sam's mother, Lucy Francis Wilson, was born at nearby Medford on April 9, 1742. They were married at Menotomy on Nov. 2, 1760.

The Wilsons were typical of the land-owning citizens who made possible the development of the new country, and eventually the American Revolution. They cleared the land, hewed logs from the surrounding forest and built their home. By hard labor Edward Wilson and his neighbors lived in safety and independence. They owned the land they ploughed and were

proud of their independence. They sensed and reacted to the popular opposition to Great Britain and her acts, and made that opposition articulate in words and deeds, helping to provide the machinery through which independence was won.

When the time came, they were ready to defend their homes, their families, their independence. Edward Wilson, one of America's first heroic Minutemen, answered the call of Paul Revere's dramatic ride on April 18 - 19 of 1775, and took part in the Battle of Lexington which signalled the birth of New World freedom. In the critical days that followed, Edward Wilson and his older sons, Joseph and Edward Jr. fought in the battle of Bunker Hill and other Revolutionary War battles, while young Samuel, a boy of 9, pleaded in vain for permission to accompany his father and brothers, if only as a "service boy." They said he was too young, so Sam Wilson stayed home, helped to manage the farm, make bullets, weave cloth, prepare supplies, and serve as messenger for the area units of the "Sons of Liberty" which had sprung up in the Menotomy - Medford area.

Samuel Wilson was born into this age of excitement, of perilous living, unknowing that this was his training ground for the next war with England, the War of 1812, when he would emerge as "Uncle Sam," the symbol of an aspiring America and the embodiment of its spirit.

The national symbol of "Uncle Sam" and the national anthem of "The Star Spangled Banner" were both born during the War of 1812. And oddly enough, the anthem was born as the result of a battle fought on Sept. 13, 1814—the 48th birthday of Samuel Wilson who was born on Sept. 13, 1766.

Here is a time-table of events that became mileposts in the development of "Uncle Sam" Wilson.

When Sam was born in 1766, it was a time for great rejoicing. For in that year the odious Stamp Act was repealed by Parliament following violent public protests, and the colonists vowed they'd never again be taxed without representation.

In 1769, when Sam Wilson was three years old, the big Colonial kitchen of their home in Menotomy resounded with

the catchy tunes of John Dickinson's "Song of American Freedom." It later became known as "The Liberty Song" and was sung at meetings of the "Sons of Liberty" to which Edward Wilson and his older sons belonged.

At an early age Samuel Wilson learned the price of freedom. When he was four years old in 1770, the infamous Boston Massacre occurred when British troops fired into a group of jeering colonists, killing five. Sam's parents took him to witness the burial of the fallen heroes.

One night in 1773, when Sam was seven years old, he remembered his father brought home news of resolutions posted by the Colonial Committee in Cambridge, saying that the tea on the high seas bound for Boston, must never be landed. On the night of Dec. 16 a crowd of men dressed as Indians, including Edward Wilson took part in the immortal Boston Tea party. Sam always remembered his father's account of the stirring event.

Records reveal that Sam Wilson repeatedly urged his parents to let him "join up" with the Colonials. When Ethan Allen, a backwoods hero and his "Green Mountain Boys" captured strategic Fort Ticonderoga on May 10, 1775, by ruse, Sam Wilson again asked his father to let him join. The military stores captured at Ticonderoga went to the relief of the American forces at Cambridge, where Edward Wilson and his two sons were serving with Col. John Whitecomb's regiment, and took part in the Battle of Bunker Hill.

HEARD HIS COUNTRY CALL

Sam Wilson always heard the call of his country, even as a boy of 13 when he became one of the messengers for the Committee of Public Safety, a task that brought him in contact with John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams and other Boston area patriots, and with all the exciting currents and undercurrents that were to lead to Yorktown and the Declaration of Independence.

On July 4, 1776, when Sam Wilson was ten years old, the Second Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia adopted

the document known as the Declaration of Independence. This document, the finest statement of democratic principles and rights in history, brought rejoicing throughout the 13 colonies.

When news of the signing of the Declaration reached Fort Ticonderoga, the soldiers there under General Saint-Clair shouted with joy: "Now we are a free people, and have a name, the United States of America, among the nations of the world."

Little did they know at that time, that Samuel Wilson, the boy whom the new Nation would welcome as "Uncle Sam" in another war with England, was preparing to join the Americans as a "service boy," and that one of his war exploits would be to rush food and supplies to the besieged Americans at Fort Ti!

Samuel Wilson as "service boy" in 1779 shouldered his musket and faced the enemy with courage and a deep conviction of the glorious destiny of his country.

Today, as "Uncle Sam" in star-spangled hat, tight gaiters and coat as brilliant and brave as the American Flag, he reminds us of that destiny and of our own bounden duty as Americans.



SAMUEL WILSON

Sees America Grow

At the end of the Revolutionary War, Samuel Wilson returned to his father's home to learn that scarce money and hunger, twin harbingers of Shay's Rebellion that shook the new nation a few years later, prompted the Wilson family to sell their farm in Menotomy in 1780, and migrate to Mason, N.H.

The boy grew to manhood there; tall, lanky and strong as a young bullock. The dark fighting days of the Revolutionary War had broadened his vision, sharpened his wits. But he knew that America's struggle for freedom and equality had not ended.

As always, he was in the thick of the events of his times. Money troubles were sweeping the country, causing one political crisis after another. The paper currency issued by the Continental Congress was almost worthless. Undeterred by the pessimists, Samuel Wilson took the stump for a stronger faith in the United States of America, preaching the need for indomitable faith and cheerfulness in the face of the young nation's difficulties.

He urged Congress to make a cash payment (pensions in our time) to veterans, many of whom had lived through Valley Forge and could not even collect their pitiful army pay of 25 cents a day.

Just as Sam Wilson had spoken out against those defeatists who believed that the 13 separate and loosely joined colonies could not win their independence from England, so he now opposed those pessimists who believed that the new nation, perpetuated on Sept. 17, 1787, one year after Shay's fearful rebellion, could not survive as a weak and debt-burdened infant nation.

Events proved that "Uncle Sam" Wilson was right, even though the pessimists had plausible arguments. His deep conviction was based on the old-fashioned virtues that had served the 13 colonies so well, and are now part of our national experience.

They are the qualities that Sam Wilson personified so well in his lifetime; the qualities of self-reliance, hard work, indomitable faith in God, optimism, thrift and individuality, which today are still vital ingredients in a nation based on the total efforts and ideas of millions of free Americans.

When Sam Wilson was 21 years old, he fell in love. He met beautiful Elizabeth Amanda Mann at a Federalist rally at Medford, where he spoke out against the pessimists who despaired for the weak young nation. He rallied the voters to help transform the new Republic into a single, strong, united nation.

Sam Wilson had not come forth yet as "Uncle Sam," the new nation's symbol, but he sure was training for the job.

Betsy Amanda Mann was the daughter of Col. Thomas Mann, a Revolutionary War hero whose six companies of militia at Bunker Hill inflicted the heaviest casualties on the red-coats.

SAM GOES WEST

But the year was 1787; jobs were scarce; there was no economic security. For two years Sam Wilson courted the beautiful Betsy, but realized finally she would always remain "above his station," unless he pulled out roots and moved westward to find his fortune.

In February of 1789, Samuel Wilson, 23, took the step that was to give the United States the unifying symbol it so desperately needed in the War of 1812. Together with his brother, Ebenezer, 26, he set out along the westward wagon trail with other pioneers bent on escaping the post-war depression that held New England and most of the country in an iron grip. The brothers had neither wagon nor property; they trudged behind more fortunate settlers.

When Sam reached the shallowest Hudson River crossing, he took stock. Standing on the shores of Troy, a small farming hamlet of 12 farms criss-crossed by connecting roads at the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, he watched the settlers' wagons crossing the river. He caught the vision of a growing, expanding America as he saw before him a growing continent pulling Americans further west.

Little did Sam Wilson know that he would become the symbol for these freedom-loving people. To him the point of all this movement meant not only the taming of a continent for America, but it also meant an opportunity to build Troy, to help shape its future in accordance with his dreams.

Years later, Sam Wilson said he had decided to settle in Troy not only because it was a focal point for thousands of pioneers moving westward, but also because the name "Troy" had brought back to him stories of the golden civilization of ancient Greece. Troy had been given its classical name but one month before; it had been known as Van Der Heyden's Ferry.

AMERICA WAS GROWING

Sam Wilson and his brother were almost penniless when they settled in Troy, but undeterred. They did odd jobs, lived frugally, worked long hours, and in two years had enough money to go into the business of making bricks. Troy needed bricks desperately, bricks with which to build homes, churches, a courthouse, even a jail. America was growing, and Sam Wilson put his enthusiasm to work. He leased land on the west side of Mt. Ida, near the intersection of Sixth and Ferry St., and went into brick making near the site of his last residence in Troy, 144 Ferry St.

Soon Sam Wilson had 250 men working for him. He was ridiculed by Tories because he treated his workmen with kindness and respect. His competitors also seemed to think there was something immoral in this. But the chief problem in industry then, as it is today, was personnel. *Sam Wilson was generations ahead of his times, when America was young, trying to find its foothold among nations.* He saw something divine and regal in human personality. When there was special work to

be done, he told his men "Come boys, let's do it together," and not "Go do it," as was the custom. He got twice as much work out of his men, and they loved him for it. He paid high wages.

This was the key to Sam Wilson's personality. People loved him because he respected them; because he stood for something they wanted: decency, honest dealing and plain talk.

Sam Wilson took root in the community and became known for his honesty and great common sense. His kindness and benevolence won him the affection and respect of neighbors for miles around. A tall, slender man with a "nutcracker" face glowing with health and friendliness, Sam Wilson was specially liked by the children who gave him the pet name of "Uncle Sam." He loved to regale them with funny stories. But he was unaware that his name would capture and dramatize the American tradition.

DEVOUTLY RELIGIOUS

Sam Wilson was devoutly religious, belonging for 10 years to the First Baptist Church of Troy, and then affiliating with other denominations. He contributed heavily to religious and charitable groups. His Bible was worn to tatters and passages were heavily underscored, such as (John 10:10) "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

He was quoted as saying: "The big thing is not what happens to us in life, but what we do about what happens to us."

As busy as Sam was in supplying bricks to communities along the Hudson River in sloops which he later bought to expand his many business enterprises with a freightage service, he took time to work with other community leaders in planning a better community. He was one of the prime movers for the incorporation of Troy as a village in 1794, and later as a city in 1816.

Sam Wilson was one of the first settlers to realize the natural advantages of Troy, specially noting its potential water power. He soon moved to secure water power by damming the

Poestenkill and Wynantskill streams. This led to starting the first paper mills in Northern New York, and spurred industrial development in the state.

By the time 1800 rolled around, Sam Wilson had left his mark upon Troy and the State of New York. He had spurred many a civic improvement and made his voice heard for the preservation of basic political freedom.

Noting the growing tendency of one segment of the population to gain the favor of legislators and put through special legislation, he urged the business men and professional men of the state to voice their opinions in all matters concerning their welfare, that of their employes and of the economic condition of their area. He told people in all walks of life, specially business men, that they had a big stake in the political affairs of their city, state and nation. He warned they would find it increasingly difficult to do business at all, unless they were adequately represented in government.

Samuel Wilson, even before he became "Uncle Sam," was always busy protecting America, keeping it the land of the free and the home of the brave.



Samuel Wilson

Is UNCLE SAM

Today one thinks with pleasure of the half-mythical figure on the threshold of the 19th century, whose name unified the country when the trouble clouds of the War of 1812 spread over the young nation. The stories of this clear-eyed giant with the quizzical smile and the tender, loyal heart are only partly told in this pamphlet. They will soon become part of America's history.

In 1805 Samuel Wilson, realizing that meat was as essential as bread to the westbound pioneer, became meat provisioner in Troy. He built a slaughterhouse and packing house on the north bank of the Poestenkill, west of River St.

Here again Sam's practical vision, the application of the principles of Christianity to every-day living, was a telling success in the business. He employed several hundred men, and eventually processed 1,000 cattle a week. He became the subject of editorials in newspapers throughout the state where editors had heard of "Uncle Sam" Wilson "who gives his workers good pay and good advice."

The truth of the matter was that people came to Sam Wilson for miles around for counsel. They stopped him on the street for advice. The honor in which he was held by all the countryside, the influence for good he exerted made him one of the best-loved citizens in the state. His home was always open. He held informal tribunals there, when people came as neighbors to get their differences straightened out.

Sam was not alone now. He had gone to Mason, N.H. in January of 1797 to marry Betsy Amanda Mann, and the couple was happy raising a fine family.

The trouble clouds of the War of 1812 weren't long in coming. In 1805 Britain, engaged in a long war with Napoleon, began stopping American ships on the high seas and impress their crews to serve on her war vessels. The crowning insult came in June of 1807 when a British frigate fired a broadside into the "Chesapeake" because the brave American commander refused to be boarded. The shots that shook the nation killed three Americans and wounded four.

Sam Wilson spoke out for restraint at various public meetings in Troy. He urged diplomatic persuasion instead of war. As British aggression continued, however, he became the spokesman for the new generation that had grown up since the Revolution, urging "The rule of British power must be curbed forever!"

On June 17, 1812, Congress declared war on England. Troy became a recruiting center and transfer point for military and naval units. Sam Wilson spoke before church groups, civic bodies and military units, urging rapid mobilization and more enlistments.

NAMED INSPECTOR

He was soon contracted to furnish the Army with "three hundred barrels of prime beef packed in full-round barrels of white oak." He discharged his duties so efficiently that he was soon appointed Inspector of Provisions for the Army in the New York Area.

As the prototype of the nation that was soon to adopt him as its godfather, the honest and vigorous Uncle Sam carried out his contracts to the letter and spirit of his obligations, proving himself incorruptible in all government and business dealings, and making sure that others under his jurisdiction did likewise.

In October of 1812, a party of officials headed by Gov. Daniel Tompkins of New York State sailed on the sloop "Fire Fly" from Albany to Troy, landing at the foot of Ferry street and proceeded to the Wilson meat processing plant, where they inspected provisions ready for shipment to Army camps. There a member of the party asked a workman what the initials "EA-

US" stood for on the barrels of meat, and the workman replied they stood for Elbert Anderson (a contractor) and "Uncle Sam" Wilson for the "United States."

This allusion grew rapidly throughout the Army camps, for Samuel Wilson was popular and the abbreviation for the United States which he stenciled on all provisions that passed his inspection, soon became a guarantee of excellence to men and officers alike. And Uncle Sam's old friends, the boys of Troy who first called him "Uncle Sam" as children and were now enlisted in the Army, came to believe that the mystic initials "U.S." alluded to the pet name they had given their favorite neighbor on Prospect street. As a result they accepted no meat but Uncle Sam's. Their comrades followed suit, and soon other contractors, in order to make their provisions more acceptable to the troops, also came to announce "Uncle Sam" brands in all provisions.

Stories of "Uncle Sam" brands and of the popular inspector of provisions soon spread far and wide through the press of that day. And the step from national acceptance to an impersonation of our country by an ideal Uncle Sam was a logical sequence.

Suddenly America had a flesh-and-blood symbol to give it courage, at a time when the war was going badly. By 1814 British ships took over the Atlantic coast, and British marines raided towns in Maine, Virginia and Maryland. America suffered her worst disgrace when the British in August of 1814 burned Washington, D.C.

"Uncle Sam" tall and resplendent in his red, white, and blue attire of striped trousers, frock coat and hat, therefore came to life when the Nation needed him most.

The widespread use of "Uncle Sam" that followed in lithographs and cartoons of the day became a symbol of victory snatched from defeat. It aroused and inspired the country with memories of victories over the British in 1776-1781.

When "The Star Spangled Banner" was born a month later on Sept. 13, 1814 at Fort McHenry, near Baltimore, Md., it gave Fran-

cis Scott Key's immortal words to the war-weary crowds. Thus, the twin symbols of the national anthem and the national symbol helped to turn the tides of battle. Fresh troops and our fledgeling Navy redeemed the humiliation of frequent defeats, climaxed by a smashing victory when a British landing force of 11,000 men was repulsed near Baltimore, and their general shot dead.

When the War of 1812 ended with the signing of the Treaty of Ghent on Dec. 24, 1814, Americans were proud of their victory, and prouder still of their national symbol and national anthem born in the crucible of that war.

Then the term "Uncle Sam" caught on like wildfire and the rest is history—history made largely by newspapers and cartoonists whose classic figure of Uncle Sam wearing striped trousers, frock coat and tall hat—clothing typical of successful business men of that era is by now so completely representative of the United States in the public mind, that scarcely anyone had thought of establishing its origin.

The Troy Record Newspapers helped to bring the story of the origin of Uncle Sam to the attention of the nation. Cartoonists of the day such as Thomas Nast and Frank Bellew joined the crusade for "Uncle Sam" as the symbol of our national aspirations. They were displeased with the earlier symbol of Colonial America personified by "Brother Jonathan," a country bumpkin created during the Revolutionary War, who often got the best of King George. They found him just as inadequate as they did "Yankee Doodle," a mythical planter referred to as the son of John Bull.

In "Uncle Sam" cartoonists and newspapermen at home and abroad recognized an outstanding example of the unfolding American story, the story of people of humble origin who have been able to rise to meet the opportunities offered them by the American system of life. "Uncle Sam" Wilson fitted the heroic mold so typical of the growing young nation; he was a farm boy who made his way to success, respect and the love of his fellow men.

As early as 1812 caricatures of "Uncle Sam" Wilson of Troy, wearing tailcoat and striped pants and tall hat began to appear in cartoons and lithographs of the day.

The use of "Uncle Sam" as a simile for the United States Government first appeared in New York City in 1813. It was immediately picked up by the Federalist press throughout the country.

By 1820 W. A. Faux, a French journalist in writing about the achievements of Samuel Wilson, said "Americans are waking up to the fact that their 'Uncle Sam' is a mighty fine, big gentleman."

In 1825, federal employes in Washington, D.C. told visitors, "We work for Uncle Sam."

In 1862 a cartoon by C. F. Morse published in Washington D.C. showed a whole army of "Uncle Sams" marching as volunteers to join "the Army of Father Abraham."

Artists like Joseph Keppler who founded Puck, the first successful humor weekly in the United States, propagated the figure of Uncle Sam built up by Nast, Bellew and others.

Actors like George Handel Hill caught the heart-warming image of "Uncle Sam," and wore striped pants to play Yankee Doodle characters on the American stage, thus helping to develop the national symbol that seemed to be the composite of millions of various-minded Americans.

European caricaturists also accepted "Uncle Sam" with open arms, and even made him a rare target for the barbed jibes of jealous Old World nations.

Today "Uncle Sam" has become a symbol of all the Good that America strives for. We may well ask: Isn't some of this Goodness in my neighbor, in my children and myself? For "Uncle Sam," in the person of Samuel Wilson was one of us, remains one of us. He is easy-walking, easy-talking. He is the neighbor who swaps yarns in the corner store. You know where you are with Uncle Sam. And yet there is that sense of dedi-

cation in him, that urge of destiny running through him with the growing strength to answer any challenge.

In his various guises "Uncle Sam" lives on for Americans as a flesh-and-blood human being, because we have accepted his origin. He remains a spokesman for all that went before him in the building of America, and all that is yet to come. In the saga of his life we can see more clearly our problems of to-day from atomic missiles to domestic progress, because "Uncle Sam" Wilson faced the problems of his troubled times with faith and courage, and with a deep conviction in the glorious destiny of the United States of America.

"Uncle Sam" Wilson died on July 31, 1854, at the age of 88, one of Troy's then oldest residents, at his home at 144 Ferry St. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Troy, where a bronze tablet on a marble shaft marks his final resting place. Over this peaceful scene fly the Stars and Stripes maintained by the Uncle Sam Council, Boy Scouts of America, Troy, N. Y.





Members of "Veterans for Uncle Sam" honor the memory of "Uncle Sam" Wilson on Veterans' Day at his grave at Oakwood Cemetery. "Uncle Sam," impersonated by Edward A. Wachter, tall and resplendent in his classic attire of striped trousers, frock coat and top hat, broods solemnly over the hallowed ground where many American war heroes lie buried. Beside him stand John Meharg, 7, left, and Michael Meharg, 8, representing future

UNCLE SAM Is

America's Source of Strength

America this year will honor the memory of "Uncle Sam" Wilson on July 31, which is the 105th anniversary of the death of this noted American, and on Sept. 13, the 193rd anniversary of his birth.

It is justly proper that this recognition should come during the 1959 Hudson-Champlain Celebration, when the Nation will honor this region where many of the first chapters of American history were written.

As a prelude to the year-long celebration, Vice President Richard M. Nixon has urged Americans to live again in pageants and historical events the thrilling days when the Colonies and England struggled for possession of the new world's lands, when the first states fought grimly for their right to exist. He also urged them to emulate Samuel Wilson and nourish in their daily lives the qualities that the noted American personified in his lifetime, which helped to build this nation.

Mr. Nixon said: "Each of us would do well to emulate the original Uncle Sam in our daily lives and thereby make sure that the symbol which has come to represent America at home and abroad will continue to be an inspiration to freedom-loving peoples throughout the world."

In a letter to this writer, the Vice President said he appreciated the opportunity to help in commemorating the occasion.

He added: "It is indeed fitting that we should pause to pay tribute to the memory of this dedicated public servant who lived his life and carried out his duties and responsibilities in such an exemplary manner that his initials have become syn-

onymous with the integrity, determination and aspirations of our proud new nation in the early days of the Republic."

National leaders of the American Legion and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars have also urged Americans this year to recognize "Uncle Sam" Wilson as a source of strength, as "an American fighting man, and a veteran, who counseled early America against despair, and who gave the stamp of his own high personal integrity to the nation's symbol of 'Uncle Sam'."

Preston J. Moore, national commander of the American Legion, in a statement to this writer, said that the name of "Uncle Sam" Wilson is synonymous with the integrity of the United States Government. He said: "No democracy can endure without men and government of integrity. It is good character moulded by Divine precepts that makes possible free government and a free way of life. . . The kind of integrity 'Uncle Sam' Wilson had is the margin of difference today between the forces of freedom and the forces of tyranny. In Godless Communism today there is no decency and therefore no integrity. The Red philosophy holds that the end justifies the means. This puts the premium on deceit, lying and treachery and makes it impossible to place any faith in any promises, pledges and treaties made by Soviet Russia."



PRESTON J. MOORE
National Commander
American Legion

Every American, however, said Commander Moore, "can be proud that the solemn word of the United States Government is always kept. It has integrity. . . the kind of decency and plain talk that 'Uncle Sam' Wilson personified."

Louis G. Feldmann, senior vice commander-in-chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, also agreed that recognition of "Uncle Sam" Wilson as a symbol of strength to live by, is a long-delayed duty of all Americans to whom he left such an inspiring heritage. He urged veterans "to strengthen the feeling of love of our country among all its peoples, making sure that the symbol of 'Uncle Sam' is not one of derision, but one of great and proud respect."



LOUIS G. FELDMANN
Sr. Vice Commander-in-chief
Veterans of Foreign Wars

Mr. Feldmann said that any problems we face today will be conquered if we approach our present tasks as a nation and as Americans, with the old-fashioned virtues which have served "Uncle Sam" and the Nation so well in the past, for they are now part of our national experience.

Both veterans' leaders agreed that the solution to the life-or-death riddle of the atomic race with Soviet Russia lies in showing to the nations of the world that our way of life, which "Uncle Sam" Wilson symbolizes, holds the greatest promise for struggling mankind. "Our best defense is a strong defense and the preservation of the 'Spirit of 1776' which Samuel Wilson helped to immortalize, prizing liberty as the heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere."





Members of the "Veterans for Uncle Sam" present an American Flag to the present owner of 144 Ferry St., Troy, the last home in which Samuel Wilson lived. The stairs at left of the building lead to the area where Mr. Wilson in 1794 operated the first non-agricultural industry in the area, the making of bricks to help build young America.