

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension Application of John Duncan R3126      Lydia Duncan      VA  
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[Punctuation partly corrected.]

State of Illinois }      March Term of the county commissioners court of the county and State  
Franklin County } SS    aforesaid A.D. 1833

On this 5<sup>th</sup> day of March in the year of our Lord 1833 personally appeared in open court before the commissionees being judges of the said court in and for the county of Franklin and State of Illinois now sitting John Duncan a resident of said county and State of Illinois aged about seventy years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath, make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7<sup>th</sup> 1832. That he entered te service of the united States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. He was born in Culpepper [sic: Culpeper] county State of Virginia to the best of his recollection, about 1763. there was once a record of his age, but his father having been killed by the Indians in 1772 or 3 his sister took the bible containing the record of his age, which has been destroyed. His father moved to Washington county [formed in 1776 from Fincastle and Montgomery counties] on the frontier of Virginia in 1771 or 2, and was killed in about twelve months after by the Indians. He states that the whole neighbourhood were fortified up at Duncan's fort, his father's residence [see endnote], and after his father was killed they employed one James Green to spy out two or 3 times a week ten or 15 miles round the fort, that as he left the fort on one of those excursions he had not proceeded more than a mile until he was fired at by the Indians & returned immediately, when, collecting a force and himself among the rest, the pursued the Indians some distance, until the scattered so that they could trail them no further, when they returned without effecting anything. His mother married again & moved to Kentucky some time in the year 1780 just before the Battle of the blue Lick [sic: 19 Aug 1782], where Cols. [John] Todd, [Stephen] Trigg and Daniel Boone's second son [Israel Boone] were killed. He states he was ordered to the Blue Lick, but being tired & just off a long journey in moving, he did not go But was immediately ordered out to guard the forts, in which service he was employed two months He had no officer, but was employed as a spy in guarding & protecting the forts, mostly English's station He then moved to Tennessee about two years after & shortly after went back to Kentucky, and and joined Genl [George Rogers] Clark's expedition against the Indians, as a substitute for William Mannyfield. He marched from the falls of Ohio [now Louisville], where he joined the expedition to post Vincent, now Vincennes [25 Feb 1779]. The found the post occupied by French & 30 or 40 Indians and took the Indians prisoners. He then returned home and was again employed in a tour of two months service as a spy and guard on Red River in Tennessee, in which service he had no skirmish or rencontre with the Indians. He volunteered again the year he does not now recollect, under Capt John Rains in an expedition undertaken by him & Capt Thomas Johnson against the Indians. They raised 80 or 90 men & marched down Elk river for some distance, crossed over, and were about encamping when they discovered Indian sign They camped however on Duck river that night and next morning, it being thought advisable he with 8 or 9 others volunteered as spies; while creeping through the thick cain, they came upon the Indian encampment, and one of the spies fired on & killed one of the Indians the forces coming up & the Indians being dispersed, they returned home. He was again ordered out for two months as a spy near Palmyra on Cumberland River; he served 40 days when returning home to look after his family he hired his brother to serve the remaining 20 days. Subsequently again he was ordered out in a light horse company to Nashville in Tennesse & there go in pursuit of the Indians under the command of Coln Robert Hays under an apprehension from the report of one Durock and a half breed that the Indians intended attacking & taking Nashville, but the Indians not making the attack at that time, Genl Robinson ordered the men to return home, but to be ready at a minutes warning;

a few nights after he received a summons to repair immediately to Nashville & started next morning, but when he arrived the Indians were gone. they however had attacked Buchanan's station on Mill Creek, near Nashville [30 Sep 1792] The Indians were about 6 or 700 strong: the Station about 30. The Indians approached in the evening & demanded who commanded the fort, & upon being told demanded the gates to be opened & upon refusal commenced firing. they fought all night but no lives were lost in the fort. One Indian rushed up with a torch to fire the fort & was killed: the only one the whites found though they thought from the sign they killed a great many more. The Indians were commanded by Double head. He was again employed in an expedition down Cumberland River for the purpose of burying Col Montgomery and Evan Shelby who had been killed by the Indians [John Montgomery, killed by Indians 27 Nov 1794; Evan Shelby died at age 75 on 4 Dec 1794]. nothing transpiring worthy of note. He was again ordered down to the mouth of Cumberland to guard up some boats, and in performing this service nothing occurred worthy of note. At another time the Indians came into his neighbourhood, killed a young lady & took some horses. he with others immediately pursued but were unable to overtake them on account of high water He was engaged in many more similar expeditions and in like service for many years, always being prompt and ready at his country's call, living in a country in a constant state of alarm, and liable to be called on at any moment He never was regularly mustered into or out of service. He never was discharged regularly he received some little pay, but does not now recollect how much. He is unacquainted with the names of any Regular or Continental officers or companies, nor ever served with any, unless some of the above named may be termed such. He never was regularly enrolled in any company or corps, unless it might be Genl Clark's or Col Hays's he belonged to none at home He has no documentary evidence of his service; he knows of no living witness who can testify personally as to his services or as to the events of the period & the history he has related But Col Thomas M. Dorriss & Dempsey Odum citizens & his neighbours can testify as to the tradition of his services and the events of the period, and also to the general belief of his services in the neighbourhood He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid                      John hisXmark Duncan

State of Illinois

Franklin County Ss [23 May 1833]

Personally appeared before me the undersigned a Justice of the Peace in & for the County and State aforesaid John Duncan who, being duly sworn deposed and saith, that by reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory, he cannot swear positively as to the precise length of his service, but, according to the best of his recollection, he served not less than the periods mentioned below and in the following grades: For one month under Capt Price in the expedition under Genl Clark to Post Vincent now Vincennes in the year 1779 – Barnett was my Colonel. I served as a private (substitute for William Mannyfield) For two months as a spy & guard on Red River in Tennessee. I had no officer nor was I with any corps in the year 1779. For fifteen days under Capt John Rains I served as a private in same year. For forty days as a spy near Palmyra on Cumberland River in the year 17[?]. I had no officer nor was I with any corps. For two months under Col Hays (the Capt's name I do not recollect) at the time Buchanan's station near Nashville was attacked in the year 1780[?] I served as a private. For one month under Capt Benjamin McIntosh in the expedition down Cumberland River to bury Col Montgomery & Evan Shelby in the year 1782 I served as a private. For one months under Capt Benjamin McIntosh in the expedition down Cumberland River to guard up the boats in the year 178[?]. I served as a private. And for such service I claim a pension

John hisXmark Duncan

NOTES:

Numerous Internet sources state that "Duncan's Fort was the home of Raleigh Duncan and

stood between Dungannon and Gray's Island on the Clinch River [then in Fincastle County, now in Scott County]. Raleigh Duncan and his brother, John, first settled on a tract of land at Hunter's Ford in 1772, which they were jointly developing into a plantation. John was killed by the Indians in 1774, and Raleigh and the widow of John fell into dispute over the Hunter's Ford land and Raleigh moved down the river to another tract of land in 1775 and here he built his home which was Duncan's Fort." This account does not agree with John Duncan's statement that his father was killed about 1772 or 1773 while living at Duncan's Fort.

On 7 Sep 1841 Lydia Duncan, 70, of Williamson County IL, applied for a pension stating that she was married by Rev. John Grammer on 10 March 1786 in Roberson County TN to John Duncan, who died on 31 Dec 1834 in the part of Franklin County that became Williamson County.

A letter dated 1 Oct 1841 from the Pension office to F. F. Duncan of Marion IL includes the following: "Upon referring to her husband's declaration under act of 7 June 1832, it is found that his alleged service was principally after the termination of the revolutionary war and was of that character not provided for by the act of 7 June 1832. Had the Dept. been in possession of the information which it now has, the claim under that act would not have been allowed. The first tour of two months is alleged to have been performed in 1780, about the time of the battle of the Blue Licks, in Kentucky, and in two years thereafter he again performed a tour of service. The battle of the Blue Licks took place in 1782, consequently the other alleged service was after the termination of the revolutionary war, and no provision is made by the pension laws for such service." Duncan appears to have served a total of three months during the Revolutionary War – three months less than required under the pension act of 1832.

On 20 July 1854 Thomas Duncan assigned power of attorney to an agent to try to obtain a pension.