

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

Pension application of John Donnell W4180

Elizabeth fn136NC

Transcribed by Will Graves

3/8/10 rev'd 3/9/10

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Also, the handwriting of the original scribes often lends itself to varying interpretations. Users of this database are urged to view the original and to make their own decision as to how to decipher what the original scribe actually wrote. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. Folks are free to make non-commercial use this transcript in any manner they may see fit, but please extend the courtesy of acknowledging the transcriber—besides, if it turns out the transcript contains mistakes, the resulting embarrassment will fall on the transcriber.]

State of North Carolina Guilford County

Be it remembered that at a court of Pleas and quarter sessions, begun and held for the County of Guilford at the Court-House in Greensborough on this the third Monday of May A.D. 1841, personally appeared in open court Elizabeth Donnell widow of the late Major John Donnell who after being duly sworn, on her oath deposes and said that she and the said Major John Donnell were by the Reverend David Caldwell. D. D. on the first day of November A.D. 1781 married -- that they were married without license but as was the fashionable and common by a previous publication of banns in the church of Doctor Caldwell. That there is no documentary evidence of their marriage now known or to be found except a record thereof made on the family record, kept on a leaf of a family Bible, which she still has & which is made a part of this her declaration -- that she lived with the said John Donnell from her marriage up to the time of his death, which occurred on the 7th day of May 1822 -- that they had ten children Nancy, James, Mary, John, William, Givy, Elizabeth, Sarah, Ruth & Eli -- that her said husband according to what he always said and according to the family record was aged about 74 years at the time of his death, that all her children all raised and still alive except James & Eli who are dead -- that her husband Major John Donnell as he always understood and believes was a soldier in the revolutionary war -- that she was raised near to him, went to the same church, was well acquainted with him before the marriage, understood among the neighbors that he was doing service in the war -- had his repeated assurances after marriage that he had served in that war -- and that he always went by the title of Major John Donnell among his acquaintances up to the time of his death -- that she has no documentary evidence of his services if he ever had any the same is not now to be found among his papers -- that she is now a single woman & has remained a widow ever since the death of her said husband -- that she was born in the State of Pennsylvania, Lancaster County on the 25th day of February 1762, and removed with her parents in early life to Guilford County NC where she has ever since lived that her husband as she also learned was born in Pennsylvania, removed to the same neighborhood in the same way several years before her -- that she is informed that she would have been entitled to a pension under the Act of Congress passed in 1838 had she applied in time, but knew nothing thereof in time -- but prays that Congress will still be disposed to grant the same unto her notwithstanding her delay that her husband John Donnell has often entertained her in giving the details and incidents of what he called his five months campaign, & talked and dwelt with much interest, pleasure & concerned thereon, & talked of that oftener & more repeatedly than any other incidents of his life.

Subscribed & sworn to in open court on the 19th day of May A.D. 1841

S/ John M. Logan

S/ E. Donnell

This day, Thomas Donnell, appeared before me, one of the Justices of the peace of Sumner County and State of Tennessee & made oath of things he knew and of things his Brother Major John Donnell told him after his return from the Army. My Brother being Captain of a company in Guilford County; was called upon to raise a company of men to serve five or six months in the Southern Army under General Lincoln, which he did, to my knowledge -- upon joining the Army he was appointed Brigade Major; this he told me on his return. He told me also that General Lincoln ordered him to a certain place & gave him a sealed order which, he was not to open until they got there; then open & act according to its directions which he told me on his return home; and I have no doubt but my brother Major John Donnell served the whole term of five or six months faithfully -- After his return from the Army, he was married to Elizabeth Denny. They lived together for many years -- had several sons and daughters -- he died and left her a widow & she remains in that situation & is likely to do so the remainder of her days. Dates of things I cannot remember, Sworn to before made this the first day of May 1841

S/ Thomas Donnell

The above was sworn and subscribed to before me the date above named
S/ Benj. Edwards, JP

State of North Carolina Guilford County

On this 19th day of April A.D. 1845, personally appeared before the undersigned, one of the Justices of the Courts of Pleas & Quarter Sessions for Guilford County, at her own residence in the said County (she being from old age and bodily infirmity unable to attend Court to make this her second Declaration) Elizabeth Donnell of said County, aged 83 years and a United States pensioner, who being first duly qualified according to law, doth on her oath make the following new Declaration, in order to obtain an increase of her pension, under the Benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed July 7th 1838, entitled "An act granting half pay and pensions to certain widows."

That she is the widow of John Donnell Deceased of the said County, who during the war of the Revolution, a Captain and Major of Militia did serve the United States several tours of duty: -- But in consequence of her not being married to the aforesaid Major Donnell, till after the close of the Revolution, and his having died several years ago, with apologies, this Declarant trusts, for not being able to give a more detailed and satisfactory account of her Deceased husband's Revolutionary Services; --

1. From the best information she can procure and from what she remembers to have heard her deceased husband state of his Revolutionary Services, in the early part of said year he did serve a tour of six months in the said war as Captain of militia and was in the service (her impression is) during Ashe's defeat.

2. In the year of 1780, the Declarant's husband was again in the United States service and had command of a Company of Militia was (her impression is) in Gates defeat in August of the year 1780.

3. In 1781, and to the close of the war, this Declarant's husband she believes was in the service of his Country as Captain & Major of Guilford Militia, & in almost continuous service. John Paisley of said County, was Colonel, as she has heard her deceased husband say, and that John Butler was Brigadier General; these were usually his superior officers --

This Declarant has therefore reason to believe and does believe that her deceased

husband the aforesaid John Donnell did in the war of the Revolution, as Captain and Major of Guilford Militia, serve the United States, more than two years. But what portion of his service, he served as Major, the Declarant at this late day is unable to state, since but so small a number of the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary Army are now living; The Declarant has caused to be collected the best evidence of her Deceased husband's Revolutionary service, that she could obtain, and respectfully submits her claim for the increase of pension to the Commissioner of Pensions.

The "Record evidence" of said John Donnell's revolutionary services, and other proof, is here with since and marked "A." "B."

The said Elizabeth Donnell, Declarant as aforesaid, further states that she was married to the aforesaid Major John Donnell before the first day of January 1794 viz. at the date set forth in her Declaration now on file in the pension office.

That her husband the aforesaid Major Donnell did die in the year set forth in her former declaration: that she was not married to him prior to his leaving the service, but the marriage took place previous to the first day of January 1794 viz.: at the time set forth in her declaration made some three years ago. That she has not married since the death of the said John Donnell.

The declarant further states that she learns from her agent James A. Craig, Esquire that as required by the Commissioner of Pensions, he forwarded to that office, a copy of Caruthers life of Doctor Caldwell, in which history, mention is made of this Declarant's deceased husband's revolutionary services at page 232, to which, "record evidence" in part, she refers the Commissioner of Pensions.

The Declarant further states that from old age and bodily infirmity is unable to attend court to make this declaration.

Sworn to and subscribed before me on this the 19th day of April 1845

S/ Elizabeth Donnell. X her mark

S/ David Whorton, JP

[fn p. 61]

State of North Carolina Orange County

Be it remembered that on this the seventh day of May 1841 personally appeared before me the undersigned an acting justice of the peace in and for the County of Orange John McBride¹ aged 83 years who after being duly sworn on his oath deposed and saith that during the Revolutionary war and long afterwards he was well acquainted with Major John Donnell, who served with him in that war that end or about the month of ___ in the year 1779 he served in the militia under the command of the said John Donnell who was a Major a tour of five months. That he was marched with said Donnell into the State of South Carolina -- that they were encamped near the Savannah River that his Superior officers were General Lincoln and Colonel John Paisley his Commanding Colonel that he passed through Salisbury, Charlotte &c into South Carolina, that during this tour they were in no regular engagement but while the Army was encamped on the East side of the Savannah a detachment was sent and fought the British at Briar Creek that affiant and Major Donnell by command of the Superior Officers remained in camp and was not in the skirmish or battle at said Briar Creek -- that they were regularly discharged and returned home, that he is confident the said John Donnell served as major in this tour for a term of five months -- that he received his commission as affiant believes from the superior officers -- that on his return he continued in command as major under Colonel John Paisley and

¹ [John McBride W4730](#)

in the service as a minute man until the close of the war -- that this latter service as a minute man was as follows Colonel Paisley and his Companies were called minute men, for the reason that by resolution and agreement they stood ready to march against the enemy of the Country at all times at a moment's warning, that this section of Country was greatly the rest by the inroads and depredations of the Tories -- that called out into service the said Regiment of militia called minute men repeatedly down into Randolph, Moore and other places down the Country, and sometimes up on the Yadkin River and frequently about home to extend a hand protection to the Whig inhabitants that he has personal knowledge of a great deal of service done by the said John Donnell as major in this way that he affiant served with and under his command that he affiant could not with certainty compute the precise length of time the said Major John Donnell did serve in this way but he feel safe in saying that the whole time in which he was in actual service in this way, last described could not be less than three months, and the affiant is a pensioner for revolutionary services and begs leave to refer to his declaration to obtain the same, that the said Major John Donnell died in the County of Guilford in the year 1822, that he affiant is acquainted with said Donnell's widow Elizabeth Donnell and affiant further says that he is so old and decrepit and his health so greatly impaired that he could not in any convenience or without danger to his health be carried to court.

S/ J. McBride

Subscribed and sworn to before me the day and year aforesaid
S/ Joseph Albright, JP

[fn p. 70]

Extract from the Life of David Caldwell DD page 232 -- by the Reverend EW Caruthers, now Principal of the High School, Greensborough NC

"Major John Donnell, who was then a Captain, and a member of the Buffalo Church, was a man of great respectability and Morrow words, a staunch Whig, and an enterprising Officer. Having embarked in the cause with zeal from the first, he had been much employed in the service of his country. He served a six-month campaign mostly in Georgia on the Savannah River --; and had been ever prompt to render his Country any services in his power. He was not in the Battle at Martinsville [Guilford C. H.] because he and his Company, or such of them as were fit for duty, had been appointed by General Greene on another service."

[fn p. 72]

State of North Carolina Orange County

On this the 23rd day of August, 1842, personally appeared before the undersigned one of the Justices of the peace in and for said County, James Dollar² a resident of Chatham County, a United States pensioner, who being first duly sworn according to law deposeseth and saith that in the war of the Revolution he served a three months tour of duty in the United States Service as a private of Infantry in the tour commenced on or about the 1st of July 1780. John Ray was Captain of the Company to which this affiant was attached (in the early part of the tour) and Saunders Captain later part of said tour. Farmer of Hillsboro was Colonel. In this tour we were in Gates defeat. In all of said tour this deponent remembers that John Donnell of Guilford County, had command of a company of militia in said tour and served all of said tour to this deponent's recollection -- remembers of him in the rendezvous in the town of Hillsboro and was at the end of said tour discharged with us & returned home.

² [James Dollar W25535](#)

John Donnell was of Colonel Paisley's Regiment. This deponent lived in Orange County during the War of the Revolution and frequently saw said John Donnell afterwards, Major Donnell, in the town of Hillsboro.

Sworn and subscribed the day & date first above written before me.

S/ H. Walker, JP

S/ James Dollar, X his mark