

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension application of James Downey R3064

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Transcribed by Will Graves

State of North Carolina, Granville County

On this 6th day of November A.D. 1832 personally appeared in open court, before John C. Taylor, Thomas A. Willis and Wyatt Canaday members of the Court of Pleas and quarter Sessions now sitting in and for the County and State aforesaid James Downey Senior Esquire, a resident of said County and State, aged 69 years on the 16th of March 1832, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath take the following Declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated.

In the summer or early in the fall of 1780 a company of militia was raised in Granville County under the command of Joshua Coffee as Captain, the other officers he cannot recollect distinctly – But on the condition each person would find his own horse and join the Light Horse and tour of three months should be performed & completed by two months Service. This affiant volunteered and found his own Horse. The Regiment was commanded by Phil Taylor as Colonel and William Hunt as Major. From Hillsboro we were marched to Bell's Mills on Deep River, where we scoured the country to keep the disaffected and Tories in check. After performing service here for some time we were marched to Salisbury where our Regiment was placed under the command of Colonel William R. Davie. Thence we were marched to Phifer's Mills where we remained on duty so long as the British retained possession of the town of Charlotte. As soon as that town was evacuated by the Enemy our Regiment was marched in their rear – some distance beyond Charlotte we flanked off to the left. In the course of our service we were in the Waxhaws, on Twelve Mile Creek and finally were stationed for a considerable time on Six Mile Creek where the American Army were encamped. Upon the Expiration of our Term of Service we were duly discharged and I came Home. I am not certain that I ever had a discharge for this tour of duty, but if I had one, it is lost or mislaid. My service in this tour I expect to prove by the Testimony of Colonel William Hunt¹ who was Major of our Regiment and by the Testimony of James Terry² & Alan Howard³ who were soldiers in the same.

The second Tour was early in the Year of 1781. As in the first tour I volunteered and found my own Horse and it was agreed that a tour of two months in the Cavalry & finding my own Horse should entitle me to a discharge for three months service. The company to which I belonged was commanded by William Thomas as Captain, Phil Thomas as Lieutenant and I think by Charles Thomas as Ensign [could be Cornet, as the word is written over]. The Regiment to which our company belonged was commanded by Colonel Malmedy a Frenchman, and by Pleasant Henderson as Major. Our company not being in Readiness to join the Regiment at Hillsboro, when it left that place to join General Greene's Army, we were marched onwards in pursuit of it. We were unable to fall in with Colonel Malmedy's Regiment, but traveled on and came up to the American Army when it lay at the High Rock on Haw River. We continued to search for our Regiment and were within about 20 miles of Guilford Court House when we heard the report of the Artillery at the Battle. We were not in the Battle, but in a day or two afterward fell in with Colonel Malmedy and his Regiment. From that time we were hovering round & reconnoitering the British Army until it was stationed at Ramsey's Mills on Deep River. Here it was that an affair took place in which a detachment of our force took three Hessians as Prisoners who were on Sentry. This affiant was very near to Benjamin Hester⁴ when he with his sword

1 FPA S7051

2 FPA R10464

3 FPA S8730

4 FPA S6998

had nearly killed one of these Hessians by a blow. After Cornwallis crossed Deep River our Regiment continued to Hover round and after him and continued the chase down the Cape Fear River until the British effected their retreat to & arrival at Wilmington. Here and in the Country round about we continued on duty in keeping the Tories in check until our Term of Service Expired when we were discharged. I am not certain that I received a discharge but if I did it is lost or mislaid as the other one has been.

This affiant was born in the County of Granville as he is informed on the 16th of March 1763 within about 4 miles of his present Residence where he has continued to reside ever since. He of course lived in that County when these two Tours of duty were performed. The Service in the last tour he will be able to prove by the Testimony of Benjamin Hester (0) and Shadrach Owens⁵ two brother soldiers in the same Regiment. The Register of his age is in the possession of Colonel James W. Smith his brother-in-law who lives in Jackson County & State of Tennessee, to whose house the father of this affiant removed a short time before his death.

In answer to the Interrogatories prescribed in the Instructions of the War Department I have herein before stated the time & place of my birth and where I lived when I entered the Service & where I now live; How and in what manner I entered the service: the names of the officers under whom I served so far as I can recollect them, and the general circumstances of my service; I have also spoken of my discharges, and I now proceed to state the names of the persons in my present neighborhood to whom I am known, and who can testify as to my character for veracity and their belief of my Services as a Soldier of the Revolution, viz.: Colonel William Hunt, James Terry, Ellen Howard, Shadrach Owen, Benjamin Hester (0). They are others who have removed to the South & West & whose testimony it is very Inconvenient to procure war.

Subscribed & sworn to in open Court.

Upon a conversation with Colonel Hunt this day I am constrained and in duty bound to make the following correction to the Statement I have heretofore made. In the first tour I have stated that I Entered the service for three months & was to be discharged upon a Service of two months as I found my own Horse and performed duty in the Cavalry. In correction of this Statement heretofore, I now state that I entered the Service in the latter part of the month of August 1780 and continued in Service and did not return home until a few days before Christmas of the same year. The reason of this Detention in Service will be stated by Colonel Home in his affidavit whose memory is more retentive than my own viz: Colonel Davie being unwilling to discharge us in the then helpless & exposed condition of our Army until recruits and reinforcements should arrive, kept us on duty for two months after our term of Service had expired. This service would entitle me to a discharge for six months Service – and we were not discharged until the arrival of General Smallwood and the regulars under his command.

Subscribed & sworn to the date above.

S/ Jas. Downey, Senr.

He 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 or Territory.

Subscribed & sworn to the date above.

S/ Jas. Downey, Senr.

Colonel William Hunt aged 75 years born on the 27th of December 1757 a resident of Granville County hereby certifies that he is & has been long well acquainted with James Downey Senior Esq. who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration. That he thinks he has correctly stated his age. He further certifies that he this affiant was a Major in the Regiment of light horse that was raised in North Carolina & sent under Colonel Phil Taylor & himself in aid of the American Army near Charlotte

5 FPA W5459 [name spelled Shadrach Owen or Owens]

in the fall of 1780. That he remembers well the said James Downey as a Soldier in this Regiment & that his Captain was Joshua Coffee. That the term of Service was for three months, but in case the Soldier would find his own horse & perform duty in the Cavalry that a service of two months should entitle him to a discharge for three months Service. That in the helpless and destitute situation of the American Army at this time induced Colonel Davie who had command of the two North Carolina regiments of Cavalry then on duty to detain them on duty until the Regulars that had promised from the North should arrive. Under this necessity Colonel Davie did detain and keep on duty those two regiments about two months after they were entitled to their discharge and until General Smallwood joined the American Army with the Regulars under his command – then being in force to defend themselves from the Enemy, these two Regiments were sent homeward and regularly discharged. That is as the men in Service would arrive to a point near their place of living they would be discharged. I am confident that I did not arrive at home until a very few days before Christmas. I think we entered into service in the latter part of August & were discharged as I have before stated. I have no doubt of the Truth of the Statement made by Mr. Downey of the other service he has stated, but has no personal knowledge of it. I further certify that said County is a man of high character for veracity and Truth.

Subscribed & sworn to in open Court.

S/ Wm Hunt

James Terry Senior born the 5th day of August 1758, a resident of Granville County makes Oath that he has heard the foregoing affidavit of James Downey Senior as far as relates to the first tour of duty stated in his foregoing declaration, read, and he states that the said James Downey Senior was a Soldier in the Regiment of Cavalry ordered in duty in 1780 under the Command of Colonel Phil Taylor, John Dickerson Lieutenant Colonel and William Hunt as Major. The company to which said Downey was attached was commanded by Captain Joshua Coffee. I was a private in the same Regiment & in the Company commanded by Captain Samuel Sneed.

This affiant further certifies that the statement of the said County & Col. William Hunt in relation to the Tour before spoken of in 1780 he does concur with them in the main in their said Statement. I further certify that said James Downey Senior is a man of high character for veracity & Truth.

Subscribed & sworn in open Court.

S/ James Terry, Senr.

Shadrach Owens aged 72 on the 12th day of December 1832, a resident of Granville County, makes Oath that he has heard the declaration of James Downey Senior read as far as relates to the Tour in 1781 under the Command of Col. Malmedy. That he this affiant was a Soldier in the same Regiment, and same company with James Downey Senior and served throughout the full Tour.

This affiant further certifies & declares his full and entire concurrence in the facts set forth by him said Downey in the Tour as stated. He further Certifies that said Downey performed the Duty he has described in this Tour in the manner as stated by him. I further Certify that said Downey is a man of high Character for veracity & Truth.

Subscribed & sworn to in open Court.

S/ Shadrach Owens

Allen Howard born on the 16th day of February 1763 a resident of Granville County makes Oath that he was a Private in an Expedition to Charlotte and the Country around about in the fall of 1780. That he entered the service in the Infantry under Captain Gilliam and that he well knows that James Downey Senior was a Private in Captain Coffee's Company of Cavalry commanded by Colonel Phil Taylor in the same Expedition. That he knows that he was on duty and doubts not that he served his full tour. This affiant further certifies that James Downey Senior has always sustained that character of an

Honest man and one of strict veracity & truth.

Subscribed & sworn to in open Court.

S/ Allen Howard

Benjamin Hester (0) being duly sworn according to law, testifies & declares on oath in open Court this ninth day of November 1832, That he was a Private in Captain John Taylor's company of Cavalry in the Regiment commanded by Colonel Malmedy, Lieutenant Colonel Dickerson & Major Hunt as set forth in the foregoing declaration of James Downey Senior Esq.. That he is well acquainted with said County and well recollects to the services of said Downey as set forth by him in his declaration. This affiant fully certifies and corroborates the facts set forth in his said declaration in the Tour under Colonel Malmedy.

Subscribed & sworn to in open Court the date above.

S/ Benjamin Hester, X his mark