Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Dunn R3144 VA Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

State of Virginia }
County of Monroe } Ss.

On this first day of February in the Year of Our Lord 1834 personally appeared before me Joel Stodghill a Justice of the peace for the County of Monroe and State of Virginia aforesaid John Dunn Senior a resident of the County of Monroe and State of Virginia aforesaid aged Seventy five years on the 21st day of August last 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 7th 1832

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

That sometime after the surrender of General Burgoyne which he thinks took place in the fall of the year 1777 [at Saratoga, 17 Oct 1777] the British prisoners then called Burgoynes army were marched to the Albemarle Barracks [arriving Jan 1779] which were situated near the Town of Charlottesville or not more than four or five miles distant [4 mi NNE]. That a number of the American Soldiers came on with the Prisoners to guard them and at the expiration of whose term of service their places had to be filled by volunteers or drafts made upon the Militia; that on the Twenty first or twenty second day of September 1778 [sic] he volunteered to guard the prisoners in said Barracks for a Tour of Six months under the Command of a Captain Marks, whose subaltern officers he thinks was Lieutenant Nelson Thompson and Ensign Garland and that he was discharged from said service on the Twenty second day of March 1779 following having faithfully performed his said six months term of service; that there was only the one company stationed at the Barracks when he was there to guard the prisoners which company he thinks consisted of between eighty and one hundred men: that the usual draft was not made for only three months but in consequence of his volunteering for six months he was cleared of two drafts; that the nature of his services was to guard the British Prisoners which was a very arduous duty although not perrilous as from the small number their routine of duty came round very quick; that he was living with his Father in the County of Albemarle at the time he volunteered to perform said tour.

That on the 17th day of May 1781 he was drafted into the service of the United for a three months tour and served under Captain [Jeremiah] Beasley Lieutenant Harvey [John Harvie] and Ensign [Daniel] Nelson that during said tour of service he was in the company that chased Tarlton from Charlottesville to old James Town [see endnote]; that he was in the Battle of Hot Water [26 Jun 1781] and two days afterwards [sic] in the Battle at Old James Town [Battle of Green Springs Plantation near Jamestown, 6 Jul 1781]; in the Battle at Hot Water he does not remember that they had any killed, but they had a few wounded and at Old James Town and some killed perhaps thirty in both killed and wounded. The company to which he belonged brought on the engagement at Old James Town they marched round a cops of wood and fired on the enemies picket guard, who returned the fire and wounded one man. He remembers that General [Anthony] Wayne command at James Town and he thinks that Colonel [John] Willis and Colonel Rucker also commanded there. On their way to James Town they passed by Petersburg which had been burnt sometime previous; that he faithfully served out his three months tour and had but just returned home when he heard of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis [19 Oct]. That at the time he was drafted he lived in the County Rockingham and State of Virginia. That he moved to Rich Creek in the County then he thinks of Greenbrier now Monroe County where he at present resides in the fall of the year 1782 and the settlers becoming much alarmed the ensuing spring at a report that Indians had been seen sculking about he engaged as an Indian Spy on the first day of June of that year in company with William Thompson and Thomas Trimble and continued in service as a spy until the first of November following; that the nature of his services as an Indian Spy was to leave Mud Fort on Rich Creek, in company with his said companions and traverse the wood to the mouth of Greenbrier

River thence to Pipe Stem Creek [Pipestem Creek], thence to bent mountain, thence to East River, thence decend East River to its mouth and thence to Mud Fort again that during the time he thus served as an Indian Spy he was not engaged in any civil pursuit

That he was born in the County of Albemarle on the 21st day of August 1758 that he has no record of his age; that he was living in the County of Albemarle when first called into service, then Rockingham and then Monroe as before stated; that he received no discharge in writing except for the three month tour which he received of Capt Beasley which he has long since lost; that he is known to the Reverend Jacob Cook and to John Swope of the County of Monroe both in his present neighbourhood who can testify as to his good character for varacity and their belief of his services as a Soldier of the Revolution That he has no documentary evidence and knows of no pers[on] whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his services. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity of pension except the present and declares that his name is not on the pension Roll of the Agency of any State.

This day Christian Peters [pension application S5898] of the County of Monroe and State of Virginia aged Seventy three years in October last and a Soldier of the Revolution personally appeared before me a Justice of the peace for the County and State aforesaid and made oath according to Law; that he served a three months Tour in the Summer of 1781 under Captain Jeremiah Beasley – Leiutenant John Harvey – and Ensign Nelson as described in the foregoing declaration and that he has always understood that the said John Dunn Sen'r. the said applicant served as stated in his said Declaration and that he has been personally acquainted with the said John Dunn Senior ever since the year 1781 up to the present period [4 Feb 1834]

NOTES:

After Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's raid on Charlottesville on 4 Jun 1781 he rejoined Cornwallis at Jefferson's Elk Hill plantation. From there Cornwallis and Tarleton were pursued to Richmond and Jamestown by the entire army commanded by Lafayette.

A note in the file states that the reason Dunn's claim was rejected was insufficient proof of service. For militia service, however, the law required only certification of the applicant's character and reputation as having served. By Jan 1834 the Pension Office had developed a strong prejudice against claims from what is now West Virginia and especially claims for service against Indians on the frontier. For details see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111.