

Patriot Profile:

Private William T. Duggins

(1751-1827)

Irish Immigrant, Revolutionary War Soldier, and Virginia Patriot

Private William T. Duggins was born October 31, 1751, in Dublin, Ireland. His early life was shaped by both loss and immigration. Following the death of his father, William emigrated to America in 1763 with his mother, Alice. They settled in Fredericksburg, Virginia, where his mother later married Robert Wilkinson. The couple had three additional children.

As a young man, Duggins learned a skilled trade. He was apprenticed to a silversmith in Louisa County, Virginia, an occupation requiring considerable craftsmanship and precision. Silversmiths were respected members of colonial communities and produced everything from household items and personal accessories to objects used in commerce and daily life.

Revolutionary War Service

When the American Revolution began, Duggins answered the call to military service.

On January 20, 1777, he enlisted in Captain William Vanse's Company of the 12th Virginia Regiment. The 12th Virginia was one of the Continental Army regiments raised to support the American cause during the Revolution.

Like many soldiers of the Continental Army, Duggins served under several commanders and was transferred between military units during his years of service. His records indicate service with units associated with Colonel James Wood, among others.

The life of a Continental soldier was demanding. Soldiers frequently endured long marches, shortages of food and clothing, inadequate pay, and harsh weather. Duggins served during a period when the Continental Army was struggling to maintain an effective fighting force against the British Army.

His name last appears on a company muster roll dated December 9, 1779, recorded at a camp near Morristown, New Jersey. Morristown was an important Continental Army encampment during the Revolution. The area served as winter quarters for Washington's army on more than one occasion and was the site of severe conditions for American troops.

Although the surviving records provide only a partial picture of Duggins' military career, his documented service represents several years of commitment to the American cause during a particularly difficult period of the Revolution.

Marriage and Family

After the war, Duggins remained in Virginia and established a family.

On December 16, 1787, he married Elizabeth Perkins, daughter of William Perkins of South Carolina. Elizabeth was born in 1771 and was approximately twenty years younger than William.

William and Elizabeth became the parents of fourteen children, establishing a large family in post-Revolutionary Virginia.

Duggins was a member of the Episcopal Church and was remembered as a devoted Christian. His faith and family appear to have been important elements of his life following his military service.

Later Years

Following the Revolution, Duggins continued his life in Virginia, eventually settling in Louisa County. The skills he acquired as a silversmith provided him with a trade, while his family and church became important parts of his life and community.

William T. Duggins died on June 23, 1827, in Louisa County, Virginia, at the age of 75. His wife, Elizabeth, had preceded him in death, passing away on December 17, 1823, at the age of 52.

An Immigrant Who Became an American Patriot

William T. Duggins' story reflects the experience of many early Americans who came to the colonies as immigrants and eventually became part of the struggle to establish an independent nation.

Arriving in Virginia from Ireland as a young boy, Duggins grew up, learned a trade, and ultimately served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. His enlistment in the 12th Virginia Regiment placed him among the men who endured the hardships of military service during the long struggle for independence.

His subsequent life as a craftsman, husband, father, and member of his community illustrates the transition from wartime service to the building of a new nation.

For members of the Sons of the American Revolution, Private William T. Duggins represents an important aspect of the American story: an immigrant who made

Virginia his home, took up arms for the cause of independence, and helped establish the foundation of the new American republic through his service and his family.