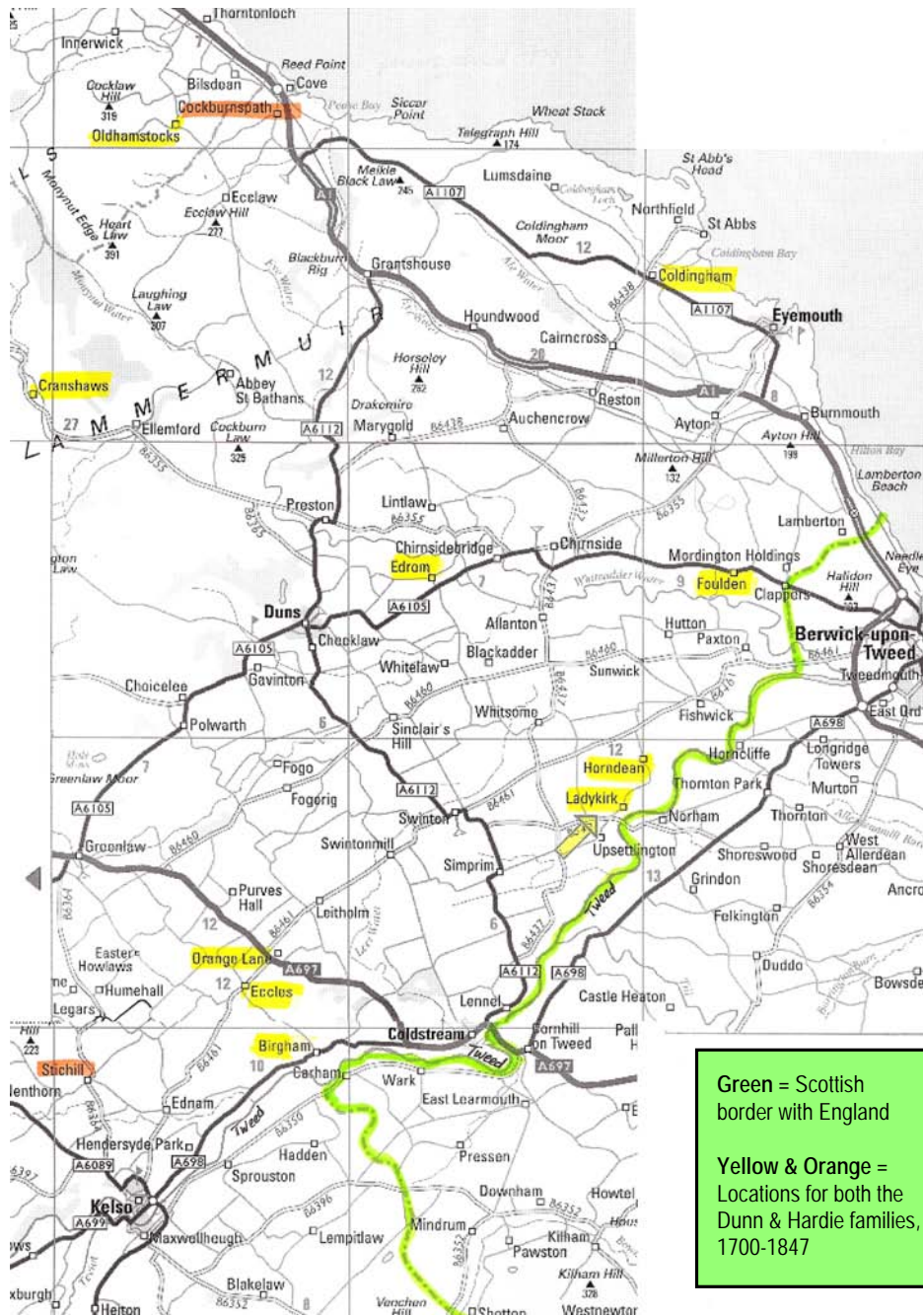


JAMES DUNN'S STORY

by Susan Skomal

James Dunn¹ is an unsung example of the thousands of immigrant men who were responsible for creating the social backbone of nineteenth century America. Although he may have privately railed against the injustices he endured, James was a quiet, reverent man, who respected his community and worked hard to serve his God, country, and family.



As an adult, James Dunn was described as a 165 pound, dark-haired, grey-eyed, man, 5 feet 7½ inches tall, with a 39-42 inch chest and a dark complexion — no doubt earned during a life spent working as a laborer outdoors. Born in Berwickshire in the Scottish Borders, James was baptized in Ladykirk, on 3 April 1814. He was the fifth of seven children² born to Archibald Dunn (bap. 2 January 1774 in Cockburnspath, Berwickshire), and Elspeth Dodds (b. 25 August 1785, also in Cockburnspath). His parents were married 26 May 1799 at Lamerton in Oldhamstocks Parish, Berwickshire. For at least three generations (and no doubt for many

¹ James Dunn and Cristina Hardie were my great-great grandparents. They have had 152 descendants as of 2012.

² Margaret, b. 17 Jan 1802, Foulden; Elizabeth, b. Sept 1805, Edrom; Janet, b. 1807, Edrom; Elspeth, b. Jun 1809, Edrom; and twins Archibald and Ann, b. Aug 1818, Ladykirk.

before that), James' ancestors had earned their living as agricultural laborers on farms throughout the region. The Archibald Dunn family moved frequently throughout Berwickshire: from Cockburnspath (in the north), they had moved to Foulden by January 1802, to Edrom by September 1805, and then to Ladykirk by March 1814.

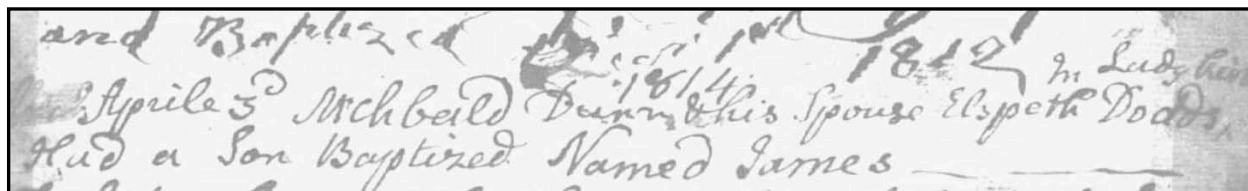


Figure 2: Baptismal registration of James Dunn, Ladykirk Parish, Berwickshire, "1814 - April 3 Archibald Dunn & his spouse Elspeth Dodds in Ladykirk Had a Son Baptized Named James."

At the time of the 1841 Scottish Census, James was a 25-year-old agricultural laborer, living at Birgham, a village within the Eccles parish. He lived in the household of his father Archibald (listed as age 70), that included 10-year-old Elisabeth Dunn (possibly his youngest sister), and

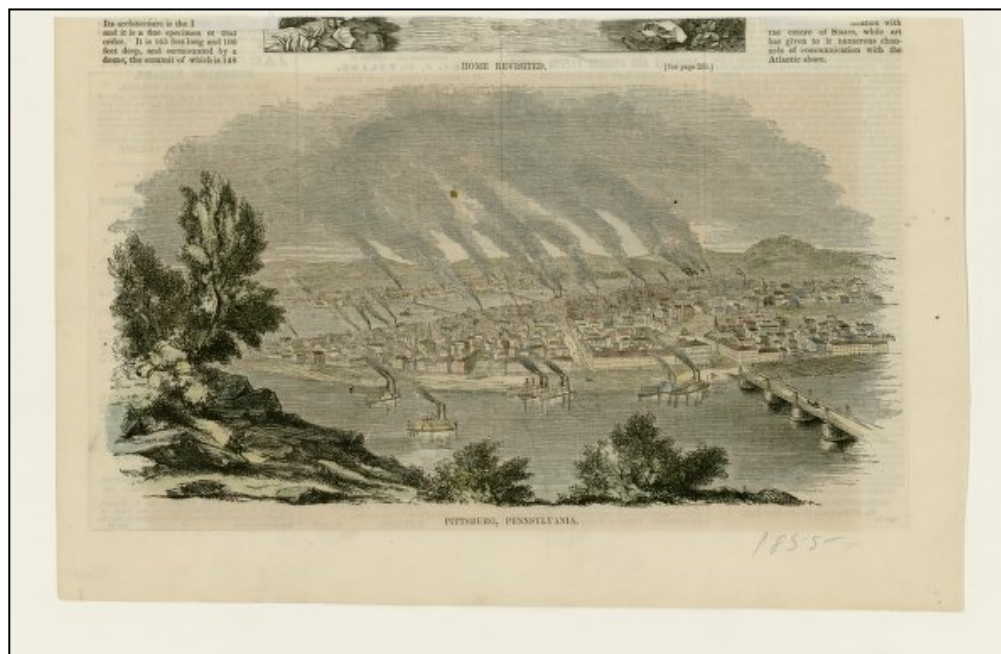


Figure 3: Pittsburgh circa 1855. Hand-colored wood engraving from a 19th century illustrated newspaper. (Pittsburgh Print Collection (ASC) <http://images.library.pitt.edu/>)

the family of his Uncle Andrew Dodds (age 51).³ His mother Elspeth had apparently died earlier.

According to affidavits submitted in support of his claim for a Civil War pension, James immigrated to Pittsburgh in 1847. It is quite possible that he had known his future wife Cristina Hardie⁴ or her family in Scotland, for

James' younger brother Archibald and wife Mary had been living in Cristina's home village of Stithell for at least three years at the time the 1841 Census was taken. Nevertheless, the two arrived separately in America, and no doubt reconnected through mutual acquaintances in the 8th Ward of Pittsburgh. They were married by a Justice of the Peace in Pittsburgh on 16 May 1848.⁵ Both were in their mid-thirties.

³ Including Andrew and his wife Rachel Dodds (37), and their children: Elisabeth (8), Alexander (7), Felam (2), and James (9 months).

⁴ Born in Orange Lane, baptized Christian Hardie 9 July 1815 in Eccles, Berwickshire.

⁵ Reported in Christina Dunn's application for Widow's Pension Benefits, 1890.

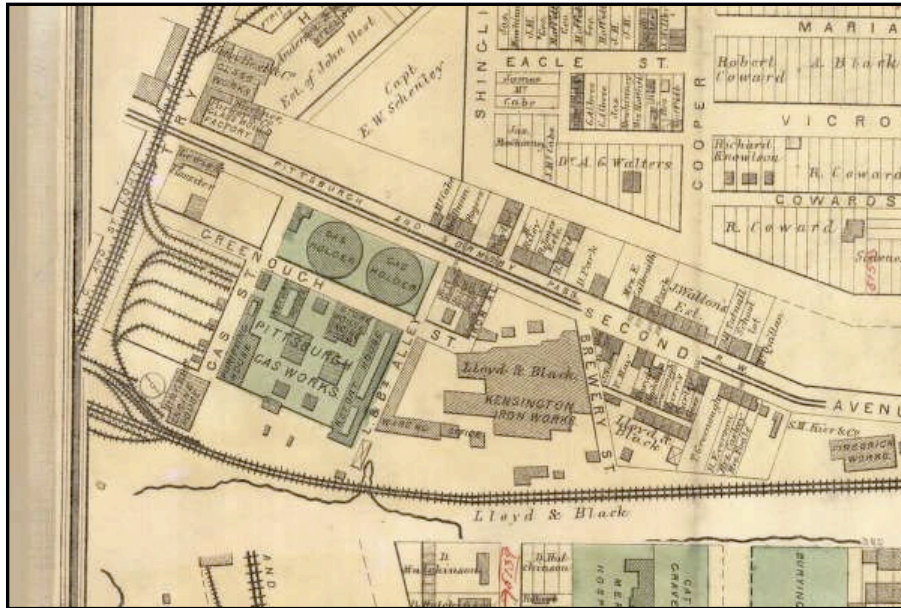


Figure 4: Map of Pittsburgh's 8th Ward, ca. 1876. Note that the Gas Works are located immediately adjacent to the railroad line that served the industries lining the Monongahela River. Second Avenue is some 100 feet above the industrial district, at the top of the bluffs that line the river. (Historic Pittsburgh archives, University of Pittsburgh, <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/>)

James and Cristina soon had three children: Archibald James was born 12 March 1851, Margaret was born 2 August 1853, and Elizabeth (known as Lizzie) was born in September 1856. The 1858 Pittsburgh City Directory lists James as a coal hauler living on "Second [Avenue] about Kensington Rolling Mill." The 1860 Federal Census taken on 7 June enumerated the Dunn family in the 8th Ward of Pittsburgh. The Dunns were also included in the 1860 Pittsburgh City Directory, where James' profession was given as "carter," living on "Second near the Gas Works." The 8th Ward was a working class neighborhood located on the bluffs overlooking the Monongahela River, immediately above the gas works, rolling mill, and railroad lines. As a "carter" or "wagon driver," he may have moved such freight as coal between the gas works and the adjacent railroad. The reported value of his personal estate in 1860 was \$50 (approximately \$1,083 today⁶), a respectable average amongst his neighbors, who were also immigrant laborers from Ireland, Scotland, England, and Wales. In addition to the majority of generic "laborers," local occupations included "puddlers" (workers in pig iron), iron shinglers, mill rollers, glass blowers, stonemasons, seamstresses, and washerwomen, plus the occasional policeman and engineer. This was the heyday of the growth of Pittsburgh as an industrial hub. Engravings from the period portray a polluted boomtown, bustling with immigrants from throughout Western Europe eager for a new start.

Figure 5: James Dunn's signature in November 1874 from his sworn affidavit in support of an application for war disability pension. At this time he was living in Cawker City, Kansas and suffering from chronic inflammation of the retina. Note that his ability to write clearly is evidence that James was also right-handed.

By 1860, James' brother Archibald had also moved to Pittsburgh with his second wife Janet and family of five children (leaving the eldest three in Scotland). Christina's parents Adam and Mary Hardie, along with all but one of their living children had likewise left Scotland for America. In the early days, Cristina's brothers and sister lived in the 8th Ward, but each eventually moved to newer parts of the city—and beyond—leaving only the Dunn family in the 8th Ward. Despite the fact that the Hardies were a close-knit, staunchly religious family, we

⁶ Comparative value of the US dollar in 1860 = \$21.663; <http://mykindred.com/cloud/TX/Documents/dollar/>

do not know how much contact there was between them and the Dunns. Family history suggests that there may have been a falling out over Cristina's first marriage in Scotland. We do know from James' obituary and scattered family history that the Dunns were likewise a religious family, yet there are no church records of the Dunn children's births or baptisms.

Both James and his wife were literate, as attested by information gathered in the census enumerations and documented by their signatures on James' enlistment forms and applications for pension benefits.

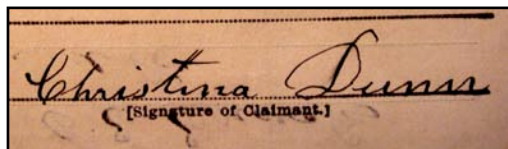


Figure 6: Christina' Dunn's signature, ca.1891 in support of her unsuccessful application for widow's pension benefits.

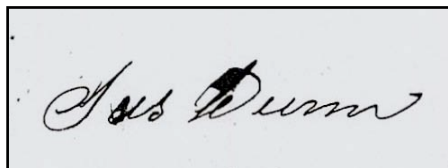
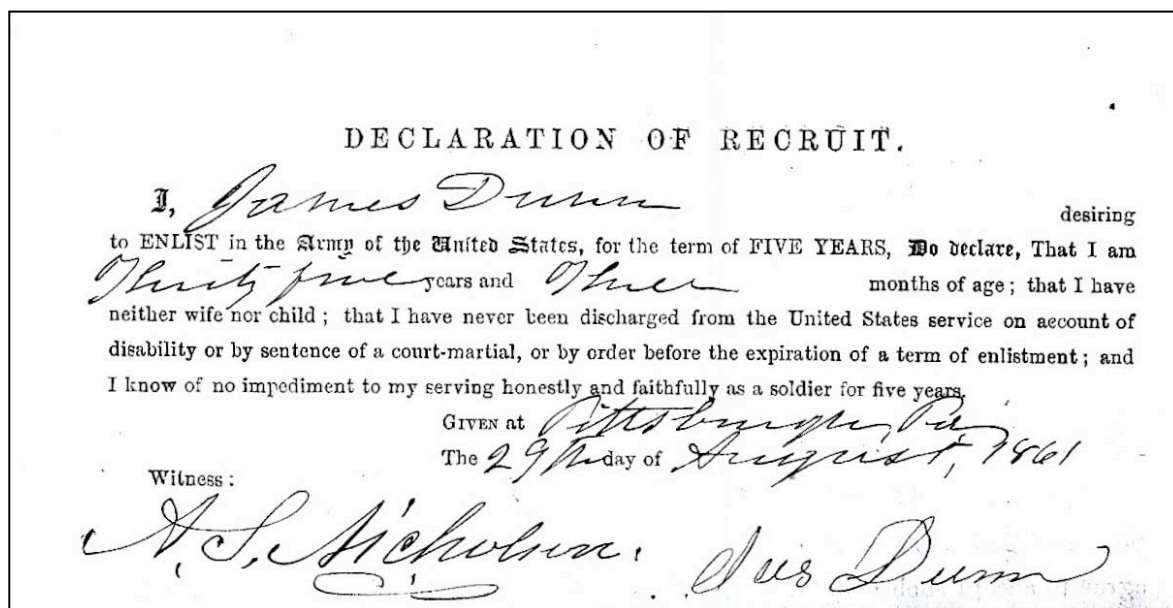


Figure 7: Signature of a younger man. James Dunn's signature on his enlistment papers, 29 August 1861.

THE CIVIL WAR YEARS

During the summer of 1861 James took a chance on opportunities afforded by what was then known as the "War of Rebellion." At the age of 47, James enlisted for a five-year tour of duty in the United States Army. Such a decision must have appeared as an attractive source of funds for his family of five. James enlisted in Pittsburgh on 29 August 1861 as a private in the U.S. 6th Cavalry Regiment. Perhaps to qualify, however, he gave his age as 35 and three months, and swore that he had no wife or family to support.



DECLARATION OF RECRUIT.

I, *James Dunn* desiring
to ENLIST in the Army of the United States, for the term of FIVE YEARS, Do declare, That I am
Thirty five years and *Three* months of age; that I have
neither wife nor child; that I have never been discharged from the United States service on account of
disability or by sentence of a court-martial, or by order before the expiration of a term of enlistment; and
I know of no impediment to my serving honestly and faithfully as a soldier for five years.

GIVEN at *Pittsburgh, Pa.*
The *29th* day of *August*, 1861

Witness:
A. S. Nicholson *James Dunn*

Figure 8: James Dunn's enlistment as a soldier in the Army of the United States of America, 29 August 1861. Photograph of the original in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

We can learn something of the customs of service that James Dunn and his comrades would have observed from a comprehensive handbook published in 1864 by Captain August V. Kautz of the 6th Regiment:⁷

7. "Any free white" male person above the age of eighteen, and under thirty-five years of age, being at least five feet three inches high; effective, able-bodied, sober, free from disease, of good character and habits, and with a competent knowledge of the English language, may be enlisted as a soldier (Reg. 929.) This regulation makes exceptions in favor of musicians and soldiers who have served one enlistment, although they should be under the prescribed height and age. A soldier cannot claim a discharge in consequence of any defect in the above requirements, unless, in case of a minor, he can prove that the requirements of the law have not been complied with in his enlistment.



Figure 8: 6th cavalry regiment motto: "Ducit Amor Patrie" (Led by Love of Country)

20. The pay of the private soldier in the cavalry, artillery and infantry, as fixed by law, is sixteen dollars per month. (Act June 20, 1864.) One dollar per month of the soldier's pay is retained monthly by the paymaster, to be paid upon the expiration of his enlistment.

22. Twelve and one-half cents is deducted from the pay of all enlisted men per month by the paymaster, for the support of the Military Asylum or Soldiers' Home. (Act March 3, 1859, sec. 7.)

No. 52.						
STATEMENT exhibiting the allowance of Clothing to each soldier during his enlistment, and his proportion for each year respectively, as established by the Secretary of War.						
CLOTHING.	FOR FIVE YEARS.					Total in the five years.
	1st.	2d.	3d.	4th.	5th.	
Hat, trimmed.....	1	1	1	1	1	5
Forage Cap.....	1	1	1	1	1	5
Uniform Coat or Jacket.....	1	1	1	1	1	5
Blue Flannel Sack Coat.....	2	2	2	2	2	10
Trousers.....	3	2	3	2	3	13
Flannel Shirts.....	3	3	3	3	3	15
Flannel Drawers.....	3	2	2	2	2	11
Bootees, pairs.....	4	4	4	4	4	20
Stockings, pairs.....	4	4	4	4	4	20
Leather Stock.....	1	---	1	---	---	2
Great Coat.....	1	---	---	---	---	1
Stable Frock.....	1	---	1	---	---	2
Fatigue Overall.....	1	1	1	1	1	5
Blanket.....	1	---	1	---	---	2

Figure 9: The "leather stock" was a stiff leather collar that most soldiers chose not to wear because it was so uncomfortable. From <http://howardlanham.tripod.com/link52.htm>

⁷ *The Customs Of Service For Non-Commissioned Officers And Soldiers As Derived From Law And Regulations And Practised In The Army Of The United States Being A Hand-Book For The Rank And Files Of The Army, Showing What Are The Rights And Duties, How To Obtain The Former And Perform The Latter, And Thereby Enabling Them To Seek Promotion And Distinction In The Service Of Their Country*, by August V. Kautz. Capt. Sixth U.S. Cavalry, Brig.-Gen. U.S. Volunteers (Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1864) <http://www.usregulars.com/>

23. The soldier has an annual allowance for clothing, the amount of which is obtained by computing the cost of the average amount of clothing allowed to soldiers for the year. (Reg. 1157.) This allowance is published periodically in orders by the War Department, in connection with the prices of clothing.

James was sent first to guard Washington, D.C. As the “rebellion” turned into a war beyond anyone’s comprehension, he participated in at least 22 battles, including the infamous Battle of Gettysburg (aka Firstfield). According to John Buford’s history of the 6th Regiment, “A new regiment was recruited in the summer of 1861, which became the 6th US Cavalry, which was the only Regular cavalry regiment formed during the Civil War. Its men came from the area around Pittsburgh, who typically enlisted for a term of five rather than three years. The 6th US, of course, is the unit that got chopped to shreds at Fairfield.”⁸ Captain William H. Carter wrote:

The regiment was recruited principally in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and western New York, under the supervision of Lieut-Col. Emory, and on October 12, 1861, Companies B, D, E, F, G, H, I and K having been organized, the regiment was transferred to the camp of instruction east of the Capitol at Washington. The organization of Company A was completed October 15; a sufficient number of recruits arrived during the month to complete the organization of Company M; and on the 1st of November the band of fifteen members joined, and the instruction of the regiment was begun. Company C was organized December 23, 1861, thus completing the organization of all but one company, and on December 31 the regiment was ready for the field with 34 officers and 950 men.⁹

James spent the winter of 1861-62 in a camp of instruction, Camp East of the Capitol “in the defense of “ Washington attached to Stoneman’s Cavalry Command, Army Potomac. After winter quarters were abandoned on March 10, 1862, James would have participated in the following actions during his tour of duty with the 6th U.S. Cavalry:

1862

Fairfax, March 10
Fort Monroe, March 30
Williamsburg, May 4.
Slatersville, May 9.
New Kent C. H., May 11.
New Bridge, May 20.
Mechanicsville, May 24.
Hanover C. H., May 27.
Ashland, June 16.
Black Creek, June 26.
Malvern Hill, August 5.
Falls Church, September 5.
Sugar Loaf Mountain, Md., Sept. 13.
Petersville, Md., Sept. 15.
Charlestown, September 28.
Hillsboro, September 29.
Waterford, October 1.
Charlestown, October 8.
Philamont, November 1.
Uniontown, November 2.
Upperville, November 3.
Barber’s Cross Roads, Nov. 5.
Amosville, November 7 and 8.
Sulphur Springs, November 17.
Fredericksburg, December 12.

1863

Beverly Ford, June 9.
Benton’s Mill, June 17.
Middleburg, June 21.
Upperville, June 21.
Fairfield (Gettysburg), Pa., July 3.
Williamsport, Md., July 6.
Funkstown, Md., July 7.
Boonesboro, Md., July 8 and 9.
Funkstown, Md., July 7.
Brandy Station, September 13.
Culpeper, October 11.
Brandy Station, October 11.
Robertson’s Tavern, Nov. 27.
Mine Run, November 28 and 29.

1864

Wilderness, May 5 and 6.
Todd’s Tavern, May 7.
Spottsylvania C. H., May 9.
Yellow Tavern, May 11.
Meadow Bridge, May 12.
Salem Church, May 28.
Old Church, May 30.
Trevillian Station, June 11-12.
Dabney’s Mill, June 29.
Deep Bottom, August 1.
Berryville, August 16

⁸ Buford lived 1826-1863; <http://www.civilwarhome.com/cavalry.htm>

⁹ The Sixth Regiment Of Cavalry, by Captain William H. Carter, 6th U. S. Cavalry, <http://www.usregulars.com/>

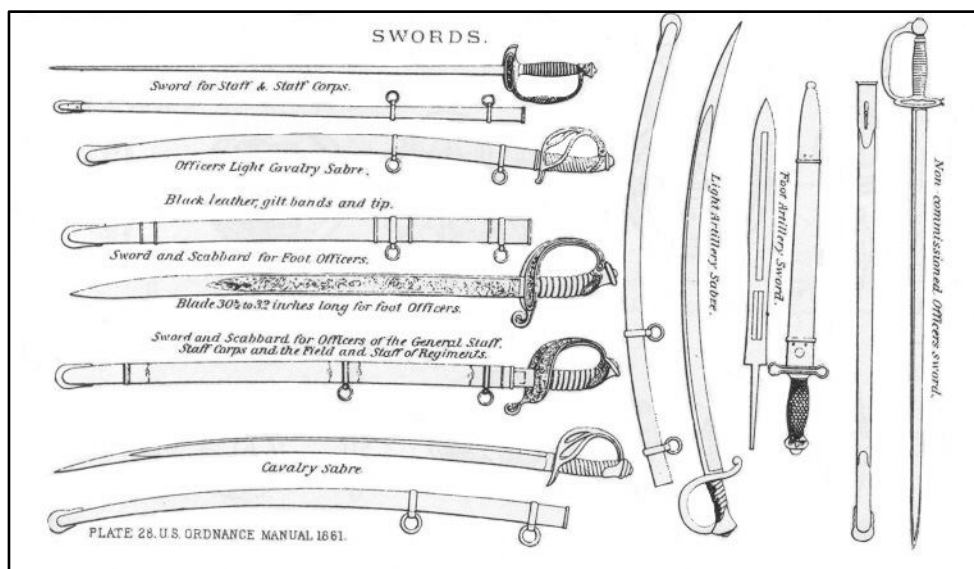


Figure 10: Sword Plate from the 1861 U.S. Ordnance Manual. Cavalry sabers were still practical weapons, as attested to by the records of soldiers wounded in cavalry clashes and James' own injury. Injuries inflicted by sabers outnumbered those by bayonet. Volunteer soldiers are reported to have had reservations about using the bayonet and their officers may have felt that hand-to-hand fighting resulted in a fragmentation of the fighting formation of their unit. <http://howardlanham.tripod.com/link11d.htm>

It must also have been difficult for the Dunn family to manage for three long years without James at home. Christina may have turned to her brother-in-law Archibald Dunn for support, and at the age of ten her son Archie may also have been able to contribute to the family income. In time for his youngest daughter's eighth birthday, James returned after having been demustered in Virginia (possibly in Berryville, 200 miles from Pittsburgh) on 31 August 1864. At the time, the regiment was involved with Sheridan's Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Fortunately, James had suffered only a saber wound to his left wrist. The fact that he had never sought medical care while in the field, however, gave the government reason to deny James the pension he had earned.

; hair, *black* ; eyes, *gray* ; that while in the service aforesaid, and in the line of his duty, he received the following wound or disability, and that he was
 2. *Sabr cut on left wrist severing the Radial Artery causing partial paralysis of the hand the same increasing with years*
There is a condition of chronic inflammation of the Retina of both eyes growing worse he tells me for the last 3 years. The present condition is almost total blindness

Figure 11: Affidavit of L.J. Walter, M.D. in Cawker City, KS, attesting to James Dunn's war wounds. Notarized 14 Nov 1874. "Sabre cut on left wrist severing the Radial Artery causing partial paralysis of the hand the same increasing with years. There is a condition of chronic inflammation of the Retina of both eyes growing worse he tells me for the last 3 years. The present condition is almost total blindness."

Muster and Descriptive Roll of a Detachment of Drafted Men and Substitutes forwarded

for the 9th Reg't N.S.V. Inf. 1st A.C. Roll dated
Apr. 26, 1865
Pittsburg Pa.

Where born *Scotland*

Age *42* y'rs; occupation *Laborer*

Drafted and mustered in:

When *March 27*, 1865.

Where *Pittsburg Pa.*

Period *1* years.

Eyes *Gray*; hair *Black*

Complexion *Dark*; height *5 ft. 6 1/2 in.*

Paid bounty and advance pay, \$*None*¹⁰⁰

Bounty due, \$*None*¹⁰⁰

Where credited

Company to which assigned *F*

Remarks *Substitute for Joseph Loughery*
Enrolled in Pitt. Twp. alle. Co. 22 C.D.
Pa. Recd at Rensselaer

Book mark: *1300*

Figure 12: Enlistment papers housed in the National Archives, Washington, D.C. Recto & verso of same card.

meet and negotiate with draftees who had the money to pay for a substitute. His physical characteristics were consistent in all paperwork associated with military duty, and he continued to present himself as eight years younger. At the age of 50, James and Joseph Loughery presented

Pittsburgh itself prospered during the Civil War, serving as a source of armaments, ammunition, and supplies for the Union Army, as well as being a critical hub for their transportation via the rivers and railways. Although it may have been possible for a veteran to earn a livelihood in this bustling city, the national cost of living had increased nearly 60% as the war escalated between 1861 and 1864. James thus chose to reenlist in the army seven months later, on 27 March 1865. This time, however, he offered himself as a substitute for another man, Joseph Loughery of Pitt Township for the fee of \$1050, worth as much as \$13,067 in today's dollars.¹⁰ James' substitute service is corroborated by family lore passed through the descendants of his son Archie.¹¹ The story also suggests that James was swindled out of the full payment for his substitution, leaving the family in dire straits. This may well have happened, for the going rate at the time for substitutions was \$2,000.¹² Because such arrangements tended to be private deals, there was little a soldier in the field could do to enforce it legally.

To make the deal, James would have appeared at the Pittsburgh recruitment center on the 27th of March, where volunteers such as he could

Company to which assigned

Remarks: *Money recd. & remitted 1050.00*
Money checked by paymaster 1050.00.
Sub. for Jos. Loughery enrolled in Pitt Twp.
Alleghy. Co. 22 Cong. D. Pa.

Book mark:

J. I. Baker

¹⁰ Comparative value of the US dollar in 1864 = \$12.445; <http://mykindred.com/cloud/TX/Documents/dollar/>

¹¹ Per Barb Belton, descendant of Archie Dunn and his second wife, Olive McNiell.

¹² Per John Deiss, Civil War pension expert working at the National Archives.

themselves as draftee and substitute at the formal draft rendezvous on 26 April 1865 to begin James' fourth year of military service. The enlistment document noted that James "Prefers 1st Army Corps, Maj. Genl Hancock's."

James' second tour of duty occurred just after Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House on 9 April 1865, President Lincoln's assassination on 14 April 1865, and shortly before the last battle was waged 12-13 May at Palmito Ranch in Texas. He began as a private, but was quickly promoted to corporal on 15 June 1865 "by order of Major Mitchell." According to the Company Muster Roll taken on 30 June 1865, he was present in Company F of the 9th Regiment of the U.S. Veteran Volunteers (Infantry). At that time he received \$3.00 for transportation. Clearly a model soldier, James was again promoted from corporal to sergeant on 28 September 1865.

The Dunn family was thus left to fend for itself while James spent a fourth year far from home assigned to guard the U.S. Capitol at Camp Stoneman, which is now the location of Bolling Air Force Base in Anacostia, Maryland.



Figure 13: Camp Stoneman, May 1864, now the location of Bolling Air Force Base in Anacostia, Maryland. Several distinctive "Sibley" tents are arranged on the low ground. The river between the camp and US Capitol (in the distant right center) is the Anacostia, and the bluffs where this was taken is now entirely residential. In fact, the buildings that were once St. Elizabeth's Mental Hospital command this view and are occupied by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security—a highly restricted location. Photo submitted to the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division by Craig Swain of Leesburg, VA. (Database Locator Identification Number: p30986)

Service in the Veteran Volunteer Corps at Camp Stoneman was likely much easier duty than were James' days as a cavalry private during the worst days of the "rebellion." Service in this Corps has been described as a virtual desk job, insofar as those chosen for this duty had already served their time in the proverbial trenches, and were not likely to be sent to the front lines.¹³ We have no record of his actual duties, although James would surely have witnessed the aftermath of the war as troops slowly found their way home and the government set about recuperating after the devastation wrought by four years of warfare, during which 620,000 soldiers and civilians were killed, and over 412,200 Union and Confederate soldiers were wounded.¹⁴

NEW LIFE IN THE WEST

How or where James' family survived the long years of the Civil War is still a mystery. Family history, however, suggests that in desperation, his wife Cristina made the difficult decision to move west to join relations. This may have occurred towards the end of James' second enlistment, for as an adolescent young Archie was called upon to fill his father's shoes as they loaded their worldly possessions onto a cart and took the road West to Ohio.

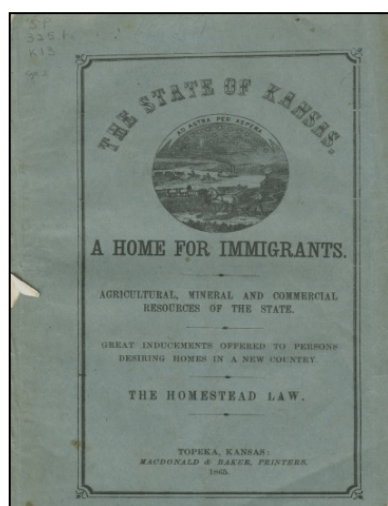


Figure 14: Promotional Pamphlet, ca. 1867. Kansas State Historical Society.

James Dunn was discharged from the Army on 26 March 1866 "by reason of expiration of term of service" in Indianapolis, Indiana. For practical reasons, it was a common practice to demuster large numbers of soldiers far from their duty stations. He was last paid his soldier's salary on 28 February 1866, and left the army with a clothing account balance due him of \$17.14. During his last year of service, he had thus been frugal and drawn only \$83.27 from his clothing allowance. By June James had located his family and they were making a new life in Fort Scott (Bourbon County) Kansas, approximately 100 miles south of Kansas City.¹⁵ Their arrival was coincident with the beginning

of a period of unprecedented growth in the American West.

Kansas Territory had become the 34th state in the Union just before the war, in 1861. Following the Homestead Act signed into law by Abraham Lincoln in 1862, and authorization by Congress in 1863 to proceed with the extinction of all Indian land titles in Kansas and make room for displaced tribes in Indian Territory (Oklahoma), there was a concerted effort to encourage rapid settlement of Kansas. The Dunns must have seen their share of the many promotional pamphlets in circulation at the time.¹⁶ It was the railroad that expedited this boom thanks to government support of the transcontinental railroad through its enactment of the Railroad Act of 1862. In fact, "the first railroad locomotive to operate in Kansas south of the Kaw River¹⁷ made its initial crossing of that river at Lawrence, 1 November 1867.

¹³ Per John Deiss, Civil War Pension expert working freelance at the National Archives.

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War#End_of_the_war_1864.E2.80.931865

¹⁵ Affidavit of Charles Norman, 17 December 1875, submitted by attorney J.B. Young to the department of the Interior Pension Office. Testimony of his personal acquaintance with J. Dunn from June 1866 to July 1872.

¹⁶ Figure 2 from: <http://www.kshs.org/research/collections/documents/online/westerntrails/index.htm#rrpams>

¹⁷ aka the Kansas River, which drains eastward into the Missouri River in Kansas City. Its name derives from the "Kansa" or "Kaw" people, who once inhabited this region.

Nosing of this 'iron horse' across the Kaw was a part of the first all-out construction race in the state to cash in on county bonds before a fixed deadline."¹⁸

After the Civil War, Fort Scott, the former military post critical for defending the Permanent Indian Frontier became the center of one of the largest towns in Kansas and ultimately the largest railroad center west of the Mississippi. This must have been an exciting time for a family looking for opportunities. Unfortunately, however, the saber wound on his left wrist and the inflammation from exposure during the war had left James partially disabled growing increasingly blind. According to the 1870 census, he had found work in Fort Scott as a teamster. But the testimony given in support of his application for Veterans benefits by his physicians in Fort Scott James stated unequivocally that he "was unable to gain his subsistence by labor" beginning in the fall of 1870.¹⁹

In July 1872, the Dunns moved 314 miles northwest to Mitchell County, perhaps lured by the promise of farmland for veterans. James and Cristina were, however, in their late fifties, and if their plans were to farm their own land, they could not have done so without their children

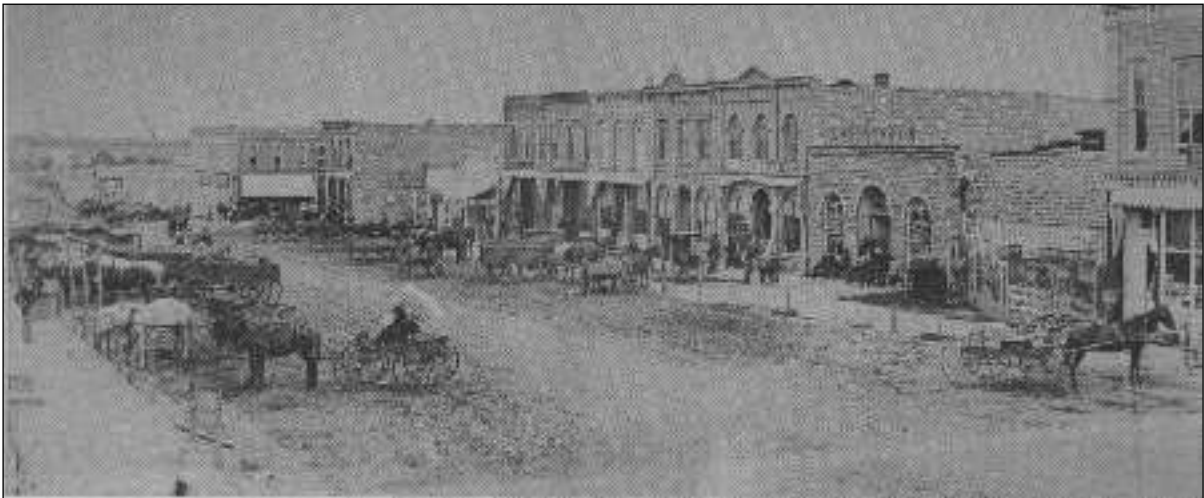


Figure 15: Cawker's Wisconsin Street, ca 1884; now Highway 24. From the History of Cawker City, KS.
<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/towns/Cawker/history.html>

¹⁸ Harald J. Henderson, *First Kansas Railroad South of the Kaw River*, August 1947 (Vol. 15, No. 3), pages 225-239. Transcription by Harriette Jensen; HTML composition by Tod Roberts; digitized with permission of the Kansas Historical Society. http://www.ksks.org/publicat/khq/1947/47_3_henderson.htm

¹⁹ Affidavit of S.A. Harrington, M.D. and W. A. Shannon, submitted 23 August 1875 to the US Department of the Interior Pension Office by attorney J.B. Young.

close by to help. At the age of 19, their older daughter Margaret married Marcus Lafayette Bangs in Mitchell County on 25 December 1873. Within six months, however, the newly-weds moved to the southern part of the state where M.L. was driving a stagecoach out of Winfield.

It was thus, that on 1 March 1875 in the Kansas State Census James (age 68²⁰) and son Archibald (22) were recorded as farmers in Cawker (Mitchell County). As James and his forefathers had done, they did not own the land that they were working. In addition to James and Archibald, the family consisted of Cristina (67²¹) and Lizzie (18). Although James did not report any personal estate, Archie had a nest egg worth \$165 (or about \$2,924 in 2005 currency).²² The entire family was literate, not necessarily the norm amongst the Kansas settlers at this time. The Dunns were part of the earliest Europeans to settle this territory, for the town of Cawker was first established in 1872, and incorporated 20 March 1874. The growing community quickly built schools, mills, banks, churches, as well as an opera house and a city auditorium. By 1880, the town's population reached its peak of 2,000.

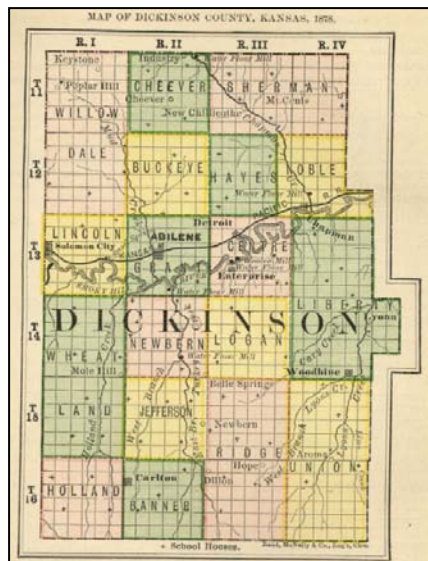


Figure 16: Dickinson County, Kansas circa 1878. Solomon City is located in the yellow block to the left margin labeled "Lincoln"

During the latter part of 1875, the family moved again, some 70-80 miles southwest to Solomon City²³, a new settlement to the west of Abilene, on the Solomon River in Dickinson County. This town may not have been a random choice, for it was on a direct stage line southwest from Cawker City

It is worth noting that for four years, from 1867 to 1871, Abilene served as the end point of the Chisholm Trail through which rough and boisterous cowboys drove hundreds of thousands of cattle north from Texas through

Indian Territory into Kansas. This industry attracted saloons and prostitutes, creating the archetypal cowtown. Solomon City—"the City of Wisdom"—however, was a quiet

community that boasted churches of several denominations, and actively recruited new settlers to cultivate wheat. It was also the last stop for the droves of wagon trains heading West.

The summer of 1876 witnessed the return of the 17-year locusts, and by August the invasion had reached Dickinson County. A circus even came to town in June. But it was also the nation's Centennial, and plans for the national celebration in Philadelphia and local festivities in Abilene and Solomon City dominated the local news. According to the *Kansas Gazette*, on 4 July 1876 in Solomon City,

"...bells rang, guns boomed, cannons roared, anvils chorused, men cheered, boys shouted, matrons laughed, maidens tee-heed, dogs barked, chickens crowed, horses neighed, sheep mewed, and a thousand Aeolian harps could not have created a greater diversity of sounds than broke upon that Centennial morn." (July 7, 1876, No. 17, p. 1)

²⁰ Note that the census taker was given an incorrect age; James was actually 61.

²¹ Christina's correct age was 60 at this time.

²² Comparative value of the US dollar in 1875, during what was called the "Long Depression" from 1872-97 = \$17.72. <http://mykindred.com/cloud/TX/Documents/dollar/>

²³ Today, the town is known simply as "Solomon."

194.847
James Dunn
 This claimant
 Cannot furnish
 Evidence required
 Why not dispose
 of it
 Was in no hospital
 Nor treated in the
 Service by any surgeon
 He has been informed
 a good many times
 about it
 J. B. Young
 ex

Figure 17 (left): Note on an envelope James Dunn's Pension Application file. Figure 18 (right): Note on another envelope reads, "No record and client can furnish no Officers. no Surgeon of regiment. Therefore rejected. July 22/76"

By 1876, James was completely blind and deteriorating rapidly. In desperation, two years earlier he had begun the tedious (and expensive) process of applying for Civil War Pension Benefits through the 1862 statute established to compensate disabled Union veterans. The statute stipulated "that only those soldiers whose disability was 'incurred as a direct consequence of . . . Military duty or developed after combat 'from causes which can be directly traced to injuries received or diseases contracted while in military service' could collect pension benefits. The amount of each pension depended upon the veteran's military rank and level of disability."²⁴

With his eyesight gone, and very limited use of his left hand, James launched an unsuccessful campaign to obtain a pension based on the wounds he suffered during the war. Waiting to file

No record
 No record and client
 Can furnish no Officers
 No Surg of regiment
 Therefore rejected
 July 22/76

an application until 1874 may reflect a certain personal pride, or his reluctance to solicit from government that he had served voluntarily. His pension file in the U.S. National Archives contains 43 documents, including official affidavits and applications, and a lengthy series of letters exchanged between his attorney J. B. Young, Esq. in Marion, Illinois, and various officials in the Department of the Interior Pension Office, Washington, D.C. The first was submitted 27 April 1874, followed by 21 exchanges until his death on 24 September 1876. In addition to affidavits from friends and physicians attesting to his poor health, his brother-in-law Adam Hardie (Christina's brother) in Pittsburgh bore witness to the fact that he was not injured prior to enlisting in 1861. Even James' sons-in-law, M.L. Bangs and William A. Kelley, signed some of the necessary affidavits. Bangs witnessed the original Invalid Pension Application on 29 July 1874, and Kelley witnessed James' declaration submitted on 19 January 1876.²⁵

²⁴ "Encyclopedia of the American Civil War" edited by David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, article by Jennifer L. Gross. <http://www.civilwarhome.com/pensions.htm>.

²⁵ Affidavit of James Dunn regarding his inability to furnish medical evidence required by the Pension Office because he was not treated for his injuries during his service, submitted 19 January 1876.

Among the various notes to the file scribbled on the backs of envelopes by dutiful secretaries in the Pension Office, was an undated and fairly dismissive statement: "This claimant cannot furnish evidence required...Why not dispose of it...was in no hospital nor treated in the service by any surgeon. He has been informed a good many times about it." (Figure 17) The last note during James' lifetime dated 22 July 1876, was a flat rejection, again jotted on the back of an envelope. (Figure 18)

According to descendants of James' daughter Lizzie, family stories relate that after the war he suffered from tuberculosis, and had to live in a shack behind the family home. Ophthalmologists confirm that the symptoms recorded in the pensions applications indicate that he had cataracts and that his tuberculosis could have caused both an early onset of cataracts and the inflammation of the retina. Given the abominable sanitary conditions and difficulties suffered by all Civil War soldiers, chances are very good that James brought that disease home from the war as well.

James Dunn died of "apoplexy" (most likely a stroke) at his home in Solomon City at the age of 62 on 24 September 1876. Government wheels apparently turned as slowly then as they do

perform the duties of an able-bodied soldier, *Enrolled*

25th Dist Pa

in such cases. This soldier has *Scar* eye

inches high.

Weight 165 lbs

Scar left wrist

Figure 19: Physical description from James Dunn's second enlistment in the Veteran Volunteer Corps, March 1865. Note the mention of the scar on his left wrist from a saber wound sustained during his first tour of duty. Records housed in the National Archives

now. Eight years later, on 11 February 1884, Adjunct Commissioner of the Department of the Interior Pension Office O.P. Bluth addressed a beautifully written letter to James Dunn of Cawker City, Kans, in which he effectively closed the case "because you were unable to furnish satisfactory evidence connecting your alleged disability with the U.S. service and line of duty." There is one final document that includes a correspondence between George B. Edgar of the

Figure 19: Physical description of James Dunn on the form submitted at his second enlistment in the Civil War. (US Archives)

Government Claim Agency in Lawrence, Kansas on 24 February 1884, addressed to Captain Charles Y. Gordon of the 6th Cavalry in Washington D.C. James' widow appears to have enlisted Edgar's help to find an officer of the 6th Regiment who could attest to her husband's wounds received during combat. Captain Gordon's response, written on the back of the same letter 23 March 1884, respectfully replied that "No information that can form the basis of a claim against the United States, can be given by anyone in the Military Service except through proper channels." In

Mr. James Dunn, of Solomon, died Saturday night, Sept. 23d. He had an attack of apoplexy about noon on Friday, from which time he continued to fail until his death. He was born in Scotland, in 1815, and came to the United States in 1847. He served in the war, after which he came to this State. Early in life he made a profession of faith in Christ, and his hope was a comfort to him to the last. He has gone to the long longed-for home.

Figure 20: Solomon Newspaper, Vol 3, No 19, Friday, September 29, 1876, on page 2 of the Dickinson County Chronicle, Abilene, Ks. of the same date.

predictably bureaucratic fashion, Captain Gordon politely recommended that the inquiry be addressed to the Commissioner of the Pension Office. It was not until a good six years later in 1890 that James' widow Christina renewed the family's efforts to obtain a pension. Correspondence on her behalf between 1890 and 1893 accounts for the remaining 20 documents in the file. Sadly, she died penniless in 1891, never having been able to qualify for government assistance.

in the service aforesaid in the line of duty.

Probable duration. The disability is _____

A more particular description of the applicant's condition is subjoined:

Particular description. Height, $5\frac{7}{4}$; weight, 165; complexion, Leath; age, 48; pulse, 65; respiration, 17

I find cicatrix commencing over the Styloid Process of ulna and reaching across the Scapoid bone. Producing but little deformity and no stiffness or weakness of joint perceptible. Disability is less than one fourth. I find on examination which is not alleged in the Order. Indistinct opacity of the Lenses of both eyes of a dark color right eye most effected Caloptic test gives but the ~~dark~~ erect image causing almost total Blindness Disability from the aforesaid cause is equal to the loss of a hand and foot or \$24 per month

I hereby certify that the examination was done by my own hand D.F. Eakin

D.F. Eakin
Examining Surgeon.

Figure 21: Examining surgeon's certificate by D.F. Eakin of James Dunn submitted 6 September 1874 from Beloit (Mitchell county), Kansas. "Indistinct opacity of the lenze of both eyes of a dark color right eye most effected caloptic test gives but the [ereat] image causing almost total Blindness..." Note that for the purposes of these applications, James still presented himself as much younger, in this case 11 years younger. (US National Archives)