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## HON. W. L. DUNCAN

Among the pioneer citizens of old Tishomingo County no one is entitled to more consideration and appreciative remembrance than the Hon. William Lane Duncan. For thirty-six years he was a conspicuous figure in the development of the county and on many occasions took the lead in matters of more than general interest to the citizens of the great "State of Tishomingo". As a man he was admired by all; while those who differed from him politically were forced to acknowledge him a foeman worthy of their steel. He was a fluent speaker, and few of his contemporaries cared to cross lances with him on the justings. He was opposed to secession, but after Mississippi had severed the ties binding the great commonwealth to the Federal union, he fell valiantly into line and worked unceasingly for the success of the Stars and Bars, and when the banner of Southern rights was furled, he assisted in bringing order out of chaos and helped to make it possible for the people to nobly build upon the ashes of the past.

William Lane Duncan was born in South Carolina in 1800. His facilities for acquiring an education were limited, but he made the best of such as were at hand. In the latter part of the 20's he, together with his father, Thomas Lane Duncan, and two uncles, John F. and E. Garner, emigrated to Russell's Valley, Alabama, and thence to Hardeman County, Tennessee. Thomas Duncan, after the surrender of the lands to the government

by the Chickasaws, moved to Pontotoc County, Mississippi, and before his death acquired an immense fortune. John F. Duncan moved to old Tishomingo County in 1834 and was elected a member of the first Board of Police of the county in the spring of 1836, serving two years. He later moved to Pontotoc County, where he resided the remainder of his life. E. Garner Duncan, Sr., moved to Tishomingo County in 1848, but only remained a short time, returning to Hardeman County, Tennessee, where he lived to the day of his death. Wm. L. Duncan was married to Miss Rebecca Null, in Hardeman County, Tennessee, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1839, and in 1842 moved to Tishomingo County, where he lived the remainder of his life. In October, 1845, he was elected sheriff of Tishomingo County, and was re-elected in October, 1847. During his first term he executed James Adams, the first person to be hung in the county, and while serving his second term hanged Adaline, a slave. He refused to make the race for a third term, but accepted the appointment as superintendent of the State penitentiary, but owing to ill health was unable to fill the position, resigning shortly after receiving the appointment. Mrs. Duncan died in 1852 and was buried in the Jacinto cemetery, and the same year Mr. Duncan embarked in the mercantile business in Jacinto with a Mr. Smith, and in 1857 purchased his partner's interest and conducted the business alone until 1859, when he moved to Corinth, forming a partnership with Mr. J. C. Terry. Their stock of goods was destroyed by the Federal army. Mr. Duncan was also an extensive buyer of cotton, and when the Confederates were preparing to evacuate Corinth he had 162 bales of cotton stored on the lot where the union freight depot is now located, and which were burned by order of Gen. Beauregard when the army left for Tupelo. When Gov. Pettus issued a call for sixty day troops in 1861, and designed Corinth as one of the points of mobilization, Mr. Duncan was appointed quartermaster, but he volunteers began to arrive before the governor had prepared the quartermaster for their reception, and as a result Mr. Duncan advanced \$5,000 with which to purchase supplies. Gov. Pettus, a few days later, forwarded Mr. Duncan \$50,000 and thereafter everything moved along like clock work. At the close of the war, Mr. Duncan was chosen to represent Tishomingo County in the State convention, July, 1865, and also served a term in the State Senate. He died on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August, 1876, and was laid to rest in the City cemetery, but was later disinterred and buried in Henry Cemetery.