



Kentucky's War of 1812: Capt. Isaac Cunningham

The Kentucky Historical Society's historical marker 2302 in Clark County commemorates Capt. Isaac Cunningham, a War of 1812 veteran who was among the first to cultivate bluegrass in Kentucky.

A Virginia native, Cunningham commanded a company of Clark and Bourbon County soldiers in Col. John Donaldson's regiment of the Kentucky Mounted Volunteer Militia during the War of 1812. After the war, Cunningham served in the Kentucky legislature in 1816 and 1827 and was a sheriff and Clark County magistrate.

Many notable men of the day, including Henry Clay, Gov. James Clark and Daniel Webster, visited Cunningham on his Clark County farm. He and his brother Robert brought bluegrass seed from Virginia and were some of the first Kentuckians to cultivate bluegrass. One early writer noted that "Their farm soon attracted the attention of their neighbors, who began to visit and learn how to manage [the bluegrass]." The family also raised shorthorn cattle and bred thoroughbred horses.

Cunningham died in 1842 and was buried on the family farm in Clark County.