

CAPTAIN WILLIAM ALEXANDER

Captain William Alexander was born in Bucks county, Pennsylvania, in the year 1749. He was long and well known in Mecklenburg county, N.C., among numerous other persons bearing the same name, as "Capt. Black Bill Alexander," from being the reputed leader of a small band of ardent patriots who, in 1771, blackened their faces, and destroyed the king's powder, on its way to Hillsboro, to obey the behests of a cruel and tyrannical governor. (For further particulars, see sketch of "Black Boys" of Cabarrus County.)

He first entered the service of the United States as captain of a company, in 1776, under Colonel Adam Alexander, and marched to the head of the Catawba River. The object of this expedition was to protect the valley of the Catawba from the incursions and depredations of the Cherokee Indians during the time the inhabitants were gathering in their harvest. He again entered the service: as captain, under Colonel Adam Alexander, General Rutherford commanding, and marched to the head of the Catawba River, and across the Blue Ridge Mountains, against the Cherokee Indians, who were completely routed and their towns destroyed, compelling them to sue for peace.

In 1780 he commanded a company under Col. Francis Locke, and marched from Charlotte for the relief of Charleston, but finding the city closely invested by the British army, the regiment fell back to Camden, and remained there until their three months' service had expired.

He again served a four months' tour as captain, under General Sumter, and was in the battles of Rocky Mount, Hanging Rock, and in the skirmish at Wahab's (now written Walkup's.)

He also served six weeks as captain under Colonel Thomas Polk, in the winter of 1775-6, known as the "Snow Campaign," against the Tory leader, Cunningham, in South Carolina.

He again served a three months' tour as captain in the Wilmington expedition, General Rutherford commanding, immediately preceding the battle of Guilford, but was not in that action, on account of an attack of small-pox.

He again marched with General Rutherford's forces against the Tories assembled at Ramsour's Mill, in Lincoln county, but the action having taken place shortly before their arrival, they assisted in taking care of the wounded and in burying the dead.

He again entered the service as captain, for ten months, under General Sumter, in Colonel Wade Hampton's regiment in South Carolina, and was the first captain who arrived with his men at the place of rendezvous.

He was also in the fight at the Quarter House, Monk's Corner, capture of Orangeburg, battle of Eutaw, and in numerous other minor but important services to his country.

Captain William Alexander resided on the public road leading to Concord, six miles east of Charlotte, where he died on the 19th of December, 1836, aged about eighty-seven years.

Source: Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical
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