

in the hands of his descendants. His grave and that of his wife may still be seen near his homestead.

HEZEKIAH ALEXANDER.

Four of the six Alexanders who signed the Mecklenburg Declaration were so well known in the county that they are still spoken of with reverence and affection. We know just where their homes were, and their graves are with us to this day. The principal transactions of their lives are recorded in history. But of the other two, Ezra and Charles, diligent enquiry has revealed nothing that is satisfactory from the oldest citizens. One informant was under the impression that they lived within the bounds of Providence, and were neighbors of Ezekiel Polk, and like him, were atheists. If this is true, they probably emigrated with him to Tennessee, carrying with them their circulating library or infidel literature, and so both they and their books disappeared and were a good riddance to their fellow citizens. Hezekiah and John McKnitt Alexander were brothers, and were near kinsman of the Brevard family. Hezekiah Alexander was born in Pennsylvania the 13th of January, 1722. By the Provincial Congress at Hillsboro (21st August, 1775) he was appointed with Griffin Rutherford, John Brevard and Benjamin Patton and others a Committee of Safety for the Salisbury District, which included Mecklenburg within its bounds. In April, 1776, he was appointed with William Sharp, again on a Council of Safety—an evidence of the great respect inspired by his intellect and integrity. He afterwards held the position of paymaster to the Fourth Regiment of North Carolina Continentals, of which Thomas Polk was colonel, James Thackston lieutenant-colonel, and William Lee Davidson major. In November, 1776, he was elected a member of the Provincial Congress from Mecklenburg with Waightstill Avery, Robert Irwin, John Phifer, Zaccheus Wilson as colleagues, which assembly formed the Constitution of North Carolina. He died in

1801, and is buried in Sugar Creek church graveyard. His house, a stone building of good proportions, is still standing, about four miles from Charlotte, near the old Potter road, a highway that was in use before our town was laid off or located. The old house has a great cavern of a cellar where tradition says Mrs. Hezekiah Alexander used to store the rich products of the farm, many jars of honey being part of their contents. Just in front of the cellar door is, or used to be, a large flat stone; and upon this stone the British soldiers broke all the jars of honey which they could not carry away with them. They would not leave anything for the old rebel and his family. There is a beautiful spring near the house with a stone arch built over it, a stone spring house for dairy purposes, whose size indicates that milk, butter and cheese must have been so abundant as to require considerable room.

Like all the colonial homes, a meadow was near by—probably once smooth and green and a thing of rare beauty, but now defaced with corn furrows and rough stalks of stubble left by the last crop. Tradition states that the two daughters of Hezekiah Alexander were very beautiful women. Mrs. Captain Cook, who was deputed by the town to entertain Gen. Washington when he was the town's guest in 1791, was considered a good judge of female beauty, having seen much of the world, and she said she had never seen any beauties who equaled these two Misses Alexander. One of them married Charley Polk and met a very tragic fate. Her husband was cleaning his gun in her room (where she was sitting with her child in her arms), when it went off and killed her. He subsequently announced his intention of marrying his beautiful sister-in-law, but her brothers objected very decidedly, and his own brothers also interfered to prevent the marriage, and he had to give it up. Daredevil as he was, he could not dare everything. The lady died unmarried. Waightstill Avery, the friend of Hezekiah Alexander, made his home at his house during his residence in Mecklenburg, and rode into town every day to his law

office. The sons of the family did not think it safe to remain at home during the occupation of Charlotte by the British, as foraging parties might be expected at any time, but of course had to return occasionally for their supplies; and their mother used to hang a signal from one of the upper windows when she thought it safe for them to come home. On the walls of the house may be seen the date of its erection, 1774.

JOHN M'KNITT ALEXANDER.

No man in Mecklenburg county in Colonial times seems to have had more of the confidence and love of his fellow-citizens (or rather fellow sufferers) than John McKnitt Alexander. His devoted piety, his open-handed and never-ceasing hospitality, and excellent good sense made him a leader among the best class of the community. His grandson, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsay, the well-known historian of Tennessee, tells that when Ochiltree, the traitor, found that Cornwallis was preparing to leave Charlotte, he knew that the citizens would punish him as he deserved, for accepting from the enemies of his country the office of Quartermaster after having signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. He had grown rich in his mercantile dealing with the Mecklenburg people and was loath to leave the property he had accumulated here. He determined to appeal to John McKnitt Alexander for protection, as being the kindest-hearted and most influential man in the county. So, on the night previous to the evacuation he mounted his horse and rode nine miles up what is called the Statesville road to the house of Alexander, but found no one at home except Mrs. Alexander and her children and servants. She knew him well, having bought goods from him for years as a merchant, and refused to admit him and refused to tell him where her husband was. He pledged the honor of a British officer that his intentions were good, and reached his sword to her through the window as a guarantee of his