

Robert Irwin

Robert Irwin was a distinguished officer, and performed important military service during the Revolutionary War. In 1776, he and William Alexander each, commanded a regiment under General Rutherford, in the expedition from Mecklenburg, Rowan, Lincoln, and other counties, to subdue the Cherokee Indians, who were committing murders and numerous depredations upon the frontier settlements.

After the fall of Charleston many of the unsubdued Whigs sought shelter in North Carolina. Early in July, 1780, General Sumter had taken refuge in Mecklenburg county, and having enlisted a considerable number of brave and dashing recruits in that chivalric region, returned to South Carolina prepared for new and daring exploits. Soon thereafter, accompanied by Colonels Neal, Irwin, Hill and Lacy, he made a vigorous assault against the post of Rocky Mount, but failed in reducing it for the want of artillery. After this assault General Sumter crossed the Catawba, and marched with his forces in the direction of Hanging Rock. In the engagement which took place there, and, in the main successful, the right was composed of General Davie's troops, and some volunteers under Major Bryan; the centre consisted of

Colonel Irwin's Mecklenburg Militia, which made the first attack; and the left included Colonel Hill's South Carolina Regulars.[G]

In 1781 Colonel Irwin commanded a regiment under General Rutherford, in the Wilmington campaign. He was a delegate to the Provincial Congress, which met at Halifax, on the 4th of April, 1776, with John McKnitt Alexander and John Phifer as colleagues. He was again a delegate to the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax, on the 12th of November, 1776, which body formed our first Constitution. His last civil services were as Senator from Mecklenburg county, in 1797, -'98-'99 and 1800. For many years he was a worthy and influential Elder of the Presbyterian Church at Steele Creek. He died on the 23rd of December, 1800, aged sixty-two years.

Source: Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical
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