

John Phifer

John Phifer was born in Cabarrus county (when a part of Bladen) in 1745. He was the son of Martin Phifer, a native of witzerland, and of Margaret Blackwelder. He raised a numerous family, who inherited the patriotic spirit of their ancestors. The original spelling of the name was Pfeifer. He resided on "Dutch Buffalo" Creek, at the Red Hill, known to this day as "Phifer's Hill." He was the father of General Paul Phifer, grandfather of General John N. Phifer of Mississippi, and great grandfather of General Charles H. Phifer, a distinguished officer in the battle of "Shiloh," in the late war between the States.

At the Provincial Council, held at Johnston Court House in December, 1775, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the first battalion of "Minute Men," in the Salisbury District; General Griffith Rutherford, Colonel, and John Paisley, Major. He was a member of the Provincial Congress which met at Hillsboro on the 21st of August, 1775, associated with Thomas Polk, Waightstill Avery, James Houston, Samuel Martin and John McKnitt Alexander; and also of the Congress which met at Halifax on the 4th of April, 1776, with Robert Irwin and John McKnitt Alexander.

By this latter body, he was appointed Lieutenant Colonel of the regiment commanded by Colonel Adam Alexander. He was also a member of the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax in November, 1776, which formed our first Constitution, associated with Hezekiah Alexander, Waightstill Avery, Robert Irwin and Zaccheus Wilson, as colleagues. He married Catharine Barringer, which latter name was originally spelled Behringer.

It was on the plantation of John Phifer, three mile west of Concord, that the gallant band of "Black Boys," headed by Captain 'Black Bill Alexander' of Sugar Creek, aided by the Whites and others from the neighboring congregation of Rocky River, effected their memorable achievement in 1771, of destroying the king's powder, which was on its way from Charleston to Hillsboro to be used by a tyrannical Governor. The reader should bear in mind this blackening of faces, to prevent detection, was in the spring of 1771, when the patriotic sentiment of this country had not ripened into that state of almost entire unanimity which characterized it, and the State generally, four years later. John Phifer filled an early grave, and lies buried at the "Red Hill," on the Salisbury road, where a decaying headstone, scarcely legible, marks the last resting-place of this true patriot.

Source: Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical
by Author: C. L. Hunter