

Overcome in battle from time to time, the rebels ^{which} escaped to the mountains and swamps; and, when the English troops were gone, collected again their forces and began over the desultory warfare. In this they often received assistance from Spain, France, and Scotland. When James VI. of Scotland succeeded Elizabeth on the throne of England, and the islands of Great Britain and Ireland were under a single monarch called James I., he gave much consideration to the confused affairs of northern Ireland. Six counties of Ulster were confiscated to the crown. The native Irish inhabitants were transplanted from the mountains to the flat country and their places were filled with colonists partly from England, but chiefly from Scotland. This was called the Plantation of Ulster. "In the first fifty years of their settling they numbered 200,000."¹⁴¹ Beginning as early as 1606 it was principally effected in 1613. For many years afterwards and especially during the rule of Oliver Cromwell, Scotch emigrants in considerable numbers settled in Ulster. There the fanaticism of the Scotch Presbyterian refused to coalesce with the fanaticism of the Irish Catholic. The methodical, steady, calculating and thrifty Scot and the impulsive, impetuous, careless, improvident and volatile Irishman possessed little attraction for each other. Living side by side in Ireland they remained and remain apart as persistently as do the Gentiles and Jews of other places.¹⁴²

"Some time after the quenching of the great Rebellion in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, more than half a million of acres in the north of Ireland were at the disposal of the

¹⁴¹ D. A. Thompkin's History of Mecklenburg County, 1903, 17.

¹⁴² 14 Encyclopaedia Britannica, 11th edition, 775-777; Harrison's Scot in Ulster, 1888, 5-46; 27 Columbian Cyclopaedia, 1897, "Scotch-Irish"; Hume's His. Eng., c. 46; 1 Wright's His. Ireland, 272-608; Haverty's His. Ireland, 1867, 455-460; McLean's Highlanders in America, 1900, 42-43; 3 Wright's His. Scotland, 157; 1 Hanna's Scotch-Irish, 1902, 498-505; Foote's Sketches of North Carolina, 1846, 84-108; Case of Ireland Stated Historically, 1880, 42-112; C. Taylor's Gulliver's Travels, 1840, 29.

English Crown. Part of this territory had been the property of the O'Neills, and the numerous branches of that great and ancient family, and part of the O'Donalds, who held princely eminence in Tyrconnell, or Donegal. After the later insurrection of Sir Cahir O'Dogherty, another chief of Donegal, and its suppression in the year 1608, the whole country fell to the King, under the law of forfeiture or escheat. At the same time, five other northern counties suffered a like doom, namely, Tyrone, the principality of O'Neill,—Derry, O'Cahan's country—Fermanagh, Maguire's,—Cavan, O'Reilly's,—and Armagh, the property of the Clanbrassil O'Neills and of the O'Hanlans; these chiefs and their followers were put under attain, and their lands forfeited; hence arose, in 1610, the Plantation of the Ulster with English and Scotch settlers, who were generally soldiers of fortune, professional adventurers, or cadets of good families. Many of them found their way into Donegal, and these may be distinguished into two kinds, viz., those who arrived in the suppression of O'Donnell's rebellion at the end of Elizabeth's reign; and those who 'settled' under James I. in 1610; the former were almost all of English descent, whereas the latter were Scotch."¹⁴³ "The commerce of Ireland, after two devastating civil wars, cannot have been extensive, or of a magnitude which ought to have excited the envy or fear of England; but in the end of the seventeenth century the state of England was not a prosperous one, and her woollen manufacturers imagined that competition from Ireland was injuring them. The consequence was that in 1698, Parliament petitioned William III. to have laws enacted for the protection of the English woollen manufacture by the suppression of the Irish; and accordingly, next year Government passed an Act through the Irish Parliament, which

¹⁴³ 1 Sir Bernard Burke's Vicissitudes of Families, 1883, pp. 350-351.

was utterly subservient, forbidding any exportation of Irish woollen from the country. It was afterwards followed by Acts forbidding the Irish to export their wool to any country save England—the English manufacturers desiring to get the wool of the sister kingdom at their own price.”¹⁴⁴ There were also acts against Presbyterians in Ireland.¹⁴⁵ Lord Macaulay’s description of the English in the north of Ireland at the time of the memorable siege of Londonderry, 1688-1689, seems to have been intended to apply equally to the Scotch-Irish there then. He remarks that “The English inhabitants of Ireland were an aristocratic caste, which had been enabled by a superior civilization, by close union, by sleepless vigilance, by cool intrepidity, to keep in subjection a numerous and hostile population. Almost every one of them had been in some measure trained both to military and to political functions. Almost every one was familiar with the use of arms, and was accustomed to bear a part in the administration of justice. It was remarked by contemporary writers that the colonists had something of the Castilian haughtiness of manner, though none of the Castilian indolence, that they spoke English with remarkable purity and correctness, and that they were, both as militiamen and as jurymen, superior to their kindred in the mother country. In all ages men situated as the Anglo-saxons in Ireland were situated have had peculiar vices and peculiar virtues, the vices and virtues of masters, as opposed to the vices and virtues of slaves. The member of a dominant race is, in his dealings with the subject race, seldom indeed fraudulent,—for fraud is the resource of the weak,—but imperious, insolent, and cruel. Towards his brethren, on the other hand, his conduct is generally just, kind, and even noble. His selfrespect leads him to

¹⁴⁴ J. Harrison’s *The Scot in Ulster*, 1888, 88.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 88-89; 1 D. A. Thompkins’s *History of Mecklenburg County*, 1903, 17.

respect all who belong to his own order. His interest impels him to cultivate a good understand with those whose prompt, strenuous, and courageous assistance may at any moment be necessary to preserve his property and life. It is a truth ever present to his mind that his own wellbeing depends on the ascendancy of the class to which he belongs. His very selfishness therefore is sublimed into public spirit: and this public spirit is stimulated to fierce enthusiasm by sympathy, by the desire of applause, and by the dread of infamy. For the only opinion which he values is the opinion of his fellows; and in their opinion devotion to the common cause is the most sacred of duties.”¹⁴⁶ Except in the matter of insolence and cruelty, in which the people of the Old South were singularly lacking, this description might, from its aptness and accuracy, have been written about the inhabitants of the Confederate States of America, a great many of whom were of Scotch-Irish extraction and most of whom regarded their servants and dependants with considerate kindness.

While James I. was planting his Scotch settlements in Ulster some of his English subjects were establishing their first permanent American settlement at Jamestown. When then in the reign of William III. laws enacted by a British parliament oppressed these colonists of Ulster and ruined their manufactures and commerce, thousands of these people sought homes in the untried regions of the western world. The feelings which dominated these removals to America were of the same character as those which at a very little later day influenced removals to the same regions of the New World by their relations and close neighbors the Scotch of the Hebrides and the nearby portions of the main land of Scotland. Boswell, speaking of his visit to the Hebrides in 1773 in company with Doctor Samuel Johnson

¹⁴⁶ 3 Macaulay’s *History of England*, c. 12.

the island of Sky, "We performed, with much dance which I suppose, the emigration from Sky personified. They call it *America*. Each of the couples, with their arms round the necks of their partners, move round in a circle, till all are in motion; and the dance seems intended to show how emigration catches, till a whole neighbourhood is set afloat. Mrs. McKinnon told me, that last year, when a ship sailed from Portree for America the people on shore were almost distracted when they saw their relations go off; they lay down on the ground, tumbled, and tore the grass with their teeth. This year there was not a tear shed. The people on the shore seemed to think that they would soon follow."¹⁴⁷ Most of these emigrants went to the vicinity of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey; many, however, landing at Charlestown in South Carolina. Thus in 1698, 20,000 of them left Ulster for America and in 1729 there arrived in Philadelphia 6,308 aliens, of whom 5,655 were from Ireland and the great part of these from Ulster.¹⁴⁸ In Pennsylvania fanaticism again encountered fanaticism and theories of government clashed with theories of government. Scotch Presbyterians quarreled with English Quakers.¹⁴⁹ Maryland and Pennsylvania had been widely advertised over Europe as permitting to their inhabitants unlimited "liberty of conscience," boundless freedom of conduct, and great facilities for the acquisition of wealth. Almost all these new arrivals took up homes in the region about Philadelphia or on the western borders of the settlements. There they were known as

¹⁴⁷ Life of Johnson, c. 40.

¹⁴⁸ 1 D. A. Thompkins's *History of Mecklenburg County*, 1903, 17; 27 *Columbian Cyclopedia*, 1897, "Scotch-Irish"; 1 *Greg's History of the United States*, 1887, 152; 2 *Hanna's Scotch-Irish*, 1902, 60-93, 9-13.

¹⁴⁹ McCrady's *South Carolina Under Royal Government*, 1899, 311-312; 4 *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 1894, 716; *Harris's Biographical History of Lancaster County*, 1872, 525-530; 1 *Ashe's History of North Carolina*, 1908, 277.

Scotch-Irish, a designation still borne by their descendants wherever they may be. Then they learned that the glowing accounts disseminated throughout Europe about the attractions and advantages of this new land were at best exaggerations. Farming was practically the only industry and the best farming lands were all occupied. The government was exclusively in the hands of Quakers who were generally selfish in character, morose in temperament, conceited in opinion, and bigotted in their peculiar conceptions and gloomy customs. It was doubtful whether or not the condition of these immigrants had been improved by their removal to America. Disappointment and dissatisfaction prevailed among them. Many Germans had preceded them. The Indians were hostile. The Scotch-Irish were favored by neither. "They were the buffer between the Indians in front, and the Quaker and German who crept along quietly in the rear, and who thus saved their hands from rough toil and their hides from being punctured with arrows by keeping well in the background. These were quite content to follow softly in the rear and take quiet possession of lands that braver men had to fight for. What wonder that these hardy pioneers should have had so hearty a contempt for the stolid 'Pennsylvania Dutchman,' and sleek and oily Quakers? They reasoned that if nobody but these and their like had come to the country, it would have continued to be a howling wilderness. The Quakers did not like the Scotch-Irish, and no doubt the feeling was reciprocated with interest. Col. McClure says, 'The Quakers wanted the Scotch-Irish immigration stopped, and sent a petition to the council of Pennsylvania asking for this and declaring that the Scotch-Irish were a pernicious and pugnacious people.' The Quakers provoked warfare, and then left the Scotch-Irish to fight it out. They would go among the Indians and trade with them, giving them

which to kill the Scotch-Irish, who settled on the border simply because they wanted from the Quakers. The Quakers complained Scotch-Irish wanted to dominate everything round Well, of course they did. There never was a Irish community anywhere that did not want to dominate everything round about it. They dominated simply because in the nature of things it could not be otherwise.¹⁵⁰ Then hundreds of the Scotch-Irish set out once more in search of homes adapted to their views. From eastern Pennsylvania and that adjacent part of Cecil County of Maryland which was claimed by Pennsylvania until the famous Mason and Dixon's line war run in 1763-1767 and from the adjoining parts of New Jersey and Delaware they passed across the narrow neck of western Maryland and over the Patomac River and formed about 1735 or 1737 the first settlements, together with emigrant Germans from the same regions, in the Valley of the Shenandoah or Valley of Virginia.¹⁵¹ Families of them, from about 1740 to 1750 and later, still moving southward, established themselves in the piedmont portions of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia and west of the Appalachian Mountains in what is now the State of Tennessee.¹⁵² There they met the Scotch-Irish who, landing at Charlestown, were advancing as settlers into the "up-

¹⁵⁰ J. W. Dinsmore's *Scotch-Irish in America*, 1906, 37-39.

¹⁵¹ 1 Ashe's *History of North Carolina*, 1908, 276; W. H. Foote's *Sketches of North Carolina*, 1846, 187-188; 2 Hanna's *Scotch-Irish*, 1907, 25-50, 94-120, 128-130; W. H. Foote's *Sketches of Virginia*, 2nd series, 1856, 13-17; J. Rumble's *History of Rowan County*, 1881, 24-29.

¹⁵² W. H. Foote's *Sketches of North Carolina*, 1846, 187-188; Rumble's *History of Rowan County*, 1881, 22-23; 1 J. W. Moore's *History of North Carolina*, 1880, 6481; 1 Washington Irving's *Life of Washington*, c. 5; 4 *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 1886, xxi., xxii., 1312; Thomas Hutchin's *Topographical Description*, Hicks's edition, 1904, map; 5 *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 1887, 13; Clewell's *History of Wachovia in North Carolina*, 1902, 15-17; McLean's *Highlanders in America*, 1900, 40-61; 2 Hanna's *Scotch-Irish*, 1907, 25-44.

country."¹⁵³ From these abodes the Scotch-Irish have scattered over the United States.

Then came the struggle for independence in British colonies in America. Foremost of those who sought this independence were the Scotch-Irish of the South. Two thousand of them in the North Carolina county of Orange and adjoining territory assembled in resistance to the exactions of the colonial government; and, on May, 16, 1771, these met the royal forces under Colonel William Tryon, then the royal governor of that province, on the banks of Alamance Creek, now in the County of Alamance near Burlington. The battle was the first fight of the American Revolution. It lasted two hours. The insurgents, who called themselves Regulators, were without training, arms, officers, experience, and military skill. They were defeated but won renown as the first to imperil life and fortune in behalf of American freedom.¹⁵⁴ Scotch-Irish of North Carolina in Mecklenburg, Rowan and nearby counties, some of whom had been Regulators, by the famous Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775, and the equally radical Resolves of May 31, 1775, made the first declarations of independence in America.¹⁵⁵ Nor were these Scotch-Irish less active and

¹⁵³ J. B. O. Landrum's *History of Spartanburg County*, 1900, 10.

¹⁵⁴ W. D. Cooke's *Revolutionary History of North Carolina*, 1853, 13-41.

¹⁵⁵ J. S. Jones's *Defence*, 1834; J. S. Jones's *Memorials*, 1838; Foote's *Sketches of North Carolina*, 1846, 33-45; Hunter's *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, 1877, 22-59; 2 Martin's *History of North Carolina*, 1829, 372-376; Cooke's *Revolutionary History of North Carolina*, 1853, 45-98; J. H. Moore's *Defence of the Mecklenburg Declaration*, 1908; W. A. Graham's *Mecklenburg Centennial Address*, 1875; 1 Wheeler's *History of North Carolina*, 1851, 69-70; J. W. Moore's *History of North Carolina*, 1880, 186-192; Garden's *Anecdotes*, 2nd series, 1828, 7-10; Wheeler's *Reminiscences*, 1884, 227-228, 241-243, 261-263, 281-282; Johnson's *Traditions*, 1851, 76-81; Kirkland and Kennedy's *Historical Camden*, 1900, 326, 342-343; J. B. Alexander's *History of Mecklenburg County*, 1902, 27-51; Robert Henry's *Statement*, Asheville Citizen, July 2, 1898; 1 D. A. Thompkins's *History of Mecklenburg County*, 1903, 43-51; Smith's *Western North Carolina*, 252-258; W. A. Graham's *General Joseph Graham*, 1904, 36-42; Gilmer's *Georgians*, 1855, 223-227; 2 *Papers of Archibald D. Murphey*, 196-202; 4 Washington Irving's *Life of Washington*, 1884 ed., 90-91, 196-197; 3 R. Hildreth's *History of the United States*, 1849, 73-74;

determined in the fighting which followed and was soon brought within their own borders. This devotion to the cause of American States and the courage exhibited in maintaining that cause became a subject of bitter invective on the part of officers of the invading armies. Colonel Banistre Tarleton, one of the most distinguished of Lord Cornwallis's subordinates in the invasion, wrote: "It was evident and it had been frequently mentioned to the King's officers, that the counties of Mecklenburg and Rohan were more hostile to England than any others in America."¹⁵⁶ On his first invasion of North Carolina Lord Cornwallis, in the autumn of 1780, remained at Charlotte sixteen days "during which time his position fully justified him in naming that town 'The Hornet's Nest.'"¹⁵⁷ "These Anglo-Caledonians constituted the flower of the Revolutionary army, remaining constant to their engagements at times when mutiny and desertion prevailed among the provincial levies," says a British writer.¹⁵⁸

At the commencement of the Revolutionary War in 1775 the Scotch-Irish had increased to such an extent that they constituted a very large element of the population in the revolting colonies. Ever since they have grown in numbers at a surprising rate, and their weight and influence in social, commercial, educational, and political institutions in all their places of abode have ever exceeded

¹⁵⁶ Tarleton's Campaigns, 1787, 160.

¹⁵⁷ I. D. A. Thompkins's History of Mecklenburg County, 1903, 62.

¹⁵⁸ A. Johnston's Myths of the American Revolution, 1908, 68.

1 T. Pitkin's United States, 1828, 351-352; A. H. Stephen's Pictorial History of the United States, 1882, 223-224; A. H. Stephen's School History of the United States, 1888, 182; 2 Lossing's Fieldbook of the Revolution, 1860, 411-417; 11 New American Cyclopaedia, 1869, 330; A. Graydon's Memoirs (1846), J. S. Littell, Editor, 323, note; Our Living and Our Dead, June, 1875, Vol. 2, No. 4, General Bradley T. Johnson, of Maryland, pages 424-428; C. L. Hunter in Southern Literary Messenger, November, 1839, Vol. 5, No. 11, pages 748-751; Johnstone Jones in Our Living and Our Dead, Vol. 3, August, No. 2, pages 187-199, September, No. 3, pages 336-345, October No. 4, pages 474-481, November, No. 5, pages 604-611, 1875, December, No. 6, pages 720-728, containing an elaborate summary of the evidence.

their numerical strength. From them have sprung hundreds of the most illustrious Americans. Among these were such men as Andrew Jackson, Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis, John C. Breckenridge, William H. Crawford, John C. Calhoun, and others worthily known to fame. Since the Revolutionary War they have been foremost in colonizing the wilderness and building the States. After that war the trend of Scotch-Irish migration was toward the west and they composed there a large and important portion of the pioneers who settled and created the States of the vast Mississippi Valley. Later they became a large element in all the States west of that valley. A multitude of volumes record the doings of the Scotch-Irish in the United States.

In the migrations of the Scotch-Irish those who came from the north met near the borders of North and South Carolina those who had landed at Charlestown, and from the countries over which these migrations had travelled have largely been distributed in America the scions of that remarkable race. In their migrations to the south they settled in the early half of the eighteenth century the greater part of North Carolina which became the counties of Orange and Mecklenburg and Rowan and the numerous counties which have been carved out from them.

The Scotch-Irish began to settle in what became Mecklenburg County about 1740,¹⁵⁹ but increased in 1742 and greatly from 1750 to 1756.¹⁶⁰ Probably the most numerous of these were Alexanders. "In the list of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of the 20th of May, 1775, six bear the name of Alexander, and a *host* of others, officers and privates, honored the name in their heroic achievements during the Revolutionary war."¹⁶¹ Abraham Alex-

¹⁵⁹ J. B. Alexander's History of Mecklenburg County, 1902, 9.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 9-10.

¹⁶¹ C. L. Hunter's Sketches of Western North Carolina, 1877, 61.

ander was chairman and John McKnitt Alexander was a secretary of the convention which passed that declaration.¹⁶² The name is remarkably common in that county until this day. Mecklenburg County was formed from Anson County in 1762.¹⁶³ Rowan County was formed as a county from a territory in which the Scotch-Irish began to settle in or a little before 1740. Isabella Ramsay Davidson, widow of Robert Davidson, came from Pennsylvania with her two children and settled in North Carolina on Yadkin River near what is now Salisbury in the present Rowan County;¹⁶⁴ and that was in 1740.¹⁶⁵ Other families were living west of the Yadkin in 1745.¹⁶⁶ Rowan County was formed from Anson County in 1753.¹⁶⁷ Iredell County was formed from Rowan in 1788.¹⁶⁸ Burke County was formed from Rowan County in 1777.¹⁶⁹ From Mecklenburg County was formed Tryon County in 1768,¹⁷⁰ but Tryon County was abolished and the territory made into the two counties of Lincoln and Rutherford in 1779.¹⁷¹

“About the year 1735 John Alexander married Margaret Gleason, a ‘bonnie lassie’ of Glasgow, and shortly afterward emigrated to the town of Armagh in Ireland. About 1740, wishing to improve more rapidly his worldly condition, he emigrated with his rising family, two nephews, James and Hugh Alexander, and their sister who was married to a Mr. Polk, to America, and settled in Nottingham, Chester county, Pa. These two nephews, and their brother-

¹⁶² Ibid., 23.

¹⁶³ Rumble's History of Rowan County, 1881, 21; 1 Revisal of 1821, 221-222.

¹⁶⁴ J. B. Alexander's History of Mecklenburg County, 1902, 11.

¹⁶⁵ William A. Graham's General Joseph Graham, 1904, 166.

¹⁶⁶ Rumble's History of Rowan County, 1881, 23.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 21; 1 Revisal of 1821, 192.

¹⁶⁸ 2 Wheeler's History of North Carolina, 1851, 214; 1 Revisal of 1821, 593.

¹⁶⁹ F. A. Sondley's Asheville and Buncombe County, 1922, 63; 1 Revisal of 1821, 273-274.

¹⁷⁰ 1 Revisal of 1821, 238.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 381.

in-law, Polk, soon afterward emigrated to Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, then holding forth flattering inducements for settlement. These families, of Scotch-Irish descent, there prospered in their several callings, and early imbibed those principles of civil and religious liberty which stamped their impress on themselves and their descendants, and shone forth conspicuously preceding and during the American Revolution.

“About the time of this emigration of the Alexanders to North Carolina, John Alexander moved to Carlisle, Cumberland county, Pa. While he resided there his son James (James the first) married ‘Rosa Reed,’ of that place. Soon after his marriage he left Carlisle, and settled on ‘Spring Run,’ having purchased a tract of land which covered ‘Logan’s Springs,’ where the celebrated Mingo chief, Logan, then lived. After Logan’s death he moved to the Springs, which valuable property is still owned by the Alexander heirs.

“John Alexander, partaking of the roving spirit of the age, left Carlisle, and finally settled in Berkeley county, Va., where he purchased a large farm, and spent the remainder of his days. His son James had twelve children, seven sons and five daughters. One of his daughters, Rachel, married Joseph Vance, of Virginia, the ancestor of ex-Governor Vance, of Ohio, and other descendants. He gave Vance a farm of three hundred acres as an inducement to settle near him. Vance accepted the gift, and soon afterward removed to the farm; but Indian troubles breaking out at that time, he sold his possession and returned to Virginia, selecting a location near Martinsburg.

“James Alexander (James the second) had four sons and six daughters. The eldest son (James the third) married his cousin Celia, youngest daughter of Robert Alexander, of whom was a descendant Robert Alexander (per-

haps a son), a captain in the Revolution, who married Mary Jack, third daughter of Patrick Jack, of Charlotte, and settled in Lincoln county, where he died in 1813.

"James Porterfield Alexander (James the fourth), and son of James the third, married Annie Augusta Halsey, granddaughter of the Hon. Jeremiah Morton, and resides, in this centennial year, on the St. Cloud plantation, Rapidan Station, Culpeper county, Va.

"Hugh Alexander, son of James the first, married Martha Edmundson, settled in Sherman's Valley, Pa., and had a large family. He died at Independence Hall, Philadelphia, while sitting as a member to form a State Constitution."¹⁷² The Alexanders are an old Scotch family. One of their ancestors held the dignity of Lord Provost of Edinburgh, early in the seventeenth century."¹⁷³ There is an Alexander County in North Carolina named for the Alexanders.¹⁷⁴ John Alexander was probably a brother of the Robert Alexander mentioned above as having married Mary Jack and died in 1813, and was probably born in Pennsylvania or Maryland. John Alexander might have been a son or near relative of James Alexander, one of the first settlers of Salisbury, North Carolina, where he died in 1754.¹⁷⁵ He married Rachel Davidson, daughter of John Davidson and sister of the John Davidson whom the Cherokees murdered and of the Samuel Davidson whom the Cherokees murdered and of Major William Davidson. Probably this John Alexander had married in what is now Iredell County, North Carolina, but resided in what is now Rutherford County, North Carolina, and served with the

¹⁷² C. L. Hunter's Sketches of Western North Carolina, 1877, 59-60. See J. E. Alexander's Record of the Alexander Family, 1878, 11-13, 18, 114-115, 117-122, 147, 155, 158, 189, 196-201, 202-214; 1 American Ancestry, 1887, 1; 6 American Ancestry, 1891, 148-149.

¹⁷³ J. E. Alexander's Record of the Alexander Family, 1878, 215.

¹⁷⁴ 2 Wheeler's History of North Carolina, 1851, 20.

¹⁷⁵ J. Rumple's History of Rowan County, 1881, 46, 54.

Americans in the Revolutionary War and for his services received from the State of North Carolina bounty lands in what is now the State of Tennessee near Nashville. In all probability he had come to North Carolina about 1750 and married about 1754. In December, 1756, he was living on Buffalo Creek, a tributary of Broad River, then in Mecklenburg County and now in Rutherford County, North Carolina. Later he removed with his family to Crowder's Creek, a tributary of Catawba River, then in Tryon County and now in Gaston County, North Carolina, where he remained until his removal across the mountains. He had but two children, sons, James and Thomas, both of whom were young men when the War of the Revolution began and served with the Americans in that war. In it these Alexanders were living in the near neighborhood of Kings Mountain (1780) and Cowpens (1781) when the memorable and decisive battles fought at those places turned the tide of that war to run in favor of the Americans. Was this John Alexander the John Alexander who was an American captain of the South Carolina militia at the Battle of Cowpens?¹⁷⁶ On October 7, 1763, George III. issued a proclamation in which, besides other things, he prohibited white settlements to be made and grants to be issued on lands "westward of the sources of any of the rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the west and north-west."¹⁷⁷ In June, 1767, Governor Tryon and certain commissioners with certain Cherokee chiefs partly ran and fully agreed on, as the eastern boundary of the Cherokee hunting grounds, a line from Reedy River in South Carolina to a Spanish oak on Tryon Mountain in North Carolina and thence directly to Chiswell's lead mines in Virginia.¹⁷⁸ This was supposed, although incorrectly, to follow the crest

¹⁷⁶ Memoirs of Major Joseph McJunkin by J. H. Saye (1925), 34.

¹⁷⁷ 1 Marshall's Life of Washington, 1804, 565-572 note

¹⁷⁸ 7 Colonial Records of North Carolina, 469-471.

of the Blue Ridge from Tryon Mountain northward. Before the beginning of the Revolutionary War settlements had been made up to the mountains but none had been attempted in that region west of the Blue Ridge. When in 1776 North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia invaded the Cherokee country, treaties with those Indians followed in which they relinquished claims to certain lands. A treaty was held by North Carolina and Virginia with some chiefs of those Indians at Long Island of Holston in July, 1777, and by it concessions to North Carolina of certain lands now in the State of Tennessee were made on July 20, 1777, and concessions to Virginia of certain lands were made. The part of North Carolina between the Blue Ridge on the east and the present eastern boundary of the State of Tennessee on the west was not embraced in the terms of this compact because that territory was then claimed by the Middle Towns of the Cherokees and those towns were not represented at the treaty. In their report to their governor North Carolina's commissioners recommended that this unreleased land be acquired by the State.¹⁷⁹ An informal understanding to that effect with the Middle Towns on payment for the land was had.¹⁸⁰ Stringency caused by the Revolutionary War prevented prompt payment by the State when demanded by the Indians. However the State assumed control of the lands, promising payment; and in 1783 its legislature, providing for payment, authorized grants and settlements as far west as Big Pigeon River.¹⁸¹ At the close of the war white men began to hunt on these lands. In 1784 a party from the upper Catawba arranged for a settlement beyond the Blue

¹⁷⁹ 11 North Carolina State Records, 566-567.

¹⁸⁰ 19 State Records of North Carolina, 497, 445, 488, 941; 20 State Records of North Carolina, 402-406; 17 State Records of North Carolina, 15, 16, 79, 77, 37, 441-442, 472, 602.

¹⁸¹ 24 North Carolina State Records, 479; Iredell's Revisal, 446.

Ridge. Samuel Davidson, son of the immigrant John Davidson and brother of John Alexander's wife Rachel, crossed the Swannanoa Gap with his family of wife and infant daughter and a negro woman slave and built his cabin on Christian Creek, a tributary of Swannanoa River, at the foot of a small mountain now called Jones Mountain lying between that creek and the river. There he remained for a short while in 1784. According to the custom in those days he turned out his horse at night to graze with a bell attached to its neck whose sound would enable him to find the horse easily in the morning. The only Indian trail there ran from Cherokee towns on Little Tennessee River along the crest of Jones Mountain through Swannanoa Gap. One morning he went early to bring in the horse and followed the sound of the bell to the top of the mountain, thinking to overtake the horse. As he reached the crest he was shot and killed by some Cherokees in ambush who had removed the bell from the horse and with that instrument lured Davidson to their hiding place. His wife heard the shots and divined their meaning. Taking her baby and the negro woman, the women escaped by different routes through the woods in a journey of fifteen or sixteen miles to the white settlement on "Davidson's Mill Creek," now Mill Creek, a branch of the Catawba, called Davidson's Fort and now Old Fort. Samuel Davidson's friends there promptly organized a party to pursue and punish the Indians. When the men of that party reached the place of the murder they found Davidson's body by the side of the trail and buried it there on the mountain. They correctly suspected that the murderers were a hunting body of Cherokees in the neighborhood. About a mile further west near the mouth of Christian Creek the avengers found the assassins, and, attacking them, killed some and drove the remainder into the mountains beyond the reach of pur-

suit. On September 25, 1913, some relatives of Samuel Davidson unveiled with ceremonies a monument at his grave erected by them to commemorate the first settler of the present Western North Carolina beyond the Blue Ridge.¹⁸² In the days which knew the beginning of the Revolution, July, 1776, John Davidson, brother of Samuel Davidson, was murdered with his wife and small daughter at their home in or near Old Fort by Cherokee Indians.¹⁸³

A few months after the murder of Samuel Davidson, other frontiersmen, among whom were his twin brother, William, and his brother-in-law John Alexander and wife (sister of Samuel Davidson), and James Alexander (son of John and Rachel Davidson) and family and Thomas Alexander (another son of John and Rachel Davidson) and family, came from the country on the waters of Catawba River in North Carolina, through Swannanoa Gap and formed at the mouth of Bee Tree Creek, a tributary of Swannanoa River, the first white settlement west of the Blue Ridge in what is now North Carolina. This became known in history as the "SWANNANOA SETTLEMENT." This was within a little over a mile of the grave of Samuel Davidson, for which they and their descendants have ever since carefully afforded protection.¹⁸⁴

At the close of the Revolutionary War North Carolina owed to her soldiers in that struggle for their services large sums of money which she was unable to pay in cash and which she undertook to pay in lands in the western part of the present State of Tennessee, then a part of North Carolina's territory. These lands were from this called "Bounty Lands" and were situated about the present city of Nash-

¹⁸² Samuel Davidson, Address by F. A. Sondley, 1913.

¹⁸³ 2 Wheeler's History of North Carolina, 1851, 238; Wheeler's Reminiscences, 1884, 239; Sondley's "Samuel Davidson" Address, Letter of J. C. L. Bird, 1913, 7-8.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

ville and to the north. "The original act in respect to these bounty-lands was passed in the form of a resolution by the Assembly of North Carolina in May, 1780. The State engaged to give to the officers and soldiers in its line of the Continental army a bounty in lands in proportion to their respective grades. These lands were to be laid off upon the Cumberland, or in Middle Tennessee, to all such as were then in the military service, and should continue till the end of the war, or such as from wounds or bodily infirmities had been, or should be, rendered unfit for the service, and to the heirs of such as had fallen or should fall in the defense of their country. 'There never was a bounty more richly deserved or more ungrudgingly promised. It furnished to the war-worn soldier, or his children, a home in the new and fertile lands of the West, where a competency at least, perhaps wealth, or even affluence, might follow after the storm of war was past, and where the serene evening of life might be spent in the contemplation of the eventful scenes of his earlier years, devoted to the service of his country and to the cause of freedom and independence.' In pursuance of this provision of North Carolina, a land-office was established at Nashville; the military lands were surveyed, and crowds of Revolutionary soldiers came from the mother State and settled in Middle Tennessee, so that nine tenths of the early population were North Carolinians."¹⁸⁵ When in 1789 North Carolina ceded to the United States the territory which now comprises the State of Tennessee the deed for which was executed February 25, 1790, both in the statute and the deed conditions were inserted for the protection of those entitled to these "bounty lands."¹⁸⁶ After John Alexander and his wife and their

¹⁸⁵ W. W. Clayton's History of Davidson County, Tennessee, 1880, 45. See Ramsey's Annals of Tennessee, 1853, 490-491; Haywood's Civil and Political History of Tennessee, 1823, 124.

¹⁸⁶ 25 State Records of North Carolina, 4-6; 2 Revised Statutes of North Carolina, 171-174; 1 Laws of the United States, 1796, 92-99.

son Thomas Alexander and his wife Elizabeth Alexander (he having married his cousin Elizabeth Davidson, daughter of Major William Davidson), had remained in the "SWANNANOA SETTLEMENT" for five or six years, they removed in 1790 or 1791 to what is now the State of Tennessee, probably because John and Thomas were entitled to "bounty lands" there and settled in the country of those lands on Harpeth River in Williamson County, near Nashville where they died. Major William Davidson remained in the "SWANNANOA SETTLEMENT" on the farm which he settled there in 1785 and where he died on May 16, 1814, and is buried. In July, 1902, the Daughters of the Revolution erected a monument at his grave. His wife was Margaret McConnell and their descendants are numerous in North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, and other States.¹⁸⁷

James Alexander was the son of John Alexander and his wife Rachel (Davidson) Alexander. He was born on Buffalo Creek, then in Mecklenburg County and now in Rutherford County, North Carolina, December 23, 1756. Later he removed with his father to Crowder's Creek then in Tryon and now in Gaston County, North Carolina. Here they were living when the Revolutionary War broke out. James was then nineteen years of age. The State of North Carolina was unable to maintain her possible force at all times in camp or on campaign but on occasions of need enlisted for limited times her militia forces, permitting them when the demand for their services as soldiers was not urgent to give their attentions to the support of their families. Five times young James Alexander enlisted and served out the times of his enlistment fighting for the American cause. As such soldier, he was repeatedly called

¹⁸⁷ Alexander-Davidson Reunion, August 26, 1911, Address of Honorable Theodore F. Davidson, 45-46.

into service for months at a time under General Rutherford and General William Davidson, his first cousin, making more than one campaign into various parts of North Carolina and into the northern portion of South Carolina where he participated in several engagements, among them a severe skirmish on the Enoree between the Americans and Tarleton's Legion commanded by the redoubtable Colonel Banistre Tarleton in person. This no doubt was the fight at Musgrove's Mill, then sometimes called the Battle of the Enoree,¹⁸⁸ where it was reported to the Americans that Colonel Tarleton was in command, fought August 18 or 19, 1780, "one of the very hardest ever fought in the country with small arms alone, the smoke was so thick as to hide a man at the distance of twenty rods."¹⁸⁹

There seems to have been at this time another battle on the Enoree. "The first check given to Ferguson was by Gen. Charles McDowell of North Carolina. No allusion is made to this transaction by any historian of South Carolina. The only account of it in any published document is found in the Gazetteer of Tennessee by Eastin Morris, and is as follows: 'The American forces commanded by Col. McDowell were attacked by Ferguson near Enoree River, aided by a reinforcement of Tories and regulars. The battle was severely fought, but ended in the defeat of the British, who retreated, leaving a number of dead and more than 200 prisoners. The prisoners equalled one-third the number of the American forces.' This statement is made in such general terms as might possibly apply to the battle of Musgrove's Mill already described, but the writer has evidence of a private nature that it was a previous affair

¹⁸⁸ R. Henry's Narrative of the Battle of Cowan's Ford, 16-17; 1 National Portrait Gallery 5, "Isaac Shelby."

¹⁸⁹ Draper's Kings Mountain and Its Heroes, 114-115, 118, 504; Landrum's Colonial and Revolutionary History of Upper South Carolina, 149-150. See Memoirs of Major Joseph McJunkin by J. H. Saye (1924), 14-16.

and probably occurred in the month of July. Capt. James Thompson of Madison County, Ga., stated to the writer that he belonged to the army of Gen. McDowell. While this army was in South Carolina and lying near the home of Col. Hampton it was surprised by the British, but held its ground and drove the British from the field. Capt. Thompson was not in the main action. His Captain, Joseph McDowell, had been ordered to reconnoitre but failed to find the British. While engaged in searching for them they came and attacked the main army. He returned just as the British were retiring from the conflict, and finding that they had taken a number of prisoners, he rallied his men and as many others as would follow him, pursued the British, retook his friends and made a large number of prisoners. Living witnesses have stated to the writer that Col. Hampton's residence was on the Enoree River not far from Ford's Bridge. After this engagement Gen. McDowell retired toward North Carolina and took post near Cherokee Ford on Broad River."¹⁹⁰

The series of fights with the British and Tories in upper South Carolina and on the southern border of North Carolina in which James Alexander thus participated were at Cedar Springs and Wofford's Iron Works and several other places in the same region. These, or most of them, are described in various books relating to that period of the Revolutionary War. Among these books may be mentioned the following: L. Draper's *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes*, 1881, 68-164; D. Schenck's *North Carolina, 1780-1781*, 76-81, 83, 126.

Then came the famous Battle of Kings Mountain which turned the fortunes of the war in favor of the Americans and led ultimately to the capture of Lord Cornwallis's army and the independence of the colonies. That battle

¹⁹⁰ *Memoirs of Major Joseph McJunkin by J. H. Saye (1925)*, 23.

was fought on October 7, 1780. Throughout its progress James Alexander was in the thick of the fight; but he escaped unharmed, capturing, among the booty, at its close, a walnut camp-chest which probably belonged to Major Patrick Ferguson but was said to be the property of Lord Cornwallis and which is still owned by descendants of the captor.¹⁹¹

In consideration of his Revolutionary services, James Alexander received in the later years of his life a pension from the government of the United States. When in his proofs of Revolutionary services as an American soldier on which he was granted by the United States government in 1834 and on until his death in 1844 and afterwards his widow Rhoda (Cunningham) Alexander was granted by that government from his death until her death in 1848, pensions, James Alexander says that "he entered the service again in Lincoln county, N. C., in the early part of the summer of 1780 under the command of Captain John Barber as a volunteer in a horse company, he marched to the Cherokee Ford on Broad River in York district, S. Carolina, where they joined the army under the command of Genl. Charles McDowell, that he was sent shortly after under the command of Col. Joseph McDowell with a Regiment of horse through Spartanburg District and had a severe skirmish with a part of the British light horse under the command of Col. Tarlton, after which they fell back upon the main army at the Cherokee ford," the "severe skirmish" mentioned could not have been any other than the famous Battle of Cowpens, fought January 17, 1781,

¹⁹¹ T. K. Oglesby's *Some Truths of History*; Alexander-Davidson Reunion 1911, Address of F. A. Sondley, 24-25; James Alexander's Pension Papers; Ramsey's *Annals of Tennessee*, 1853, 248, 243-245, 232-240; 2 Wheeler's *History of North Carolina*, 1851, 98; 4 National Portrait Gallery, 1853, 7-8; 15 State Records of North Carolina, 1898, 163-165, 100-111, 115-117, 131-136, 126-127; W. H. Foote's *Sketches of Virginia*, 2nd series, 1856, 126-133; W. A. Graham's *General Joseph Graham*, 1904, 266-283.

in which the British commander was Colonel Tarleton and in which North Carolina troops under the immediate command of Major Joseph McDowell formed part of the American army there of General Daniel Morgan and in which battle, fought in upper Spartanburg District near Broad River, Colonel Tarleton, after a severe fight, was defeated and forced to retreat. There was no other fight in that region wherein Tarleton commanded the British or wherein Major Joseph McDowell's American troops were engaged. It is true that Tarleton's forces were part infantry as well as part cavalry; but it is also true that the American cavalry, acting under Colonel William Washington, had, for their share in the battle, the attack upon and repulse of the British cavalry and not on the British infantry and that in most of this cavalry conflict, if not in all, the British cavalry were led by Colonel Tarleton in person. Hence, so far as the American light-horse were concerned in the fight, it was a conflict between them and Tarleton's light-horse commanded and led by Tarleton himself, and it was a "severe" fight. Of that battle an officer of Lord Cornwallis's army said: "During the whole period of the war no other action reflected so much dishonour upon the British arms. The British were superior in numbers. Morgan had only five hundred and forty continentals, the rest militia. Tarleton's force composed the light troops of lord Cornwallis's army. Every disaster that befel lord Cornwallis, after Tarleton's most shameful defeat at the Cowpens may most justly be attributed to the imprudence and unsoldierly conduct of that officer in the action."¹⁹²

While the Revolutionary War was in progress James Alexander, on March 19, 1782, on Allison's Creek in York

¹⁹² 2 E. Stedman's American War, 1794, 324. See Tarleton's Campaigns, 1787, 215-222, 252; R. Mackenzie's Strictures, 1787, 79-118.

District of South Carolina, married Rhoda Cunningham, a native of Pennsylvania in territory once thought to belong to Maryland, born October 15, 1763, daughter of Humphrey Cunningham, a Scotch-Irish immigrant. For about two years soon after the marriage James Alexander and his wife resided in York District, South Carolina. "A Miss Ware or Wear married in Ireland a Mr. Summerville and, between 1740 and 1750, they sailed for America. On the way they stopped at an island where Mr. Summerville and all the children, except Rhoda left in Ireland, died. Mrs. Summerville survived, reached America, and later married George Davidson and became the mother of General William Davidson killed at Cowan's Ford of Catawba River. Rhoda Summerville, half sister of General William Davidson, came to America. Either before or after her arrival she married Humphrey Cunningham. For a while they lived in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, from which they removed to York District, South Carolina. The names of their children were Humphrey, James, John (who was drowned in East Tennessee), Rhoda (who married James Alexander), Sarah (who married James Patton), August 3, 1784, in York District, South Carolina, born December 12, 1765."¹⁹³

Early in 1785 John Alexander and wife with their sons, James and Thomas and the sons' families, in company with relatives and others crossed Swannanoa Gap and settled on the Bee Tree Creek, a tributary of Swannanoa River and on that river near the creek's mouth. The word "Swannano" or "Swannanoa" is another form of Shawano, the same as Shawnee, and the Swannanoa River is the Shawano River. The Shawanos in the early days had a town on the stream about half a mile above its mouth which

¹⁹³ Letter of ----- Hannah to Ed Couch, Anthony, Kansas (sent to me by Dr. E. P. Anderson), from Prairie Grove, Arkansas, September 19, 1921.

they abandoned probably about 1750 and which was known to the whites as Shawano or Swannano. The first occurrence of the name seems to have been when that abandoned town was mentioned in public documents relating to General Griffith Rutherford's expedition against the Cherokees in 1776. No doubt the river was named from the town.¹⁹⁴ In a grant which in 1787 the State of North Carolina issued to William and James Davidson for six hundred and forty acres of land on which are now the former towns of Kenilworth and Biltmore and the southeastern portion of the City of Asheville the land is described as being in Burke County "on both sides of Savannah," later in the grant called "Savana." Savannah is another form of Shawano.¹⁹⁵

This was the first settlement of white men in what is now North Carolina west of the Blue Ridge. In the records of those days it is famous as the "SWANNANOA SETTLEMENT." There the Alexanders and their kinsman, Major William Davidson, took up their homes on adjoining lands with houses in immediate proximity for assistance to each other in case of an attack by Indians, Major Davidson's farm lying immediately south of that of the Alexanders. The first cabin of the Alexanders was built near the line between their farm and that of Major William Davidson; but when, later on, dangers from the Cherokees were less imminent, James Alexander built another residence about one-half of a mile further up Bee Tree Creek and, later still, he erected instead a house about one hundred yards to the west of the latter and the last building is yet standing. The farm on which the Alexanders settled in 1785 has never passed out of the family and descendants of James Alexander and of his family name still own and live

¹⁹⁴ 11 State Records of North Carolina, 1895, 354, 355.

¹⁹⁵ Mooney's Myths of the Cherokee, 530-531, 370; F. A. Sondley's Origin of the Catawba Grape, 1918, 18-24.

on the place, although on the death of James Alexander it passed to next to the youngest son and not, according to the Scotch-Irish custom, to the youngest son.¹⁹⁶ Many were the vicissitudes of early residence on the Swannanoa River. The Cherokees had sided with the British in the Revolutionary War and, observant of Indian notions, were loath to regard the peace which was declared at its conclusion. Old Mrs. Rhoda Alexander often told with tears to her grandchildren the dangers and annoyances of that early life, and how when the men of the family were absent Indians would come and frighten the women and children, take their provisions, open their feather beds and empty the feathers over the house, and collect their household furniture in the yard and burn it. Finally endurance could stand no more. As James Alexander returned one day along the path which led to his home he perceived a fire in front of his house. From this he knew that Indians were there engaged in mischief. As he advanced he presently heard three of them coming along the path from his house. He stepped behind some bushes. They came on, shouting and dancing. His rifle cracked, and the Indians disappeared. "Grandfather, did you kill him?" inquired the child to whom he was telling the story. The old man knew whether his aim was true or not. His only answer was, "I did not look back to see, my little girl." Soon John Alexander and Rachel Alexander his wife and their son Thomas Alexander and Elizabeth his wife removed to the country which is now the State of Tennessee. James with his family remained on the old place. After a while the legislature of North Carolina created a new county by the name of Buncombe out of a part of Burke County and a part of Rutherford County. In this new county was included the home of James Alexander. The act which created this new

¹⁹⁶ J. Rumble's History of Rowan County, 1881, 131.

county was passed at the legislative session of 1791-1792 and ratified January 9, 1792.¹⁹⁷ By that act James Alexander was made one of the justices of the peace who should compose the first county court of Buncombe County. That court met for the first time April 16, 1792, and James Alexander was one of the justices of peace in attendance when on that day the county was organized at the home of Colonel William Davidson, his cousin, at the Gum Spring on the south bank of Swannanoa River about one-fourth of a mile below the later town of Biltmore.¹⁹⁸

Under the act of Congress of 1832 in regard to pensions, James Alexander received from the government of the United States from 1834 until his death a pension for his military services in the Revolutionary War and that pension was continued from his death to his widow Rhoda (Cunningham) Alexander under the act of Congress of 1836 until her death.¹⁹⁹

James Alexander died at his residence on Bee Tree Creek in Buncombe County, North Carolina, June 28, 1844, and was buried about two miles away at the old Robert Patton burying ground. His widow, Rhoda (Cunningham) Alexander died at their home place January 29, 1848. On her death his body was removed and buried with her body in the same grave at Piney Grove Presbyterian Church about three-fourths of a mile from the Robert Patton burying ground. Their children were:

John C., born March 22, 1783, and married to Jane Patton on December 31, 1808;

Rhoda, born November, 1785, and married to William McDaniel (Rhoda McDaniel dying September, 1881);

¹⁹⁷ 1 North Carolina Revisal of 1821, 680-681.

¹⁹⁸ Honorable Theodore F. Davidson's Genesis of the County of Buncombe in Asheville and Buncombe County, 1922, 197-199; see also pages 64, 62-63 by F. A. Sondley.

¹⁹⁹ James Alexander's Pension Papers.

William Davidson, born January 28, 1788, and died in youth;

George C., born September 10, 1790, and married to Elizabeth Foster, June 23, 1818, she being a younger sister of Nancy (Foster) Alexander, wife of James Mitchel Alexander; George C. Alexander dying October 3, 1880, and his wife Elizabeth (Foster) Alexander dying January 4, 1884;

James Mitchel, born May 22, 1793, and married to Nancy Foster, September 8, 1814;

Robert S., born September 2, 1795, and married to Jane Wilson, May 25, 1820;

Rachel, born December 30, 1797, and married to Moses White, December 2, 1824;

William Davidson (the second child so named), born December 10, 1800, and married to Leah Burgin, April 21, 1825;

Humphrey Newton, born June 11, 1803, and married to Mary Foster, December 26, 1826; and

Elizabeth, born April 10, 1806, and married to Joseph A. McEntire, January 19, 1832.²⁰⁰

All these children of James and Rhoda (Cunningham) Alexander lived and died in Western North Carolina and all except Rhoda McDaniel and the first William Davidson Alexander left descendants. Up to the time of his death George C. Alexander wore pantaloons of the Dutch (German) type buttoning only on one side with suspenders of the same material sewed to them.

James Mitchel Alexander, son of James Alexander and Rhoda (Cunningham) Alexander, was born at the Alexander home on Bee Tree Creek in Buncombe County, May 22, 1793, in the "SWANNANOA SETTLEMENT" and when

²⁰⁰ James Alexander's Pension Papers; Alexander-Davidson Reunion, August 26, 1911, Address of F. A. Sondley, 27-28, 24-25.

Buncombe County was just a little over a year old. Most probably James Mitchel Alexander was named for the Presbyterian preacher, James Mitchel, who preached most of his time in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, from 1781 to 1841, and was celebrated as a preacher among the Scotch-Irish throughout Virginia, Kentucky, and Western North Carolina.²⁰¹

In the times of pioneer settlements of American "backwoods" it was important for every young man to learn a trade. When a youth James Mitchel Alexander learned to be a saddle-maker and maker of harness but never followed the trade long. On September 8, 1814, he married Nancy Foster, oldest child of Captain Thomas Foster and his wife Orra (Sams) Foster who lived where the town of Biltmore later was. Soon afterwards, on July 6, 1816, he bought from Zebulon Beard a parcel of land containing 28 acres and 134 poles for two hundred dollars. This land was in the town of Asheville and is now south of Patton Avenue and west of the northern section of Church Street but extends at the southern end of the tract eastward to South Main Street now Biltmore Avenue.

On this land upon the western side of South Main Street, at a place now by the widening of that street in Biltmore Avenue or partly so, he built a residence, large for those days, afterwards known as the "Hilliard Place," at the turn in the street opposite the present Coca-Cola Building. There for years he prospered as a tavern-keeper. The first Methodist church-house in Asheville was erected on a lot cut off from this land and given by him July 20, 1839, for the purpose and on it and adjoining land is now

²⁰¹ Foote's Sketches of Virginia, 2nd series, 1856, 133-141; F. A. Sondley's Address, "Alexander-Davidson Reunion, August 26, 1911," 17-29; F. A. Sondley's Address, "Samuel Davidson," 1913, 12-22; 5 Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1883-1884, 1887; C. C. Royce's map of the Territorial Limits of the Cherokee Nation of Indians, 1884.

the Central Methodist Church on Church Street.²⁰² The Swannanoa River enters at Asheville into the French Broad River. This latter stream rises in Transylvania County, North Carolina, and running northward and westward into the State of Tennessee through the mountains joins the Holston River a few miles above the City of Knoxville. The first printed mention of what is the French Broad seems to be that made by Lieutenant Henry Timberlake in an account of his visit to the Overhill Cherokees when, on his return therefrom to Virginia, in March, 1762, he says: "We marched the next day to Broad River, which we crossed about four o'clock in the afternoon without much difficulty, by reason of the lowness of the waters; but the river which is here over 700 yards over runs with great rapidity, and the banks extremely steep on either side."²⁰³ That was in what is now the State of Tennessee. The next printed mention of that river appears to be that in which again it is called "Broad River" in a letter dated June 1, 1766, to John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, from Alexander Cameron, his deputy.²⁰⁴ It seems that the first printed references to it as "French Broad River" are in a resolution of the Senate of North Carolina on Sunday, December 21, 1777, in relation to lands between "the waters of the and Broad river on this side and the waters of French Broad river on the other side of the Appalachian Mountains;²⁰⁵ and in a letter from Charles Robertson to James Smith dated Wataugah, July 13, 1776,²⁰⁶ apparently the very first; and in a letter from Colonel Charles Lewis to Governor Patrick Henry dated "Camp French Broad," October 14, 1776;²⁰⁷ and Captain William

²⁰² 22 Record of Deeds of Buncombe County, 359.

²⁰³ Timberlake's Memoirs, 1765, 99.

²⁰⁴ 7 Colonial Records of North Carolina, 1890, 215-217.

²⁰⁵ 12 State Records of North Carolina, 1895, 239.

²⁰⁶ 10 Colonial Records of North Carolina, 1890, 665.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 842.

Moore's report to General Rutherford of the former's expedition dated "November 17th, 1776."²⁰⁸ The name must have been given prior to 1763 when the French relinquished all claims to the country through which that river runs. It was called *French Broad* because its waters were in territory then, prior to 1763, claimed by the French and to distinguish it from the Broad River which rose east of its heads on the opposite side of the Blue Ridge and whose waters were in English territory.²⁰⁹ The Indian names for this river were different as to different parts. The part near Asheville was called by the Cherokees "Untakiyastiyi—Where they race."²¹⁰ One writer, H. E. Colton,²¹¹ says that the river was called by the Indians or some of them, Tocheste, or Racer; another writer, Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey,²¹² says that it was called by the Cherokees, Agiqua, throughout its length; another writer, Charles Lanman,²¹³ says that it was called by the Cherokees Pse-li-co; two other writers, W. G. Zeigler and B. S. Grosscup,²¹⁴ say that it was called Agiqua by the Ereti, or "Over-the-mountain" Cherokees, and Tocheestee below Asheville and Zilliocoah above Asheville by the Ottari or Lower Cherokees; another writer, William Gilmore Simms,²¹⁵ says that it was called by the Cherokees Tselica. Just before the Revolution the Blue Ridge in North Carolina and South Carolina was called the Cherokee Mountains.²¹⁶

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 895-898.

²⁰⁹ F. A. Sondley's *Hickorynut Gorge*, 37-46; Adair's *History of the American Indians*, 1775, 231; Ramsey's *Annals of Tennessee*, 1853, 45; J. H. Logan's *History of Upper South Carolina*, 1859, 392; Morse's *American Geography*, 1792, 410.

²¹⁰ J. Mooney's *Myths of the Cherokee*, 1902, 543, 406; F. A. Sondley's *Hickorynut Gorge*, 1916, 44-46.

²¹¹ *Mountain Scenery*, 1859, 75.

²¹² *Annals of Tennessee*, 1853, 87.

²¹³ *Letters from the Allegheny Mountains*, 1849, 123; *1 Adventures in the Wilds of the United States, etc.*, 1856, 431.

²¹⁴ *Heart of the Alleghanies*, 1883, 18.

²¹⁵ *1 Poetical Works*, 1853, 324.

²¹⁶ *8 Colonial Records of North Carolina*, 1890, 556, 564; *11 State Records of North Carolina*, 1895, 222, 228.

For several years after the settlement at Knoxville now in Tennessee there was no convenient road for that settlement to South Carolina and Eastern Georgia. On July 8, 1795, Governor William Blount of the territory which had been ceded by North Carolina to the United States and was subsequently erected into the State of Tennessee, submitted to his council "several papers, respecting the opening of a wagon road from Buncombe Court-House, in North Carolina, to this territory"; and a committee was thereupon appointed which recommended a conference on the subject with commissioners to be appointed by South Carolina;²¹⁷ but a day or two before July 31, 1795, "two waggons arrived at Knoxville from South Carolina, having passed through the mountains by way of the Warm Springs of French Broad; so that a waggon road may be said to have been then opened from Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and other Atlantic States by way of Knoxville to Nashville."²¹⁸ This road proved to be a great convenience to people passing through that mountainous region. It was then also much used by emigrants from the eastern and settled portions of North Carolina and South Carolina on their ways to the new States of Kentucky and Tennessee and neighboring land and later to Alabama and Mississippi;²¹⁹ and to Missouri and southern Illinois. But it was a wretched road and would now be deemed wholly impassable.²²⁰ The urgent need for a thoroughfare through these mountains demanded something better. At last, in 1824, the North Carolina legislature granted a charter for a new road to be called The Buncombe Turnpike and to

²¹⁷ Ramsey's *Annals of Tennessee*, 1853, 644.

²¹⁸ Haywood's *Civil and Political History of Tennessee*, 1823, 450.

²¹⁹ Haywood's *Civil and Political History of Tennessee*, 1823, 470, 450; Ramsey's *Annals of Tennessee*, 1853, 644; *62 Records of Deeds of Buncombe County*, 357-362.

²²⁰ *2 Asbury's Journal*, 1852, 482-483; *3 Asbury's Journal*, 1852, 37, 90-92, 133-134, 237, 323, 352, 400; Bennett's *Chronology of North Carolina*, 1858, 102-103; *2 Pickett's History of Alabama*, 1851, 186-188.

extend from "Saluda Gap in the County of Buncombe, by way of Smith's, Murrayville, Asheville, and the Warm Springs, to the Tennessee line," and to be constructed by the "Buncombe Turnpike Company," the part below Asheville passing along the northern and eastern bank of French Broad River.²²¹ The road was completed in 1827. A large section of this road north of Asheville was built by Colonel James Mitchel Alexander under contract with the Buncombe Turnpike Company. When engaged in that work he clearly foresaw that over this highway when finished would be driven annually large numbers of horses, mules, cattle, and hogs from Kentucky and Tennessee to the markets of South Carolina and eastern Georgia, and that the business of feeding these and their drivers as they passed would be a lucrative one. He also perceived that quantities of Indian corn, the principal product of that region, sufficient for the purpose could be obtained every year from the farmers whose lands bordered upon or lay near to the French Broad River for several miles back on each side, and that a handsome profit might be realized by exchanging with these farmers for their corn merchandise of the character needed by them, while properly extending to them credit for goods to enable them to raise the crops out of which the debts so contracted should be paid. "In 1842 Asheville was on the great thoroughfare for the movement of stock from Tennessee and Kentucky to South Carolina and Georgia. There passed through this town annually 140,000 to 160,000 hogs, being driven to the Southern markets. November and December were the months for the movement of the swine, so you can imagine the great numbers that passed through the town daily in a season. A drove of hogs would travel 10 miles a day and they required about eight bushels of corn to the hundred hogs. Bun-

²²¹ 2 Revised Statutes of North Carolina, 1837, 418-424.

combe extended from the Tennessee line to the Henderson line, so that it can be calculated that the feeding of these hogs while passing through Buncombe was no small thing."²²² In order to avail himself of the great opportunities thus afforded Colonel James Mitchel Alexander procured a large body of land extending about ten miles up and down the French Broad River, and on that land he built a place, then and yet called Alexander although the post-office name for a long time was "French Broad," ten miles north of Asheville, chiefly on the eastern side of the river. There he constructed a hotel and stables and feed lots and a store-house and blacksmith shops and waggon shops and shoe shops and a tanyard and a ferry (later a bridge) and residences and negro quarters and other buildings, all situated on the new road near the river side. Removing from Asheville to that new home in 1828, he conducted there for many years and with much success and profit a hotel, feed stables, feed lots, farms, mercantile establishment, tannery, waggon factory, shoe factory, harness and saddle factory, blacksmith shops, grist mill, saw mill, and other enterprises of a business kind adapted to the needs of the country, making on horseback annual trips to Charleston, South Carolina, for the purchase of goods to be hauled in waggons to his mercantile establishment at Alexander. After nearly a quarter of a century of uninterrupted prosperity he transferred these businesses and accompanying lands and buildings and tools, appliances, appurtenances, and outfits with a number of slaves to his only son, Alfred M. Alexander, and one of his sons-in-law, J. S. Burnett, and changed his home to a very large and handsome new residence which he erected three miles further south in the direction of Asheville. Naming this new home with its commodious and elegant mansion and accompanying

²²² A. T. Summey in Asheville newspaper about 1898.

buildings, servants' quarters, and appurtenances and farm, garden, and outhouses, Montrealla (Royal Mountain), only the mansion of which remained when burned in 1929, he spent the residue of his life there in comfort and a wide, extensive, and profuse hospitality and even luxury. There he died on June 11, 1858. He had built a church on his farm at Alexander and he founded near Montrealla a new Methodist Church still called "Alexander's Chapel." At that chapel in a plot surrounded by a rock wall he constructed a family burying-ground. In that inclosure he was buried. No man ever lived in Buncombe County who enjoyed in greater measure or with more certain desert the respect and confidence of his acquaintances than did Colonel James Mitchel Alexander, or, as he was always called "Colonel Alexander." His widow, Nancy (Foster) Alexander, a woman of remarkable business capacity and energy and a housekeeper whose fame extended through all the Southern States, died at Montrealla on January 14, 1862, and is buried by his side. As illustrating early customs in Buncombe County it is related that in the beginning of his residence on the French Broad Colonel Alexander usually word "leather breeches" made of buckskin.²²³

Colonel James Mitchel Alexander and his wife Nancy (Foster) Alexander had five daughters and one son, all of whom are now dead leaving descendants in considerable numbers and with widely diverse habitations. That son and those daughters were:

Harriet Elizabeth, born December 28, 1816; died March 22, 1897;

Alfred M., born January 11, 1819; died October 24, 1890;

Mary Eliza, born October 4, 1821; died September 11, 1861;

²²³ See J. Rumble's History of Rowan County, 1881, 213.

Orra A., born November 22, 1824; died December 25, 1859.

Sarah M., born July 2, 1827; died October 13, 1871;
R. Catherine, born November 13, 1830; died.

As to Colonel James Mitchell Alexander see Bennett's Chronology of North Carolina, 1858, 103.

Harriet Elizabeth Alexander, eldest child of Colonel James Mitchel Alexander and his wife Nancy (Foster) Alexander, was born at her father's home in Asheville, December 28, 1816. When he removed to Alexander in 1828 Harriet had attended school at the Newton Academy for some years. That school had been founded, through the permission of her great-grandfather, William Forster the Second, on his land under the name of Union Hill Academy between 1793 and 1797, although apparently a school had been taught there as early as 1786. From 1797 to 1814 it was conducted as a combined church and classical school by George Newton, a Presbyterian preacher. The building was at first a log structure. About 1803 another building was erected one hundred yards further south. Later than the erection of the log house William Forster the Second conveyed a tract of land including that academy to his son William Forster the Third. On July 11, 1803, William Forster the Third conveyed eight acres of land "including an old school house with a new one to trustees, for the Further Maintenance and support of the gospel, and teaching a Latin and English school or either, as may be thought most proper from time to time, by the above named Trustees or a majority of them, or their successors in office," upon specified terms.²²⁴ On November 15, 1809, the same William Forster the Third conveyed three and one-fourth acres adjoining on the south the land just mentioned "including the brick house now building" to the "Trustees

²²⁴ 4 Record of Deeds of Buncombe County, 678.

of the Union Hill Academy," (naming them), "established by an act of Assembly a seminary of learning in chapter 43 in the year 1805." In 1809 an act of the North Carolina legislature changed the name to Newton Academy. In 1857 or 1858 the building last mentioned gave place to another brick building which itself has been recently replaced with a concrete structure.²²⁵ Here Harriet Alexander's grandfather had gone to school, here her mother had gone to school, here she went to school, and here her youngest son went to school. In the graveyard here are buried six of her grandparents and great-grandparents and many others of her relatives. There her aunt, Miss Matilda Foster, had taught and there some of the most distinguished men of North Carolina and South Carolina had begun their education.²²⁶

While attending this school in the eighth year of her age she was allowed to go to the funeral of Colonel Daniel Smith, a famous Indian fighter and Revolutionary soldier whose wife Mary was a daughter of Major William Davidson, and who had lived and was originally buried less than a mile from the academy. The interment was with military honors where Fernihurst is now.²²⁷ The little girl was much frightened at the noise made by the "firing by platoons" over the grave and never forgot the incident. She was a favorite with her great-grandfathers, William Forster the Second and Edmund Sams, as well as with her grandfather James Alexander and his wife Rhoda (Cunningham) Alexander and her grandparents Thomas Foster and wife Orra (Sams) Foster, and was always a welcome visitor

²²⁵ F. A. Sondley's *Hickorynut Gorge*, 1916, 15-17; Bennett's *Chronology of North Carolina*, 1858, 29-30; F. A. Sondley's *Asheville and Buncombe County*, 1922, 147-148.

²²⁶ F. A. Sondley's *Hickorynut Gorge*, 1916, 17; F. A. Sondley's *Asheville and Buncombe County*, 1922, 125; Bennett's *Chronology of North Carolina*, 1858, 29-30.

²²⁷ F. A. Sondley's "Samuel Davidson" Address, 1913, 4-6; F. A. Sondley's *Asheville and Buncombe County*, 1922, 153.

at their homes. They took pleasure in entertaining her with stories of their lives and sufferings and experiences and she ever remembered all those stories and the characteristics and peculiarities of their narrators.

When she was twelve years old and had a brother and three sisters her father removed to Alexander in 1828. After some while, during which a teacher employed by her father gave instructions at their home to her and her brother and sisters, she was sent to school at Greeneville, Tennessee.²²⁸ While at home on vacation and when she lacked a few days of having attained her sixteenth year she married on December 17, 1832, Elisha Ray and went to live on a place of her father's at the mouth of Beaverdam Creek, five miles north of Asheville. Elisha Ray died on June 21, 1844, and she returned with her five children to the home of her father. After more than eleven years of widowhood she married Richard Sondley of Columbia, South Carolina, on October 17, 1855, and went to live in Columbia. Richard Sondley died on January 28, 1858, and his widow returned to her father's home in Buncombe County, then at Montrealla. There she lived until the death of her parents and throughout the terrible war waged by the North against the South. At the close of that war she removed to Asheville; but in 1868 she returned to that home at Montrealla which she had become the owner of on the death of her mother in 1862. In 1871 she again removed to Asheville to a home which she had just built on what is Cherry Street. There she lived for twenty-six years and there she died on March 22, 1897. A noble character of womanhood and intelligence. She was buried at Alexander's Chapel in the rock-inclosed burying plot of her father's family.

By her first marriage she had five children all of whom are dead except one. They were:

²²⁸ Goodspeed's *History of Tennessee*, 1887, 887.

John Edwin Ruthven Ray, born November 8, 1833; died.

Frances Ann Elizabeth Ray, born July 6, 1836; died May 29, 1923;

James Mitchel Ray, born November 15, 1838; died February 22, 1923;

Susan Eliza Ray, born September 21, 1840; died October 26, 1860;

Josephine E. Ray, born August 14, 1843.

Susan Eliza Ray died unmarried. Josephine E. Ray married D. T. Millard, and is now a widow having descendants. The others all left descendants.

By her second marriage, that to Richard Sondley, Harriet Elizabeth (Alexander) Sondley had but one child, a son, born August 13, 1857, at Montrealla, Forster Alexander Sondley, the author of this sketch, who has never married and lives at Finis Viae, Buncombe County, North Carolina, now in the seventy-fourth year of his age.