

Exum, Benjamin ^[1]

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by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1986

ca. 1725–89

Benjamin Exum, Revolutionary ^[2] patriot and legislator, was born in Isle of Wight County, Va., the son of John and Elizabeth Exum. In 1750 he moved with his father to Edgecombe County ^[3], N.C., but later settled in Dobbs County ^[4]. His land fell in the new county of Wayne ^[5] when it was formed in 1779 from the western portion of Dobbs.

With the outbreak of the American Revolution ^[2], Exum was one of the most active patriots in Dobbs County. On 18 Oct. 1775, he was certified as a lieutenant of the Second Company of Minutemen. On 6 May 1776 he was on a committee to extract sulphur for ammunition in Dobbs County, and he represented the county at the Provincial Congress ^[6] at Halifax ^[7] in November 1776. In 1777, he was a member of the state senate. The Benjamin Exum of Dobbs who was clerk of the House of Commons for the same session was probably the son of the senator. Again a member of the senate in 1778 and 1779, the elder Exum was also treasurer of the New Bern District in the latter year.

Early in 1780, after he was made colonel of the Wayne militia, Exum and his regiment were ordered to join General Horatio Gates in South Carolina. Here, in the following August, the regiment took part in the disastrous Battle of Camden ^[8] and suffered heavy losses. In 1781, Colonel Exum was listed as commander of the Second Regiment of North Carolina militia.

Exum was again elected treasurer of the New Bern District in 1784. Subsequently, he and some of his associates in office became involved in financial difficulties. A committee was appointed by the House of Commons to investigate, but no action was taken and the matter was dropped.

On 21 Feb. 1780, he and his wife Martha, whose surname is unknown, deeded to Hugh Shaw a tract of land on the north side of the Neuse River ^[9] lying partly in Wake ^[10] and partly in Johnston ^[11] counties. In 1788, he deeded his Wayne lands to his sons William and Mathew. Exum died shortly afterwards as his name does not appear in the census of 1790. Benjamin and Martha Exum were the parents of three sons, Benjamin, William, and Mathew, and two daughters, Martha and Tabitha. Tabitha married Benjamin Smith of Wayne County ^[5].

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Authors:

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Origin - location:

Wayne County ^[17]

From:

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1 January 1986 | Smith, Claiborne T., Jr.

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