

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE 1764-1820

Alexander Mackenzie was born near Stornway in the Hebrides (Scotland). His mother had died in 1774. His aunts decided to leave Scotland taking him with them to the New World where some of the family had already settled. He was in his teens when he arrived in America, the year before the American Revolution began. They settled in the Mohawk Valley of New York.



Alexander belonged to the militia where he learned many outdoor skills. When the war broke out the family moved to what is now Glengarry County, Ontario. Alex was sent to school in Montreal. At the age of seventeen he went to work in a counting house of a fur trade company.

Meanwhile his father, Kenneth Mackenzie, who had been a clan chief and a military man, joined the Royal Yorkers (Royal Regiment of New York) under Sir John Johnson. He died in 1790 near Kingston (in what is now Ontario) where his regiment was guarding the southern section of the St. Lawrence River.

Alexander continued his apprenticeship with the North West Company and in 1785 was admitted as a partner in the business. He then began his explorations which culminated in the great trek ending at Bella Coola, British Columbia. Here he and his men inscribed on a rock the words: "Alex Mackenzie from Canada by land, 22 July 1793".

He was in his early thirties and the first person of Loyalist descent to view what is now British Columbia. He died in 1820 and was buried in Avoch, near Inverness, Scotland.

Source: The MacMillan Dictionary of Biography
Barry Gough – [First Across the Continent](#), Toronto, McLelland and Stewart 1997, University of
Oklahoma Press
Excellent Site: Avoch Heritage Association: <http://www.avoch.org/html/mackenzie.html>