



General Alexandre Dumas: Soldier of the French Revolution

Professor John G. Gallaher B.A. M.A. Ph.D.

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Although General Alexandre Dumas was a fascinating man and a bold, distinguished Napoleonic soldier, he has been overshadowed by the literary successes of his son Alexandre Dumas (The Three Musketeers and The Count of Monte Cristo) and grandson, the playwright Alexandre Dumas.

Gallaher reveals General Dumas' extraordinary life in eighteenth-century France, providing the first biography in English of the mulatto soldier who knew both the favor and the wrath of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Born Thomas-Alexandre Davy de Ia Pailleterie in 1762 to an enslaved black woman and a white French nobleman, the young Thomas Alexandre spent his first fourteen years on the island of Saint Domingue. Following his mother's death, Alexandre joined his father in Normandy in 1776. Later, he moved to Paris alone. In 1786, after losing financial support for his libertine Parisian life, Thomas-Alexandre enlisted as a private in the French army under his mother's name—Dumas. From there began a distinguished military career that saw early rapid advancement, peaked with high favor from Napoleon, and ended after unjust attempts on Dumas' life.



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