



Kentucky's War of 1812: General John Adair

The Kentucky Historical Society's historical marker 1139 in Columbia commemorates the naming of Adair County in John Adair's honor in 1801.

Born in South Carolina, Adair, a Revolutionary War veteran, moved to Mercer County in 1787. He soon became involved in Kentucky politics, serving as a member of several state constitutional conventions, as Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives, and a U.S. senator.

During the War of 1812, Adair was an aide to Gov. Isaac Shelby. He fought at the Battle of the Thames in 1813 and ultimately led the Kentucky troops at the Battle of New Orleans. Adair found continued political prominence and was elected governor in 1820.

As governor, Adair provided debt relief for citizens, created the Bank of the Commonwealth, and, according to historian Lowell Harrison, he “advocated state funding for education, a better penitentiary system, reform of the treatment of the insane and improved navigation on the Ohio River.”