



Kentucky's War of 1812: Richard M. Johnson

The Kentucky Historical Society's historical marker 1125 in Johnson County commemorates the county being named in Richard M. Johnson's honor in 1843.

Born in 1781 in what is now Jefferson County, Johnson's formative years were spent in Fayette County. He attended Transylvania University and studied law, which he practiced in Scott County. A state legislator and a U.S. congressman, Johnson was a congressional "War Hawk" who voted for war with Great Britain in 1812.

Commissioned colonel and ultimately known as the "Father of American Cavalry," Johnson led Kentucky volunteers during the War of 1812. His fame grew after the Battle of the Thames, fought in Canada in October 1813. Wounded there, Johnson reputedly killed the Indian chief Tecumseh in this important American victory.

He remained in Congress until 1819, became a U.S. senator and was elected U.S. vice president, serving under Martin Van Buren. After his term, Johnson returned to the Kentucky legislature. He died in 1850 and was buried in Frankfort.