

Fenner, Richard ^[1]

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by Ruth L. Barrett, 1986

1758–12 May 1828



A photograph of Dr. Richard Fenner's grave.

Image from [Archive.org](#).

^[2]Richard Fenner, physician, was born in New Bern to Richard and Ann Coddington Fenner. He was commissioned ensign in the Second Regiment, North Carolina Continental Line, in January 1779, was promoted to lieutenant while a prisoner of war at Charleston, and served until the end of the war when he settled in Halifax with his older brother, [Robert](#) ^[3]. In [Halifax](#) ^[4] he studied medicine with a young Scot, Dr. Mungo Ponton, who later married [Montford Eelbeck](#) ^[5]'s youngest daughter. In 1788 Fenner married Ann McKinnie Geddy, daughter of John and Patience McKinnie Geddy. About 1792 both he and his father-in-law moved from Halifax to [Franklin County](#) ^[6], where Fenner practiced medicine for twenty-five years. In 1799 he was elected first president of the [North Carolina Medical Society](#) ^[7]. In 1817 he went to [Raleigh](#) ^[8] and lived there about five years.

In 1823, Fenner emigrated with his family, including his daughter Ann's husband, Thomas Henderson, to Madison County, Tenn., where Fenner bought land near Jackson, the county seat. He died and was buried at Cotton Grove. His widow and various of their children lived on the plantation until she died in 1852 at eighty-five, outliving seven of her ten children. Those children were Margaret, who died in infancy; Ann (m. Thomas Henderson); Richard H. (m. Sarah M. Outerbridge); Mary (m. John M. Johnson); William K.; Eliza Geddy (m. James Vaul); Martha Matilda (m. Lewis Coopender); [Erasmus Darwin](#) ^[9] (m. Annie America Collier); John McKinnie (m. Miriam Williams); and Juliana (m. David McKnight). Four of Dr. Fenner's seven sons and three of his grandsons became physicians and two of his daughters married doctors.

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Origin - location:

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