

McDowell, Joseph ^[1]

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McDowell, Joseph

by John Inscoe, 1991

25 Feb. 1758–18 May 1795



Joseph
McDowell.
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^[2]Joseph McDowell, *Revolutionary War* ^[3] officer, the son of "Hunting" John McDowell, was born at his father's newly acquired Pleasant Gardens home in what is now *McDowell County* ^[4]. To distinguish him from his second cousin and brother-in-law of the same name who lived at Quaker Meadows, he was usually referred to as "Pleasant Gardens Joe," Joseph McDowell, Jr., or P. G. Young McDowell was sent to Winchester, Va., his father's former home, to attend school. At age eighteen he enlisted, along with his cousin Joseph, in a *Burke County* ^[5] regiment commanded by another cousin, *Charles McDowell* ^[6]. He served with the regiment in various encounters with Tories and *Cherokee Indians* ^[7] and during its most effective action at the *Battle of Kings Mountain* ^[8]. There is some uncertainty among descendants as to which Joseph commanded the regiment in that battle, though the best evidence indicates that "Pleasant Gardens Joe," then a major at age twenty-two, served under "Quaker Meadows Joe," then a colonel. Soon after the war Major McDowell was made an honorary militia general and continued to be referred to as General McDowell for the remainder of his life.

With his military career behind him, McDowell resumed his education, studying both medicine and law. He was admitted to the bar in 1791 and seems to have limited himself to a legal practice in Burke, Rowan, and Rutherford counties. From 1787 to 1793 McDowell represented Burke County in the House of Commons. He was also a delegate to the constitutional conventions of 1788 and 1789 from Burke County, as was his cousin of Quaker Meadows. From 1790 to 1794 he served on the board of trustees of *The University of North Carolina* ^[9].

McDowell married Mary Moffitt, who survived him as did three children; Ann, James, and John. His widow married Colonel John Carson and became the mother of *Samuel P. Carson* ^[10], congressman and secretary of state of Texas.

When McDowell County was formed in 1842, it was named for Joseph McDowell of Pleasant Gardens, which fell within the bounds of the new county.

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Additional Resources:

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"Pleasant Gardens." N.C. Highway Historical Marker N-4, N.C. Office of Archives & History. <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?sp=Markers&k=Markers&sv=N-4>^[13] (accessed July 31, 2013).

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