

**Adair, John** <sup>[1]</sup>

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by Mary Adair Edwards Phifer, 1979

**1732–24 Feb. 1827**

John Adair, pioneer settler and local official, usually identified as "The Entry Taker," was born in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. He married Ellen Crawford and had at least one son, John Jr., and one daughter, Mary or Maria. He is to be distinguished from [General John Adair](#) <sup>[2]</sup> (1757–1840), who was born in Chester County, S.C., and who later moved to Kentucky, where he became the eighth governor of that state and died at White Hall, Mercer County. General John Adair lived in North Carolina for only a year or two when he attended school in [Charlotte](#) <sup>[3]</sup>.

John Adair, the Entry Taker, is also to be distinguished from his son, John, Jr., born in Ireland in 1754, who, though not so well known, served his country well in defending the frontier while living with his parents in Sullivan County, then North Carolina, but afterward Tennessee. He moved to Knox County in 1791, and lived there for fourteen years before moving to Wayne County, Kentucky, where he died.

John Adair, the Entry Taker, brought his family to America about 1767, landing in Baltimore. He lived in Maryland and Pennsylvania, about a year in each colony, before moving to Sullivan County in 1772. There he acquired four hundred acres on the north side of the Holston River on both sides of the main wagon road. In 1779 he was appointed entry taker for Sullivan County; in 1780 he was drafted for military service, but his son served as his substitute.

In 1781, before the [Battle of King's Mountain](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, Adair released state funds for arms and supplies to Colonel [Isaac Shelby](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and Colonel [John Sevier](#) <sup>[6]</sup>, both of whom he knew well. Without funds, they had turned for a loan to him as land agent. Adair's reply to the request was: "I have no authority in law to make that disposition of this money. It belongs to the impoverished treasury of North Carolina, and I dare not appropriate a cent of it to any purpose, but if our country is overrun by the British our liberties are gone. Let the money go, too. Take it. If the enemy, by its use, is driven from the country, I can trust that country to justify and vindicate my conduct, so take it." The loan amounted to \$12,735. Shelby and Sevier pledged themselves to see it refunded, or the act of the Entry Taker legalized.

A group of western Virginians and Carolinians submitted a document read in Congress 13 Jan. 1785, asking for the establishment of an independent government to be known as the [State of Franklin](#) <sup>[7]</sup>; John Adair was one of the four residents of Sullivan County to sign the petition.

In 1787 Hawkins County was formed from Sullivan and Adair was appointed commissary agent. In 1788 he was also named commissary agent for the route through the Cumberland Gap that was the passageway for travelers through the wilderness to the Cumberland Plateau. In that same year he built Fort Adair on the Broadway Road, which was the Indian path to the Clinch River.

In 1790 North Carolina ceded land to be known as the Territory South of the Ohio; it remained so designated until 1 June 1796, when Tennessee became the sixteenth state. During those six years Adair took several public actions. In 1790 he was appointed to serve as justice of the peace of Hawkins County. In 1791 he was one of the first to buy a lot in Knoxville. In that same year the legislature of North Carolina granted him a 640-acre section of land four and a half miles north of Knoxville in the Beaverdam Basin. He built his home, called Adair Station, on Adair Creek. In 1792 Adair was appointed a justice of the peace and a member of the court of common pleas and quarter sessions for Knox County. Two years later, when Blount College, now the [University of Tennessee](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, was established, he was named a trustee. In 1796 Adair was a member of the constitutional commission that wrote the constitution for the State of Tennessee. In this same year Knoxville was founded by Adair's close friend and contemporary [Hugh Lawson White](#) <sup>[9]</sup> of [Iredell County](#) <sup>[10]</sup>, who named Adair a commissioner. Adair also served as a trustee of Hampden-Sydney Academy and as an elder in the First [Presbyterian Church](#) <sup>[11]</sup> of Knoxville, established in 1793. He was a presidential elector from the Hamilton district from 1796 to 1800.

Adair died at this residence.

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Lyman G. Draper, *King's Mountain and Its Heroes* (1929).

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**Additional Resources:**

City of Knoxville, Adair History:<http://www.cityofknoxville.org/parks/history/adairHistory.asp> <sup>[12]</sup>

<http://books.google.com/books?id=RXMOAAAIAAJ&pg=PA226&pg=PA226&dq=john+adair+%22entry+taker%22&source=bl&ots=dg6YD5KeIW&sig=RRCBLE94N0Ji-Z2xCkZPYDBnjPM&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Yzr4UMSGE5Dm8wSi34DICQ&ved=0CDMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=john%20adair%20%22entry%20taker%22&f=false&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false> <sup>[13]</sup> (accessed January 17, 2013).

John Adair, the entry-taker in [WorldCat](#). <sup>[14]</sup>

North Carolina booklet : great events in North Carolina history. North Carolina Society of the Daughters of the Revolution., 1901; 1902; 1903; 1904; 1905; 1906; 1907; 1908; 1909; 1910; 1911; 1912; 1913; 1914; 1915; 1916; 1917; 1918; 1919; 1920; 1921. <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/north-carolina-booklet-great-events-in-north-carolina-history-1918-july-v.1-no.1/413957> <sup>[15]</sup> (accessed January 17, 2013).

*Land we love, a monthly magazine devoted to literature, military history, and agriculture.*J. P. Inwin, D. H. Hill. 1866; 1867; 1868; 1869.<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/land-we-love-a-monthly-magazine-devoted-to-literature-military-history-and-agriculture-1867-september-v.3-no.5/501852> <sup>[16]</sup> (accessed January 17, 2013).

**Subjects:**

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