

Deberry, Edmund ^[1]

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Deberry, Edmund

by Daniel M. McFarland, 1986

14 Aug. 1781 [1787?]-12 Dec. 1859

Edmund Deberry, planter, businessman, and congressman, was born near Mt. Gilead, [Montgomery County](#) ^[2]. The birthdate is disputed although his tombstone indicates 1781. He was descended from French [Huguenots](#) ^[3] (De Berry) who first settled in [Bertie County](#) ^[4]. His father, Henry (1758–1818), and mother, Sarah ("Sally") Edmund Deberry, moved to Montgomery County from Bertie before the [American Revolution](#) ^[5] and operated a [gristmill](#) ^[6] and forge on Clark's Creek near Mt. Gilead. The father served in the Revolutionary War, was once sheriff, and for several terms represented Montgomery in the [General Assembly](#) ^[7]. Edmund had two brothers, John and Benjamin.

Deberry received his education at home and at an early age became a successful farmer, businessman, and real estate owner. He was active in the [Masonic Order](#) ^[8] and Sons of Temperance. Elected to the state senate in 1806, he served thirteen terms until 1828. While in the Assembly he was active in the movement for [internal improvements](#) ^[9]. A supporter of John Quincy Adams, he was an elector on the National [Republican](#) ^[10] presidential ticket of 1828.

Congressman [John Culpepper](#) ^[11] declined to run for reelection from the [Fayetteville](#) ^[12] district in 1829, announcing his support of Deberry for the seat he would vacate. John Cameron, editor of the pro-Jackson *North Carolina Journal*, declared in opposition to Deberry. In the heated campaign, Cameron accused his opponent of making large sums of money constructing public buildings while a member of the state senate. The contest was close, Deberry winning by barely two hundred votes. In the next three elections Deberry was opposed by Democrat [Lauchlin Bethune](#) ^[13]. Bethune ousted Deberry by thirty-seven ballots in 1831, Deberry won by exactly the same margin two years later, and Bethune was defeated finally in 1835. Deberry continued to represent the Fayetteville district until March 1845, when he was not a candidate.

After he left Congress Deberry organized the Swift Island Manufacturing Company. He proposed to produce silk, hemp, wool, and iron. Although other business concerns kept him busy, he did not lose interest in politics. In 1849 his partisans persuaded him to return to Congress for one last term. During his political career Deberry was a staunch National Republican or [Whig](#) ^[14] and believed in active government. In Congress he served on committees to monitor government expenditures and on the Agriculture Committee, of which he was chairman for several sessions.

In 1812 Deberry married Temperance ("Tempie") Lightfoot (1774–1871) of Virginia. They had eight children: Henry Winslow, Ann ("Nancy"), Lemuel, Gaston, Edmund, Jr., Mary, Sallie, and Betsy. The congressman and his wife were buried in the family graveyard on their old plantation in Pee Dee Township. The home, near Wadesville, is identified by an historical highway marker.

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Additional Resources:

"Edmund Deberry 1787-1859." N.C. Highway Historical Marker K-33, 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=K-33> ^[15] (accessed May 9, 2013).

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Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=D000181> ^[16] (accessed May 9, 2013).

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