Ephraim Mcdowell Encyclopedia Article

Ephraim Mcdowell

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Contents

Ephraim Mcdowell Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Ephraim Mcdowell.....3

Ephraim Mcdowell

1771-1830

American surgeon who in 1809 removed a twenty-two-and-a-half-pound ovarian tumor from a 47-year-old woman in the backwoods of Kentucky without anesthesia. This was not the first such operation, but the first to succeed by skill rather than luck. The patient survived 29 years after her surgery. McDowell's report of his results in "Three Cases of Extirpation of Diseased Ovaria," published in 1817. The article established ovariectomy as a standard surgical procedure.