



Families—large and small, prominent as well as little-known—have made Jefferson County what it is today. Our reputation for hard work and community spirit has created a special place to live and work.

Nowhere else is that reputation—and the results—clearer than in a scenic area in eastern Jefferson County settled by the Tyler Family in our frontier period. These farmers came west from Virginia in 1780—the very year in which Jefferson County was created—and built a solid, prosperous life on the land.

The Tylers left a legacy in brick and stone and on the land which is a vivid reminder of their special spirit. It is so special, in fact, that three surviving Tyler Family farms have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Tyler Settlement Rural Historic District. This 600-acre area, the first such district in Kentucky, still recalls the energy and commitment which gave all of us such a firm foothold two centuries ago.

For these reasons, it gives me great pleasure to ask my fellow citizens to honor the Tyler Family legacy—and what it represents for countless other families like them—by supporting the preservation of this district.



Harvey I. Sloane

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cover credits

Blackacre Nature Preserve, J. Timothy Keller/Jefferson County
Office of Historic Preservation and Archives
Nelson Tyler with daughters Jennie and Minnie, ca. 1865.
Tyler Descendants Collection. Wheeler Family, Moses Tyler.
Presley Tyler Farm, ca. 1915. Fulton Wheeler Collection.

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TYLER SETTLEMENT

RURAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
JEFFERSON COUNTY, KENTUCKY



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. Stone springhouse and lane, Robert Tyler Farm
 2. Barnyard, Moses Tyler-Presley Tyler Farm
 3. Log house, Robert Tyler Farm
 4. House and fields, Moses Tyler-Presley Tyler Farm
 5. Log house, Edward Tyler Farm
- all photos: J. Timothy Keller/Jefferson County Office of Historic Preservation and Archives

The Tylers arrived in Jefferson County, Kentucky, at the dawn of its settlement. Like others at that time, they were farmers, bringing with them the skills which they had developed living in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, skills which included building in stone, brick and log.

The Tylers' extended families began assembling land in the mid-1780s using warrants obtained from Virginia. They selected land lying in a fertile crescent arcing east of the future city of Louisville, well-drained and suitable for any number of crops.

The first Tyler settlers included Edward, the patriarch, as well as three sons, Moses, William, and Robert. All established farmsteads about a half-mile from one another, each containing the buildings and structures then necessary for running a farm.

All three surviving Tyler farms (William's farm has been subdivided and the buildings demolished) retain most of the structures which made up the farm units. Each has a stone (or a stone and log) house as well as stone spring houses from the 1780s or 1790s. The Robert and Moses Tyler farms have impressive log barns from the same period. Brick homes were added to the Edward and Moses Tyler places by later gener-

ations in the second quarter of the 19th Century.

Perhaps more remarkable is that a number of landscape features left by the Tylers survive today. In order to connect one farm to the other and to larger communities nearby, the Tylers devised and constructed a system of lanes, some mere traces, some incorporated into major paved roads. The Tylers' road system—sophisticated for its day—may have been based partly on even earlier routes, using cuts and fills where necessary and improving springs along the way for more reliable sources of water. In addition to the road network, the field patterns, woods, streams and springs are much the way the Tylers left them.

The prevailing land use today is agricultural, primarily with cattle and sheep, thoroughbred horses, and hay production. A large portion of the district was set aside in 1979 as the Blackacre Nature Preserve, a 170-acre tract owned by the Commonwealth of Kentucky and managed as an environmental education center by the Jefferson County Public Schools.

The 600-acre Tyler Settlement Rural Historic District—the first fully documented rural historic

landscape in Kentucky—is just east of the city of Jeffersontown. It is bounded more or less by Taylorsville Road on the south, the Southern Railroad on the north, Jefferson Freeway on the east, and the Jeffersontown city limits on the west. In addition to the three original Tyler places, 17 other families now live in the district, most in early-20th century houses comprising about 3% of the total land area. The district was added to the National Register on the 1st of May 1986 after nomination by the Kentucky Historic Preservation Review Board. The area was documented by the Jefferson County Office of Historic Preservation and Archives with Land and Community Associates of Charlottesville, Virginia, as a consultant.

The National Association of Counties recognized the identification of the Tyler district with its 1986 Achievement Award. For further information about Jefferson County—a National Park Service Certified Local Government for historic preservation—and the rural historic district, contact the Office of Historic Preservation and Archives.

