

Tyler Block  
319 W. Jefferson Street  
Louisville  
Jefferson County  
Kentucky

HABS No. KY-151

HABS,  
KY,  
56-LOUV  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Architectural and Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20243

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

TYLER BLOCK

HABS No. KY-151

- Location: 319 West Jefferson Street, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky.
- USGS New Albany Indiana-Kentucky Quadrangle, UTM: 16/608840/4234510.
- Present Owner: Urban Renewal and Community Development Agency of Louisville.
- Present Use: Demolished in 1974.
- Significance: The five-part facade of this commercial block is a fully expressed example of the Italianate style of architecture applied to an urban structure.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1874.
2. Architect: Henry Wolters. A native of Germany, Henry Wolters was born near Hanover in 1845 on his parents' estate. After acquiring a technical training at Heidelberg University, he went on to Paris to study architecture at the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

Following a term of service in the Danish-Prussian War, Wolters left for the United States, arriving in Louisville late in 1873 when he began work on the Tyler Block, his first commission. His career spanned from 1874 to his death in 1921. Throughout this period he maintained an office in Louisville, the place of his residence. From 1884 through 1889 he operated an office in New Orleans with a Mr. Harrod. In 1888 he was a partner with Mr. Wheelock in Birmingham, Alabama.

His known works are as follow:

Cotton Exchange.....	New Orleans, La.
Cotton Exchange.....	Memphis, Tenn.
Court House.....	Evansville, Ind.
Court House.....	Birmingham, Ala.
City Hall.....	Vincennes, Tenn.
Union Passenger Station.....	Birmingham, Ala.
Norton Hall, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary .....	Louisville, Ky.
Bamberger & Bloom (Store).....	Louisville, Ky.
Kaufman & Strauss (Store).....	Louisville, Ky.



- B. Historical Context: Levi Tyler, whose money financed the construction of this building, was one of the foremost citizens of Louisville in the antebellum period. He served in the incorporation of the Marine Hospital February 5, 1817. As a Mason, he founded Tyler Lodge, No. 241. He was president of the Lexington and Ohio Railroad in 1838 and of the Louisville and Lexington Turnpike Road Company from 1838 through 1839. In 1818 he was president of the Commercial Bank of Louisville. On November 3, 1827 he presided over a meeting for incorporation of the City of Louisville. He died March 16, 1861 at the age of 72.

His son, Henry S. Tyler, was also a prominent citizen. He is best known for the role he served as Mayor of Louisville.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### General description:

Because of numerous past alterations the original design of the first floor facade cannot be revealed. A mass of glass completely covered this floor. Rows of five one-over-one double-hung sash windows lined the second, third, and fourth floors. Only the second and third floor windows had pilasters; pediments were used on the third floor windows only. A special treatment was used on the central third floor window: pilasters with capitals of female human heads. A pediment with a denticulated cornice stood atop the roof, and behind it was a gable roof.

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### A. Bibliography:

#### 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Books located in the County Clerk's Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

Will Books located in the Probate Office, Jefferson County Courthouse, Louisville, Kentucky.

#### 2. Secondary and published sources:

Harvey, T. Edgar, ed. Commercial History of the State of Kentucky. Courier-Journal Job Printing Co: Louisville, Kentucky, 1899, p. 131.

Johnston, J. Stoddard. Memorial History of Louisville from its First Settlement to the Year 1896. Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Co., 1896.

Williams, L. A. History of the Ohio Falls Cities and Their  
Counties. Cleveland: L.A. Williams and Co., 1882.

Newspaper clippings:

"New Buildings," Louisville Daily Ledger, January 8, 1874, page  
1, col. 4.

"Office Building Replaced Row of Old Shops," Courier-Journal,  
August 4, 1924, sec. 4, p. 4, col. 4.

"Tyler Block Facade Suggested As Part of New Exhibition Hall,"  
by Ed Ryan, Courier-Journal, September 8, 1973, sec. B, p. 1,  
cols. 4-6.

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Historic American Buildings Survey  
Spring 1981

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Preservation Alliance of Louisville and Jefferson County, Inc. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS, the project was completed during the summer of 1974 at the HABS Field Office in Louisville by Prof. John Haggard, (Syracuse University), Project Supervisor; David Arbogast (Columbia University), Project Historian; Mary Oehrlein, Project Foreman; Bayer Lee (City College of New York), Architect; and Mary M. Herd (University of Tennessee) and Charles Raith (University of Cincinnati), student assistant architects. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written descriptive data in the spring of 1981, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher took the photographs of the structures in 1979.