

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

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**General James Taylor, Jr.**

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## General James Taylor, Jr.

1770 - 1848

### Settler and Businessman

James Taylor, one of the first settlers of what is now Campbell County, was born in Carolina County, Virginia. In 1792, James Taylor and his brother Hubbard Taylor made their first trip to Kentucky (then still a county of Virginia) to survey their father's 2500 acre land grant. A year later, Taylor returned and cleared a 180 acre tract of land, building a modest log house which he called Belle View. During this same year, along with settler Jacob Fowler, Taylor surveyed and plotted the first road from Newport to Lexington (now U.S. Highway 27).



In 1794, when Campbell County was formed, Taylor was elected the first clerk of both the county and the quarter sessions court and served in this position until 1795. When the town of Newport was established, Taylor laid out lots on one hundred sixty acres of his land for the town. He was instrumental in the establishment of the town, at his own expense surveying, establishing a ferry, organizing subscriptions to build a courthouse and a jail. From 1795 to 1840, Newport was the seat of Campbell County (which at that time included Boone, Kenton, Pendleton and most of Grant County).

His father deeded him 1500 acres of his land grant as a wedding gift in 1795 when he married Keturah Moss Leitch, the widow of Major David Leitch.

From 1792 until 1848, the settlement period of northern Kentucky, General James Taylor, Jr. proved to be a prominent leader through his many accomplishments and influences. His influences were not only in the physical development of the area, but also in the cultural and social development. His concern with establishing a school and his connections with prominent political leaders including James Madison, Zachary Taylor and Thomas Jefferson helped develop northern Kentucky from a raw settlement area of uncleared lots, dirt roads and a few log cabins into a thriving and civilized region.

His major influences and accomplishments, if defined in relation to his leadership in the founding of northern Kentucky, can be narrowed down to the physical development of northern Kentucky, the founding and development of the City of Newport, the establishment of the Newport Barracks, and the advancement of education through the development of the Newport Academy.

Throughout Campbell County, *nomenclature* influenced by Taylor includes Taylor Avenue in Bellevue, Fort Thomas and Highland Heights; in Newport, James Taylor Park and Keturah Street; in Bellevue, the City of Bellevue and the Taylor's Daughters Historic District; and the city of Taylor Mill (named for a mill built by Taylor).

"By the time of his death in 1848, General James Taylor, long considered northern Kentucky's wealthiest and most influential citizen, enjoyed a reputation throughout the Ohio Valley for his business acumen, community interest, and civic promotion," states Dr. Robert Vitz, professor of history at Northern Kentucky University, in his article "General James Taylor and the Beginnings of Newport Kentucky."

Nominated by Teresa Brum, Historic Preservation Officer, City of Newport.