

Three Historic Chatham County Houses A Feeling for Place 1787 – 2006

Part IV: The Taylor House

by Jane Pyle
2006

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Taylor House 1975
NC Archives



Taylor House 2006

Part IV

The Taylor House

The Terry-Taylor House, like the McClenahan House, is not named for its builder or first owner. Like the other house, there are few records about the beginnings of this house. The original owner of lot 111 was George Lucas, who willed the property to his daughter Mary Taylor in 1830, and the house may have been built about this time, for the plan resembles other houses from this period. Again like the McClenahan House, this one was probably rented and may have been the site of a girl's school for a time.

The old section of the Green Womack house half a block east on Chatham Street is the only other remaining example of this typical 1830s house type, that is, a tall, narrow two-story frame structure. Despite extensive additions, much remains of the original home. A sheathed stair hall separates the main, east parlor from a narrow west parlor where a handsome mantel, sheathed wainscoting, and molded chair rail survive. Both hall and parlor have six-panel doors. In the east parlor,



Taylor House - East Side 2006



Mantel in east parlor; originally in the McClenahan house



Sheathed hall and stairs

plaster walls are supported by a broad baseboard. The mantel is said to have originated in the McClenahan house. A fine example of stone craftsmanship can be seen under the house, where the stone chimney foundations flank a full basement, once the kitchen.

The label Terry-Taylor House derives from A.P. Terry, who bought the house in 1897 from Spence Taylor and sold it in 1901 to Siewers P. Taylor, wife of W. Harlow Taylor. Siewers Angier was the niece of Benjamin Duke, and it is said that his wedding gift to her was the \$1,000 used to buy the house and lots.

Both Harlow and Siewers were deaf mutes and raised their two daughters in this house. He enjoyed fishing, dancing, and baseball, managing a local team as well as umpiring. He was county jailer in the early 1920s when he attempted unsuccessfully to thwart a lynch mob. Two more generations were reared in this home after their daughter Pauline married Junius Peoples, son of the co-founder of the Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company in Siler City. The other daughter, Emily, returned to Pittsboro to live in the McClenahan House, willed to her by a cousin, and later bought and restored the Yellow House, as described in an earlier feature.

[Author's note: This article draws from The Architectural Heritage of Chatham County, North Carolina, and the clippings file at Wren Memorial Library, Siler City. Jane Pyle]



Six-panel door in hall



Sealed fireplace in upstairs west room

Part V

The Taylor and Related Families

The influential Taylor family moved to Chatham County from Virginia at the time of the American Revolution and has connections with several other leading Chatham families – Lucas, McClenahan, Womack, Alston, London, Stedman, Ramsay -- who settled here when the town of Pittsborough was first laid out in 1786 or in the wave of development in the 1830s. Some of the notable people were:

- Philip Taylor, 1759-1795, Captain, 1st North Carolina Regiment
- Sarah Taylor Crawly, wife of Philip Taylor, helped found the Pittsboro Methodist Church
- James F. Taylor, 1791-1828, son of Philip and Sarah, North Carolina attorney general, 1825-1828
- James Taylor, 1765-1830, brother to Philip, trustee of Blakely Academy and Pittsborough Academy, patriarch of the Chatham County Taylor family
- Mary Lucas Taylor, 1776-1860, second wife of James, daughter of George Lucas, entrepreneur from Bladen County whose mercantile interests included navigation on the Cape Fear River to Chatham County, early town commissioner, justice of county court, owner of hundreds of acres of land along Roberson Creek between his ferry and mill on Haw River and Pittsboro; source of much of the inherited Taylor wealth

A delegate to the Convention of North Carolina in 1788, George Lucas signed a petition protesting the siting of North Carolina's capital on Hunter's farm in Wake County. He promoted instead the thriving center of Fayetteville, at the head of navigation on the Cape Fear River.

- William P. Taylor, 1814-1872, lawyer, clerk of county court and clerk of school board, sheriff 1840-1842, state representative 1858-1862 and senator 1862, Deputy Grand Master of Grand Lodge of North Carolina, 1853, trustee of the Methodist church; moved to Texas after the Civil War.

An early family connection to the Patrick St. Lawrence House goes back through W.P. Taylor's wife Ann Ramsay to Elizabeth Stedman Ramsay Goldston, whose Stedman, Poe, and Ramsay families owned it from 1815 through the Civil War

- John Wesley Taylor, 1831-1888, Captain of Co. M, 15th North Carolina Regiment, county sheriff, 1874-1880; cut and hauled lumber for remodeling the Episcopal church
- Sarah Ann McClenahan Taylor, 1837-1878, wife of John Wesley, daughter of Dr. Spence McClenahan, 1798-1859, prominent Pittsboro physician and civic leader, first president of Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company, state representative 1836-1840, owner of Kelvin
- Fanny London Taylor, 1851-1897, second wife of John Wesley Taylor, sister of W. L. London, adjutant general of the Confederate Army, Pittsboro merchant, and founder of Bank of Pittsboro, and of Henry Armand London, founder of the *Chatham Record*
- Annie Taylor Nash, daughter of Fanny London and John W. Taylor, painted the portrait of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham that hangs in the Superior Court Room.
- Mary Taylor Womack, 1799-1823, wife of Green Womack, 1782-1856, entrepreneur and merchant in Pittsboro from 1810, town commissioner
- Thomas B. Womack, 1855-1910, husband of Susie Taylor, 1865-1906, grandson of Green Womack, lawyer, county solicitor, designer of historic county courthouse, Pittsboro
- Harlowe Taylor, 1869-1923, youngest son of John Wesley and Sarah Taylor (see feature on the Taylor House)
- Spence Taylor, 1858-1920, son of John Wesley and Sarah Taylor, county jailor and sheriff 1890-1892
- Emily Taylor Dixon Brower, 1905-1993, daughter of Harlow and Siewers Taylor, deputy clerk of court, Miss Pittsboro at the Durham Exposition of 1925
- Pauline Taylor, 1903-1966, daughter of Harlow and Siewers Taylor and husband of Junius Peoples, 1895-1955, son of co-founder with F. M. Hadley of the Hadley-Peoples Manufacturing Company of Siler City

[This article draws largely from a family history shared by John Taylor of Georgia, an article from the Chatham Record of 20 September 1962, CCHA's cemetery survey, and federal censuses.]

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