

## THOMAS TAYLOR

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Several ministers (were) present, among them Father Thomas Taylor, 95 years of age, who with his aged consort (80 years) came forty miles in their conveyance to be present; and the road was rough, as I can testify. Though physically infirm by reason of age, yet it can be truly said of them, the eyes of faith are not dim nor spiritual vigor abated.

Father Taylor gave us two good talks, and Sister Taylor stirred all hearts by a pathetic appeal to assist in carrying on the mission work in the county. It was not in vain. About \$100 was pledged for evangelizing, which, with other subscriptions, will swell the amount to nearly \$200.

Shortly after this report, Thomas Taylor fell sick and was taken to the home of his daughter, Harriet because his wife Abigail was up in years herself and unable to care for Thomas. He died the following year and is buried at the *IOOF Cemetery* in Elma.

The grave of his daughter Jane was near by and needed to be moved, so the two were combined with one headstone.

### **Learn More —**

A more extended story of Thomas Taylor is on the Internet at: <http://NCBible.org/nwh/ProTaylor.html>

The detailed development of churches in Grays Harbor County, Washington is located at: [NCBible.org/nwh/WaGrays.html](http://NCBible.org/nwh/WaGrays.html)

The detailed development of churches in Lewis County, Washington is located at: [NCBible.org/nwh/WaLewis.html](http://NCBible.org/nwh/WaLewis.html)

## 🌲 PIONEER PREACHERS 🌲

### PAGES FROM OUR PAST — A SERIES

by Charles Dailey

## THOMAS TAYLOR (1790 - 1886)

Thomas Taylor was a native of Virginia and married another Virginian, Susannah James. She was 20 and he was 22. Mr. Taylor had a Baptist heritage and was a minister among the Baptist Churches in his earlier years.

Sometime before arriving in Washington Territory, he identified with the Churches of Christ and Christian Churches. He was in Kentucky during the time that John Mulkey and Thomas Crawford McBride left the Baptist denomination to become Christians without denominational creeds. The Mulkey break came about 1810 and Thomas and Susanna were married there in 1814. We can speculate that Thomas Taylor made the change during those same years.

Like Aaron Payne, he fought in the Black Hawk War in Illinois in 1839. Harriett was born in Illinois, so the family was living there in 1838.

After coming across the plains in 1852, Mr. Taylor settled with his family in Oregon City. Nearly all of his 11 children were grown and married. He and Susannah still had 14-year-old Harriett at home when they arrived, but she would marry Sidney Beckworth in just three more

years. Their son Thomas J. Taylor was living at home and married Almira Stout in 1855.

Their son Harrison had married Serena Whitlock five years before and they were also in Oregon City with their two children. The two families may have traveled the Oregon Trail together.

Thomas Taylor was probably following the carpenter trade in the rapidly growing new community. It was here his beloved Susannah died in 1859.

Thomas accompanied his children as the two families moved to Elma, Grays Harbor County, Washington Territory in time to be counted for the 1860 Federal Census. He was living next door to his son Harrison and his wife Serena. She was a school teacher. Since both Thomas and Harrison were carpenters, Thomas probably helped build Harrison's house as well as play grandpa to Cornelia, Harriett, Mary and Marinah.

Thomas' married daughter Harriett and her husband Sidney were living on the other side of Harrison and Serena. They soon had Charles, John and Emma. More grandchildren!

Sometime following the 1860 census, Thomas' daughter Jane Slover and her husband Enos settled in Elma.

Later he moved to Tenino, Lewis County, W. T., where he was counted in the 1870 census. That same year, he became the preacher at the newly-formed church on Ford's Prairie. This later became the *Centralia Christian Church*. Mr. Taylor was 79 by this time!

Like most of the earliest churches in western Washington, the Centralia meeting place was built on or near the military road (now Jackson Highway). In 1871 they built a 20' x 30' building at Ford's Prairie. We think that it is the low building in the photo at the right of center. Notice the wagon trail. The house on the left is probably the Halfway House owned by John Buchanan.



Mr. Taylor was riding a preaching circuit, because there is record of him preaching at the church on Yelm Prairie.

While living at Tenino, he met and married a widow, Mrs. Abigail Drury. This was shortly after 1870. Abigail soon wrote to the *Christian Standard*:

There are but two preachers of our order any where here on the Sound. Father Taylor, although his head is silvered with the snows of seventy-nine winters, rides over a hundred miles every month, and preaches to four different congregations. He baptized eight persons during December and January.

Bruce Wolverton, writing in the 1885 *Christian Standard* tells of the annual meeting for Western Washington Territory held at Elma: