

## Robert B. Taylor Collection

1886-1972

99 textual records, 29 photographs, 10 artifacts, 5 albums / 3 linear feet / 4 boxes

The Robert B. Taylor collection provides invaluable information on Corona's earliest days and its principal founder, Robert B. Taylor. Taylor was born in Millbrook, Wayne County, Ohio on October 26, 1849. Though he attempted to join the army as a flag bearer in the Civil War, he was rejected. Instead, he went to college to become a teacher. After teaching for 6 months, Taylor bought his father's store in Indiana and set about becoming a merchant. He also began buying land in other states and selling off subdivisions. In 1873, he married Emma S. Mason. Several years later in 1886, he and Emma moved to California at the urging of his father, who lived in Anaheim. Immediately, Taylor purchased 105 acres in Anaheim and sold it one year later at a profit. Soon after viewing the property the Yorbas had put up for sale near Riverside, he began making plans to begin the community of South Riverside. He went to Iowa to gain support for his venture. In 1886, Taylor purchased 12,000 acres of the Yorba Ranch property south of Riverside with partners George L. Joy, A.S. Garretson, Samuel Merrill, and H. Clay Kellogg. Together, they incorporated a company and were known as the South Riverside Land and Water Company. Emma Mason Taylor and R.B. Taylor had three children: Emma Josephine Taylor (known as "Ocie") in 1877, James DuVergne Taylor (known as "Verne") in 1906 and Harry Garfield Taylor. He later moved to Los Angeles with Emma, but his children lived in Corona most of their lives and the entire family are buried in the local Sunnyslope cemetery. R.B. Taylor died at 1251 W. 54<sup>th</sup> St, Los Angeles on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1940, of pneumonia. See attached BIOGRAPHY for more information.

This collection consists of autobiographical sketches and a history of early Corona by Taylor himself, a family bible, several scrapbooks/photo albums, various newspaper clippings and wedding announcements. In addition, several letters and photos that evidence Taylor's connection to the White House; 2 letters from Vice President Thomas Marshall and a photo with President William Henry Harrison in Corona. Additional items include Taylor's South American mining interests, business ventures in Los Angeles, and articles written and published by the Garretson family. The collection has little information of R. B. Taylor after 1900 to his death in 1940 other than his contributions to recounting early Corona history for civic anniversary events. The Songer collection (M001) should be examined in conjunction with the Taylor collection, as it contains more information about the R. B. Taylor family and the founders of Corona. Some of the items in the collection have been photographed or scanned and are available to view via the Corona Public Library website in our online digital database, *Corona Heritage Online*.

**Organization:** The collection came to the library without a particular order, and it has been arranged into time frames of major interest and subdivided into types of materials.

**Shelving Location:** A1 & A21

### Repository:

Corona Public Library  
W.D. Addison Heritage Room  
650 S. Main Street

Corona, CA 92882

(951) 279-3593

[Heritage.Room@CoronaCA.gov](mailto:Heritage.Room@CoronaCA.gov)

<https://history.coronapubliclibrary.org/>

**Access:** Call or email to verify Heritage Room hours or to schedule a research appointment.

**Gift of** Smith, Levora Raney - grandniece of R.B. Taylor (1982)

**Inventory:**

Call Number	Folder	Description of Records	Leaves
M002/1	1	Finding Aid and Biography	
<b>Series 1</b>		<b>R.B. Taylor and Family in the Midwest</b>	
		Handwritten copy of autographed Letter Signed, from R. B. Taylor to Captain J. L. Merriam of Corona, Apr. 14, 1913, describing Taylor's history of settling South Riverside. Includes names, water development, surveys, and the formation of the First Congregational Church; envelope addressed to Mrs. Clark Songer of Corona.	
M002/1	2	Newspaper articles <i>20-20 Hindsight</i> by Fred Eldridge about the letter from Taylor to Merriam. The articles are dated December 27, 1978.	16
M002/1	3	Personal Recollections - handwritten autobiographical sketch by R. B. Taylor, 1934 at age 85 years. Includes early founding of Corona (South Riverside), founding of Wayne Nebraska by R. B. Taylor, and his early business ventures in Granville College in Ohio, as well as other early business ventures in Colombia City and Ida Grover, Iowa. Early partnerships, such as with Mr. McHugh. A second copy of his recollections is included here.	29
<b>Series 2</b>		<b>Taylor &amp; Family in Early South Riverside (Corona)</b>	
M002/1	4	Carbon copy of typed early history of Corona, including railroads, driving routes and R. B. Taylor's recollections on early street planning and naming, businesses, and early inhabitants – 1886 – 1895.	6
		Newspaper: <i>Press Enterprise</i> , Diamond Jubilee of Riverside County, Sunday May 5, 1968. Page C-6 by Iris Hayward gives Corona History of May 9, 1893 to May 9, 1968.	
M002/1	5	Two photocopies of Senate Resolutions related to Diamond Jubilee of the City of Corona by Senator Backstrand.	7
		Photocopies of photos, originals are in the Photograph Collection: Coldwater Canyon, Temescal. (TEM-aaa-016a)	
		Temescal Hotel (BUS-lod-007a)	
M002/1	6	Citizen's Bank and First National Bank (BUS-ban-003b), a copy of an 1890 newspaper article about the bank	8

		Train and President Benjamin Harrison at stop in Corona on way to Temescal Tin Mines in 1891. R. B. is on right side of picture with his hand on his hat. On display are flags, plates of oranges, and bars of tin in a large stack, April 26, 1891. (original Resource ID:SPE-aaa-001; current Resource ID PER-pol-005)	
		Bird's Eye View of South Riverside. Four months after its founding in 1886. Includes a short history of the founders. (HIG-aer-003)	
		Aerial view of Corona, taken from 5000 ft. in airplane from March Field. (HIG-aer-008)	
M002/1	7	Handwritten history of the founding of the Congregational Church (2 pages, blue ink – author unknown). On back is listing of ministers, wives and children, and dates of services. Typed history of the founding of the First Christian Church (author & date unknown).	5
M002/1	8	Stationary from Hotel Temescal, dated Jul 13, 1888, with notes written on back dated Jul 13, 1889, signed by Emma (Ocie) Taylor. Display note "Hotel Temescal, built 1888"	2
M002/1	9	Yellow ribbon commemorating the "10 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Corona (1887 – 1897)" "Compliments of Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Taylor" and California Seal Printed on front.	1 artifact
M002/1	10	Souvenir Ribbons from Corona Road Races 1913 and 1916. (1916 red printed with "Tickets" and 1913 lavender "Compliments of Newton and Warner TWO STORES")	2 artifacts
M002/1	11	Newspaper and Magazine clippings (6 articles from undated Newspapers and 1 Magazine page showing scenes from Corona, updated).	3
<b>Series 3 R. B. Taylor Family: Articles Regarding Family and Friends</b>			
M002/1	12	Book containing articles, newspaper clippings about the Taylor family. The book contains an inscription on the first page: "To my dear friend Ocie Songer insincere sympathy - Bruce Brown". Wedding announcement of Mary Inez and Frank Burman Ware, 1915. Photocopy of a photo – PER-aaa-266	2 leaves, 1 book
M002/1	13	Newspaper clippings – article on King George VI; Poetry written by Dr. E.H. Smith of Corona; Ocie Taylor Songer is only survivor of founding family; 60th Anniversary of R. B. Taylor; family picture CA 1927; Death notices of Judge Geo. R. Freeman and Mrs. Clara Rimpau; Ocie Taylor at age 92 honored at Corona's Pioneer Picnic on Jun 2, 1969.	6
M002/1	14	Brochure: Marlborough School for Girls Los Angeles – Handbook and Graduating Class Address by Mrs. Geo. A. Caswell, Jun 22, 1969. Typed copy for newspaper article – Songer-Taylor marriage.	1 leaf, 2 pamphlets
<b>Series 4 Memorabilia of Clark. E. Songer</b>			
M002/1	15	Corona Lodge 291, Knights of Khorassan Certificate dated September 1917; Past Chancellor's Credential, dated December 31, 1918.	2

M002/1	16	Badge of Lodge 291, Corona K of P	1 leaf, 4 artifacts
		Grand Lodge Ribbon, Yosemite 1920	
		Envelope of M.C. Lilley & Co., Ohio	
		A Red Ribbon with saying attached – “Absence makes the heart grow fonder”	
<b>Series 5 Correspondence</b>			
M002/1	17	Letters from Vice President Thomas R. Marshall, September 6, 1913 and March 31, 1914	2
<b>Series 6 R. B. Taylor – South American Mining Interests (1900 – 1910)</b>			
M002/1	18	Passports – R. B. Taylor: USA – Jan 19, 1910;	3
		Columbia, South America – October 13, 1902	
		Columbia, South America – January 21, 1902.	
M002/1	19	Antioqua Gold Mining Company letterhead listing R.B. Taylor, General Manager / W.J. McIntyre, Secretary and Treasurer / E.W. Freeman, President / F.H. Rindge, Vice-President. The office was located at 509 Laughlin Building, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. The location of the mines - Colombia, South America.	2
		One business card for the Antioqua Gold Mining Company – with R. B. Taylor listed as General Manager (c. 1900)	
M002/1	20	Diary – of Mary Taylor Mathis, sister of R. B. T. and wife of Page Mathis (Black 6 ¾” x 8 ¼”. 120 pages). Describes day to day life, from Los Angeles to New York to South America – thoughts of Mary as she waited for Page and R. B. as they inspected mines. Includes descriptions of Caribbean Islands and Bolivia. (May 1, 1900 – after Mar 1902)	1 book, 3 leaves
		Three separate leaves of diary writings.	
<b>Series 7 R. B. Taylor – Business Ventures in Los Angeles</b>			
M002/1	21	A handwritten description of R.B. Taylor's smokeless gunpowder. The manuscript includes his formula for the gunpowder.	4
M002/1	22	Original brochure and photocopy – Community Oil Producers of California, c. 1920. R. B. Taylor Trustee/Manager. Pictures show investors and well, Burbank, CA.	3 leaves, 1 photo
		Sepia Photograph – Well # 1 of Community Oil Producers c. 1920.	
M002/1	23	Article – <i>American Globe</i> , February 1922 – "Wilshire Oil Producers Strike It Rich". R. B. Taylor's lease of Rimpau land near La Brea Tar Pits.	1
M002/1	24	Pass – Southern California Motor Road Company Pass to R. B. Taylor, no. 26. Issued until December 31, 1888.	2
		Business card – Associated Oil Syndicate, R.B. Taylor is listed as Manager.	
<b>Series 8 Published Articles by Garretson Family</b>			
M002/1	25	<i>Tales of Death Valley, Interested in Gold in 1887</i> . Revisited in 1897 A. S. Garretson (mimeographed copy). The original article appeared in the Sioux City Tribune in 1887.	28

		<i>Tales of Death Valley, Interested in Gold in 1887</i> , revisited 1897 edition by A. S. Garretson (mimeographed copy). The original article appeared in the Sioux City Tribune in 1887.	
		A Bit of History by a Son of a Pioneer, by S. A. Garretson, 1963 (mimeographed) .	
<b>Series 9 Ephemeral of R. B. Taylor</b>			
M002/1	26	Name card – Miss Charlotte Root (addresses of Aunt Mary, 3610 Broadway and Mrs. Woodall, 2443 Broadway, written on back)	4 leaves, 1 artifact
		B.P.O.E. Card – E. H. Porter, P.E.R. (Aunt Jorusin's son, Father's nephew written in hand of Ocie Songer)	
		A saying written on a scrap of paper	
		Picture button of R. B. Taylor, 1880s.	
<b>Series 10 Photographs – R. B. Taylor Family Collection</b>			
M002/1	27	Handwritten note on Riopan stationary "Daguerreotypes" is written at the top of the note with members of the Taylor Family listed below.	46
		Ancestry chart for RB Taylor, Emma Mason Taylor, and Emma Taylor Songer (Ocie). Compiled by Heritage Room Staff.	
		Miscellaneous Census records used in ancestry chart research.	
		Individual Logs for the 7 Songer-Taylor Photo Albums (See Series #11)	
		Index of names and places for Scrapbooks/Photo Albums (See Series #11)	
		List of Family Names featured in the Taylor-Songer scrapbooks and photo albums	
M002/1	28	Photocopies of photographs.	10
		PER-aaa-275 Portrait of Robert B. Taylor. August 12, 1899	
		PER-aaa-276 Harry Taylor (son of R.B.), about 2 years old. Circa 1886	
		PER-aaa-277 Harry G. Taylor. Circa 1890	
		PER-aaa-278 E.M. Taylor's Great Grand Father Washburn.	
		PER-aaa-280 R.B. Taylor. Date:1928	
		PER-aaa-281a,b R.B. & Emma Taylor. Date: 1928	
		PER-aaa-282 R.B. Taylor. Circa 1880	
		PER-aaa-283 Emma Mason Taylor at the age of 26. Date: 1880s.	
		SPE-ann-005 / E-16-6-3 Dedication of Skyline Drive. Some of the people in the photo are identified in an attachment to the photocopy of the image.	
M002/1	29	Photocopies of photographs – R. B. Taylor residences:	4
		BUI-res-141 948 Santee St., Los Angeles	
		BUI-res-142 Belmont St., Los Angeles	
		BUI-res-143 519 Temple St., Los Angeles	
		BUI-res-144 54 <sup>th</sup> St., Los Angeles	
M002/1	30	Photocopies of photographs –	11
		PER-aaa-267 Lucille Songer	
		PER-aaa-268 Lucille Songer and Bob Davis	

		PER-aaa-269 Lucille Songer	
		PER-aaa-270 Lucille Songer 1 ½ x 2 ½	
		PER-aaa-271 Lucille Songer 2 ¾ x 4	
		PER-aaa-272 Man and car, likeness of Clark Songer	
		PER-aaa-273 Marilyn Johnson & husband	
		PER-aaa-274 Prof. Talbert of Granville Ohio College, handwritten note is attached to the photocopy.	
		OUT-cal-106 Hotel Acton near Fullerton	
		OUT-cal-107 Sugar Loaf, Catalina Island	
		OUT-cal-108 Sugar Loaf, Catalina Island	
		OUT-aaa-112 Two graves – unidentified man and two cars	
<b>Series 11 Bible &amp; Scrapbooks/Photo Albums– Family of R. B. Taylor</b>			
M002/1	31	Description of Albums 001 - 007.	1
M002/1	32	<b>Album 005</b> -- Bound black pages with no cover. Photos of the Songers and Taylors.	1 album
M002/2	Flat Box	<b>Album 001</b> – Large Brown Photo Album. 50 pages, contains: several generations of the Taylor, Mason, and Songer families. Created by Emma “Ocie” Taylor Songer.	1 album
M002/3	Flat Box	<b>Album 002</b> -- Black material bound book given to Emma Josephine Taylor (Ocie) by Clark Songer, Jun 14, 1907. Includes family pictures, and those of So. California and South America. Includes Mission Inn, Mt. Rubidoux, Beach, Corona, Victorville, Chatsworth, farms, and residence interiors and exteriors, as well as scenic views in Mexico and South America and the people of those areas.	3 albums
		<b>Album 003</b> – Reddish-brown leather scrapbook contains 35 pages of photos and newspaper clippings.	
		<b>Album 004</b> - Loose black pages with no cover. 32 pages of family pictures by Ocie Taylor Songer, ranging from 1900-1910. 15 pages of Blue Tone and 17 pages of black and white prints. From unknown scrapbook containing photos and clippings.	
M002/4	Flat Box	<b>Taylor Family Bible</b> – Large, brown Bible with gold lettering, leather bound, contains genealogical material.	1 book

**Robert B. Taylor Collection**

1886-1928

**List of Relocated Items**

Location	Resource ID	Description	Item Type
Box 156, B G-4	AAA.1119	Hotel Temescal, commemorative silver spoon, with enameled handles hand painted with fruit and flowers, and a picture engraved on the bowl of the spoon.	ARTIFACT
Box 156, B G-4	AAA.1120	Bank Building, commemorative silver spoon, with enameled handles hand painted with fruit and flowers, and a picture engraved on the bowl of the spoon.	ARTIFACT
Photograph Drawers	BUI-res-141	948 Santee St., Los Angeles	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	BUI-res-142	Belmont St., Los Angeles	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	BUI-res-143	519 Temple St., Los Angeles	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	BUI-res-144	54 <sup>th</sup> St., Los Angeles	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	BUS-ban-003b	Citizen's Bank and First National Bank	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	BUS-lod-007a	Temescal Hotel	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	HIG-aer-003	Bird's Eye View of South Riverside. Four months after its founding in 1886. Includes a short history of the founders.	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	HIG-aer-008	Aerial view of Corona, taken from 5000 ft. in airplane from March Field.	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-266	Black and white photo believed to be of Taylor Family members in front of the Sunkist Plant. Howard Ware thought the tall man on the left may be Claude Songer.	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-267	Lucille Songer	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-268	Lucille Songer and Bob Davis	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-269	Lucille Songer	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-270	Lucille Songer 1 ½ x 2 ½	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-271	Lucille Songer 2 ¾ x 4	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-272	Man and car, likeness of Clark Songer	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-273	Marilyn Johnson & husband	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-274	Prof. Talbert of Granville Ohio College, handwritten note is attached to the photocopy.	PHOTO

Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-275	Portrait of Robert B. Taylor. August 12, 1899	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-276	Harry Taylor (son of R.B.), about 2 years old. Circa 1886	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-277	Harry G. Taylor. Circa 1890	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-278	E.M. Taylor's Great Grand Father Washburn.	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-280	R.B. Taylor. Date:1928	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-281a,b	R.B. & Emma Taylor. Date: 1928	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-282	R.B. Taylor. Circa 1880	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-aaa-283	Emma Mason Taylor at the age of 26. Date: 1880s.	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	PER-pol-005	Original Resource ID was SPE-aaa-001 - Train and President Benjamin Harrison at stop in Corona on way to Temescal Tin Mines in 1891. R. B. is on right side of picture with his hand on his hat. On display are flags, plates of oranges, and bars of tin in a large stack, April 26, 1891.	PHOTO
Mapcases	SPE-ann-005 / E-16-6-3	Dedication of Skyline Drive. Some of the people in the photo are identified in an attachment to the photocopy of the image.	PHOTO
Photograph Drawers	TEM-aaa-016a	Coldwater Canyon, Temescal	PHOTO