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→ The Way it was

(E)

Linda Rough,

(1987)

for B.Ed. - 1 - Ed. Dept. then BCSE.

TAYLOR family

Interviewee = Howard TAYLOR

b.1912-

for B.Ed.

Silverback College

b.1912.

18pp

only pp 1-7  
= relevant

Around 1860, the Taylor family was first introduced to Bendigo.

When, just after migrating from England, John William Taylor, (Grandfather to Howard), walked from Melbourne to Bendigo,

... with his swag, (that is - his bed), on his back and other belongings in a sugar bag, (that is - jute) hanging from his shoulders in front, a small billy can and a fry-pan hung from his belt. (1)

He married Susanna Johnson, who worked for her two sisters in the first ladies corsetiers shop in Swanston Street, Melbourne, prior to marrying. She then travelled to Bendigo in a bullock wagon.

The Gold Rush was what attracted John to Bendigo and he obtained a one acre block of land as a miners right, for five shillings a year, on the corner of Specimen Hill Road and Chum Street. He built this home from local sawn timber and running through the front of the block was a small creek,

...everytime it rained, the loose dirt was washed down the creek, you'd see the prospectors with their tin dish and shovels, they definitely did well out of this prospecting. We used to call it 'specking for gold'. They could see it, before they'd start to shovel it into their dishes. (2)

John was able to secure a job as a pattern maker for mine winding machines in one of the Bendigo foundaries. When the mining activity began to slowdown and foundaries began to close, John began building houses in the Bendigo area.

John and Susanna had nine children, six girls and three boys, the youngest being Henry Johnson Taylor (Howard's father). Around the age of twenty-six, Henry married Elva May Martin. Her father was a saddler, machinist and gunsmith.

Howard

Check find tapes!!

...he was born into a very rich family actually, in the south of London, he didn't like the snobbery, it didn't appeal to him, at all. He just told his father that he'd be leaving home and would go and learn a trade somewhere and it must've been pretty hard for his old man cause he said to him - "If you leave home, you'll be cut off without a shilling". It made no difference to Grandfather, he was going to make his own way...as soon as he'd qualified in the three vocations, he migrated with Grandma. (3)

Her name was Carolyn Bridgewater. The two met whilst he was doing his apprenticeships in the Midlands of England, near Birmingham.

On Monday the 9th of September, 1912, Howard Johnson Taylor → Isabelle was born to Henry Johnson and Elva May Taylor, in a four roomed weatherboard house in Chim Street, Specimen Hill,

...this house built by my father cost seventy sovereigns which he had saved up, working as a carpenter with his father and two eldest brothers.. (4)

...all around that Specimen Hill area the family built. (5)

Fifteen months after Howard was born, Gwendoline Elva was born, then tragedy struck, another child was due some months later and

...if the doctor had had a motor car instead of a horse and buggy, he might've been able to save mum's life, she died in childbirth at thirty-two. (6) = my mother



In 1918, after the death of his mother the family moved to Booth Street, Golden Square to live with her parents. Howard's father was able to build a large house from two cottages, pulling one down and adding to the other. At the same time, though being very close to an armistice, World War 1 was still going,

...my father tried to join the army... the doctor wouldn't give him a clearance, he said "you've got a responsibility to your family", because he knew my mother pretty well. Old Doctor Frost from Golden Square,... he was very saddened by my mothers death, he felt a bit of responsibility as he didn't get there in time. (7)

After a year or so Henry came down with Pneumonic Influenza, which inflamed the lungs and weakened the heart, this caused a number of deaths in Bendigo. As the Bendigo Hospital could not cope with the epidemic a part of the Bendigo Asylum was used for nursing patients. Fortunately Henry survived, however he carried the weakness right through his whole life. Two years after Elva's death, Henry remarried.

His second wife was May Whitcombe, who originally came from a dairy farm in Strathfieldsaye. She worked in a café, selling food and sweets, and was paid one pound per week. Her parents moved onto a wheat farm in Quambatook, so she lived with her grandmother in Strathfieldsaye until she married Henry.

...my stepmother and I were at variance quite a bit, she didn't take to me at all really...I was a bit sensitive to the fact that she was still my father's wife and not my mother...in many ways, she was a terrific person... (8)

Henry and May bought and renovated a house in Panton Street, shortly three more children were born, these being Norman Henry, Alan Robert and Raymond John.



After being renovated, the Panten Street house created a lot of excitement and interest as a new 'Little Hero - Chip Bath Heater' was installed. To operate the heater, any ash would be removed from the ash pit underneath the small fire door, a bucket of wood chips would be placed in the heater, the water turned on and the fire lit. The heated water was then used in the bath.

..half the kids in the school had to come and have a look at it, there was only one in the street. The thing I liked as a kid was to get the fire running up the flue. I thought that was very interesting.(9)

Howard's task was to keep the wood box full and enough kindling sticks ready to light the various fires, as all cooking and heating was done with wood fuel. A few houses had been burnt down due to poor installation or lack of a flue, slack building regulations did not help in reducing the fire hazard.

After a few years the house in Panten Street, Golden Square was sold and the family moved to Echuca Street, Quarry Hill. Howard's father was compelled to build a large house as there were five children and two adults.

...the weatherboard dado was sheeted up with Tasmanian hardwood, weatherboard specially milled... and then above the weatherboards was rough cast stucco over steel lathing - a steel mesh lathing, the weatherboards were stained then they weren't painted for years and years...each year you'd give them a coat of weatherproof oil, this looked like stained furniture...it was beautiful timber...(10)

At about five and a half, Howard started school. There was no Kindergarten, no Preschool, it was straight into grade 1. He started at Specimen Hill State School and was there for six months. At the school were about thirty children, one teacher and one monitor. The monitor's job was to help with correction, to give the spelling and other such tasks. They were virtually student teachers and as there was no formal training school the monitors became teachers after a number of years.

Howard's mother died about June that year and as the family moved the Booth Street, Golden Square, Howard was transferred to Golden Square State School for four or five years. He also attended Quarry Hill State School for six months before attending high school, as the family had then moved to Echuca Street, Quarry Hill. In grades five and six there were about fifty children with most being in grade six. There was only one teacher with the two grades, he was given some relief when a senior girl would take the spelling with grade five whilst he would do arithmetic with grade six.

...you'd have your head down from the time you went in until you came out... I liked school, I was very keen on school, but you knew you had to work and you got stuck into it...one teacher Mr O'Mahoney, I considered one of the best teachers I ever had in the sixth grade. He'd only have to open the drawer in his desk, pull the strap out and lay it there. It was the best deterrent of all. (11)

High school was called Elementary High and instead of being forms one and two, they were called F and E forms respectively,

...F and E forms were held in the top section of the Camp Hill State School...we'd have to go over to the main high school [Bendigo High School] for science and woodwork. (12)

Subjects Howard studied were English, French, drawing, geometry, maths, science and woodwork. Maths was divided into three parts - arithmetic, algebra and geometry,

...I thrived on that, I loved that there were three of us, especially E form, and I had to take second place a couple of times, but I came out on top...algebra was a dream, I loved that...It was an interesting thing with education, although I went up to second year high school, my father only had six years of primary and he covered more subjects in those six years of my education. He did Euclid [a study of geometry from Greece], trigonometry, geometry, he knew a lot. (13)

Howard wished to continue his schooling, however it was near the end of the depression, money was a bit tight at home, and four other children were still following on. As each child had to look after themselves, Howard left school after securing his Merit Certificate (form two) and went to work for his father, building. He was given two shillings on pay day, the first money he'd earned and he remembered his father telling him not to spend it all at once.

The 1930's depression meant unemployment, low wages, moving around to find work and near starvation to some families,

...my father was very fortunate, he was well known and there was always something to do, some of them weren't such a good paying proposition, but he was always able to make ends meet at the time. We were fortunate living in Bendigo...Bendigo didn't feel it till well on, but then it lasted a little bit longer...once the depression finished, things started to move quite quickly, there seemed to be more money put into the system and away we went. (14)

After working for his father for a few years, Howard realised he'd like to own a business of his own one day, so at about the age of seventeen, he went to night school doing three years of building construction, Tuesday and Thursday nights for two hours and just prior to marrying he did a further twelve months night school at a Bendigo Building college learning how to keep books and so on.

For the first fifteen years of Howard's life most people travelled by horse drawn vehicles. His father had a spring cart which he used for his building business and a hickory and rubber tyred gig for the family,

...there was one trip we did take with the horse and buggy, just before my mother died, there were three buggy loads went to Daylesford for a weeks holiday, we drove all day, it took eight and a half hours, Bendigo to Daylesford, the road was pretty rough and shocking, especially around Mount Franklin. (15)

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On Christmas Eve 1925, a new Chevrolet touring car was delivered. It cost Henry approximately 245 pounds, the family thought he was a millionaire. Back then the price of a car was tied economically to a persons income,

... the annual wage rate was the usual price of a workers car. Five pound a week...fifty weeks... 250 pound and then a business man or professional man who was on higher income, well he'd buy a better car, and thats the way it was...virtually, pro rata, cars are cheaper now than what they were then. (16)

Petrol was bought in tins that came in a wooden case, bowlers did not exist. Later, a forty-four gallon drum with a pump on top could be bought and if this wasn't handled properly, there was a bit of wastage. Since that first car, Howard has been fascinated by the motor vehicle. Never being actively involved in sports, motor cars became Howards hobby. So far he has owned twenty-five cars during his life, only three of which were new,

...I was driving at fifteen...I didn't get a licence until I was nineteen. A policeman spoke to my dad, he said...I think he'd better get one, don't you... it was a special treat to get the car. (17)

Shortly after, Howard bought a small B.S.A. motorcycle, which was short lived as his girlfriend (Lorna Jean Dickson) caught the heel of a good shoe in the back wheel.

...I sold it and did all right out of it, and then I bought a Ford V8 Roadster, that was my pride and joy. (18)



FOOTNOTES.

- (1) Tape 1, side A...(0 - 6 minutes).
- (2) Tape 1, side A...(0 - 6 minutes).
- (3) Tape 1, side A...(6 - 8 minutes).
- (4) Tape 1, side A...(0 - 6 minutes).
- (5) Tape 1, side A...(6 - 8 minutes).
- (6) Tape 1, side A...(6 - 8 minutes).
- (7) Tape 1, side A...(8 - 11 minutes).
- (8) Tape 2, side A...(22 - 28 minutes).
- (9) Tape 1, side A...(15 - 20 minutes).
- (10) Tape 1, side A...(15 - 20 minutes).
- (11) Tape 1, side A...(25 - 30 minutes).
- (12) Tape 1, side B...(5 - 9 minutes).
- (13) Tape 1, side B...(5 - 9 minutes).
- (14) Tape 1, side B...(11 - 15 minutes).
- (15) Tape 1, side B...(0 - 5 minutes).
- (16) Tape 1, side B...(0 - 5 minutes).
- (17) Tape 1, side B...(9 - 11 minutes).
- (18) Tape 1, side B...(11 - 15 minutes).
- (19) Tape 1, side B...(22 - 25 minutes).
- (20) Tape 1, side B...(17 - 21 minutes).
- (21) Tape 1, side B...(17 - 21 minutes).
- (22) Tape 1, side B...(28 - 32 minutes).
- (23) Tape 1, side B...(21 - 24 minutes).
- (24) Tape 2, side A...(4 - 6 minutes).
- (25) Tape 2, side A...(6 - 8 minutes).
- (26) Tape 1, side B...(21 - 24 minutes).

Footnotes continued...

- (27) Tape 2, side A...(8 - 13 minutes).
  - (28) Tape 2, side A...(8 - 13 minutes).
  - (29) Tape 2, side A...(11 - 15 minutes).
  - (30) Tape 2, side A...(19 - 22 minutes).
  - (31) Tape 2, side A...(19 - 22 minutes).
  - (32) Tape 2, side A...(22 - 28 minutes).
  - (33) Tape 2, side A...(28 - 32 minutes).
  - (34) Tape 2, side A...(28 - 32 minutes).
  - (35) Tape 2, side B...(0 - 6 minutes).
  - (36) Tape 2, side A...(28 - 32 minutes).
  - (37) Tape 2, side B...(6 - 11 minutes).
  - (38) Tape 2, side B...(11 - 14 minutes).
  - (39) Tape 2, side A...(11 - 15 minutes).
  - (40) Tape 2, side B...(16 - 20 minutes).
  - (41) Tape 2, side B...(16 - 20 minutes).
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