

Taylor, James Peyton ^[1]

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by William S. Powell, 1996

20 Oct. 1839–9 Dec. 1928

James Peyton Taylor, Confederate soldier and teacher, was born near [Pittsboro](#) ^[2], the son of the Reverend William Peter, a Methodist minister, and Mary High Taylor. He was graduated from [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[3] in 1859 and taught school in Pittsboro during the years 1859–61 and 1865–66. On 12 June 1860 he married Virginia Morris Hanks, who was also a schoolteacher.

From 15 Apr. 1861 until serious health problems arose, he served with North Carolina troops in Virginia, first as a private and then as a corporal. Although present, his unit took virtually no part in the fighting at Seven Pines, but it was heavily engaged at Malvern Hill. Sometime prior to 10 July 1862 he was discharged after providing a substitute. In 1863 Governor [Zebulon B. Vance](#) ^[4] detailed Taylor for service as assistant adjutant and inspector general of the Twelfth Brigade, North Carolina militia, with the rank of major.

Taylor and his wife and young daughter, Helen Euphemia, called Effie, moved to Texas in 1866. Soon other members of the family from North Carolina joined them: Mrs. Taylor's brother, John Wesley Hanks; her sister Louise Hanks, who married Joseph P. Underwood; and an uncle, Dr. Anthony Morris. James P. Taylor farmed briefly on the San Bernard River at a place they named Bernadine. Moving to Brazoria County, both Taylor and his wife resumed teaching—in Brazoria in 1867 and Columbia in 1868. In time they built a spacious, two-story house on what was called "the Avenue" between East and West Columbia. There they erected a separate building and opened a private school. Taylor also taught there between 1867 and 1872, when he became principal of the first public school in Texas, a post he retained until 1910, when he was elected county superintendent of schools. After serving for four years he retired. Three hundred former students attended a celebration of the Taylors' fiftieth wedding anniversary in June 1910.

References:

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