JOHN AMMON TAYLOR; MY GRANDFATHER.

John Ammon Taylor was born in Georgetown, Texas, Febr. 18, 1846, a son of John and Eleanor Burkett Taylor. They with 35 other families, had left their homes and property in Nauvoo and went to colonize in Texas under the leadership of Lyman Wight. This group and other families had been called by Joseph Smith Jr. to make a settlement in Texas a few weeks before his death and were making preparations to do so when he was killed by the mob. All the colonists that went to Texas belonged to the “Josephites.” (Which later became the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints).

John and Eleanor later decided to go to Utah and in 1852 they moved to Oklahoma Territory where they stayed 2 years getting ready to join their family, who by this time were at Bingham’s Fort near Ogden. (This was in the area now known as Five Points.) They started their journey June 12, 1854 and arrived at Bingham’s Fort August 15, 1854. Another family started out with them but had better horses, no oxen, and didn’t want to travel as slow as the train so pulled ahead. Several days later the train found the wagons where they had been attacked by Indians and all killed except 2 boys who were riding their horses ahead and upon hearing the Indians hid in the brush and watched their family massacred. John Taylor’s party consisted of the parents, 10 children, 12 yoke of oxen and 1 horse. They had one bad accident when the baby was run over b a wagon but through faith and prayers he was healed. They moulded [sic] his head back in shape and took turns holding it with their hands.

Grandfather was 8 years old at the time of this journey and in later years when he and his brothers and sisters visited together they would take of the amusing happenings on this trip, perhaps not so funny at the time but remembers so afterward. All the family had a great sense of humor which helped them through many trying times, and he especially liked to tease and play harmless jokes on others. As he was the 6th child in a family of 12 he found plenty of outlet for this.

The family settled in Weber County and there he spent the rest of his life with the exception of a few years in Montana. He led the usual hard life the times with scant schooling but like most parents had the desire to see his children educated and out of a family of 9 boys and 1 girl he had 4 sons who attended Utah State Agriculture College and 1 son graduate of Harvard University of Engineering.

During his early manhood he made several trips to the Missouri River after immigrants, and on the last trip in 1868 he drove a team during the day and took turns in the night-hearding or watering camp at night. On these trips the guides and immigrants indulged in wrestling, singing, jumping etc. for amusement and he was the best wrester in his Company. When they would meet another Company they always stopped and had wrestling matches and other diversions. He often told of one of these matches when an opponent, a Wm. Gibson, after being thrown by Grandfather broke the hold and caught the leg of his overalls ripping it to the top. This made Grandfather angry as he had on a new pair and they couldn’t be had often in those days, so he said “I’m going to throw you had now.” which he proceeded to try and do, finally succeeding but he also broke Gibsons arm. This made him as remorseful as he had been angry before and he insisted on paying the Doctor’s charge, although Mr Gibson didn’t hold him to blame for anything. On this trip back from the Missouri he bought one of the first cook stoves ever to come into that part of Utah (Ogden Valley) as he was contemplating marriage to Mary Hannah Poulson (Maren Johanne Ottoson).

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In his early boyhood his father John Taylor got the goldfever [sic] and wanted to go to California so 6 younger children of the family and the parents made preparations to go but while camped at the mouth of Ogden Canyon waiting for the rest of the company they had a bad Indian scare and abandoned this plan and the next year set out with ox team and went up through northern Utah across Idaho and finally ended at Alder Gulch, Montana, where one of the richest goldfields then known was located. During their stay here the Indian Wars broke out, Grandfather and his brother William went to fight the Nez Perce. It seems there must not have been any age regulation about joining the Army – just the ability to load/fire a musket as they were in their teens. They never rejoined their parents who stayed in Montana several more years. On coming back to Utah Grandfather spent one summer in East Mill Creek working for Amos Neff, but one was enough when he had settled for his summers work he had a small amount of script on the Tithing Office and about 30 pounds of homemade soap. He packed the soap and walked to Weber County, about 50 miles. It was after this experience he made the trips back to the Missouri River and between trips worked for Bishop Ballantine of Eden, Ogden Valley. His parents were still in Montana, and his brothers that were married had been sent by Brigham Young to help colonize different parts of the Territory; one to Ashley Valley (Vernal), one to Franklin, Idaho and another was freighting from Utah to Montana.

While working for Bishop Ballantine he met Maren Johanne (Hannah) Poulson in 1868 in the Salt Lake Endowment Hiuse [sic] after his last trip to bring in immigrants. They lived in Eden a little over a year, where John Henry was born, their eldest son.

The people of Ogden Valley had to travel through Ogden Canyon to Ogden City for supplies and Grandmother very often made the trip behind a yoke of oxen and told us many times it was not uncommon for them to have to stop and build a road or bridge over the river where it had washed out. IT would take them all day to make the trip[.] She was very proud of the cook stove Grandfather had brought her and often baked bread and other delicacies for the neighbors, especially when there was a wedding supper or a party. She used this same stove until 1895.

Grandfather often told how hard it was to get money or at least to keep it and it was a common thing to go to a dance with a girl on one arm and a pumpkin or such in the other to pay the dance ticket. One incident where his love of jokes to to light again happened whenhe [sic] was floor manager and door deeper of the Poplar dance hall. One young man named Summers for several weeks had brought a $5.00 gold piece to pay his ticket and always came early before enough money was taken to make change. This night Grandfather was prepared for him, securing the change after much trouble in dimes, nickles [sic] and some pennies. When the gold piece was offered he proceeded to count out the pennies nickles [sic] etc. Summers immediately dug into his pocket and brought out the quarter to pay the ticket, but nothing doing, he had to weigh his pocket down with coppers.

After being married and living in Eden Grandfather moved his family to Plain City (the area known locally as Poplar) and began dealing in real estate. In 1899 he bought his fathers old homestead of 350 acres of the best irrigated land to be found in Weber County. Late in the 1880’s he and the older boys established a ranch in Bingham Co., Idaho buying part and homesteading part. The range was open and their cattle and horses ranged from Culew valley to Promontory, thus began the Bar JA brand one of the oldest and best known brands in Northern Utah and Southern Idaho. (Bingham County was later divided and the ranch was in Oneida Co. with Malad as the County seat.) This began as a cattle ranch with herds being driven out from Plain City and surrounding town to summer range and back in fall with horses being left at all times. After the Cattle war

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with the Union Pacific R.R. and the subsequent closing of the waterholes on the range a large part of the ranch and all the cattle were disposed of and activity was given solely to the raising of horses for which the “Taylor Boys” became famous in this part of the country. They sold horses to the British Government for the Boer War in the 1890’s and also to the United States for the Spanish-American War and World War I. During later years they broke and sold horses for polo players.

As the sons grew older and married, Grandfather turned the active management of the farm and ranch over to them and devoted most of his time to civic affairs, helping establish the Plain City Irrigation Company, Plain City Canning Company, Harrisville Creamery Company, and the Utah Idaho R.R. in getting service to Plain City. He was a member of the District School Board for 20 years. He was also a member of the Black Hawk Veterans Association until his death.

Although being a stockholder in these companies took up most of his time, he always had time for visits with his brothers, sisters and friends and would arrange big family parties on the slightest excuse. He was a devoted husband and father and although not especially active in church affairs he instilled the L.D.S. religion into his children and sent two sons on missions, one to Australia and the other to the Central States.

Plain City was always the family home, here were reared the family, John H., William, George Francis, Charles Ezra (my father), Hyrum Alber, Ether Green, Parley Paul, Elmer A., and Lester Grant – nine sons and one daughter, Eliza Hannah. Grant died as a small child. With the exception of George F. his sons and daughter married and also reared their families in Plain City. On February 7, 1916, Grandmother died. Grandfather later married Martha Ferrin and moved to Ogden where he died after a two week illness on February 19, 1921, the day after his 75th birthday. He was survived by his eight sons and one daughter, 58 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He left his descendants a great heritage: of family love; to live a full useful life and be stalwart men and women.

Written by Thelma Taylor Storey, February 1935.

Information from family records, Ogden Standard

Examiner articles, personal letters written by

Uncle Francis and Emma Knight Furness, niece of

Grandfather and family memories.