



State of Tennessee  
Department of State  
**Tennessee State Library and Archives**  
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Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

**ROBERT L. TAYLOR FAMILY PAPERS,  
1877-1992, bulk 1878-1965**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Robert L. Taylor Family Papers, 1877-1992, bulk 1878-1965, were a gift from Robert L. Taylor, Jr., of Memphis, Tennessee. The collection contains approximately 400 items, mostly newspaper clippings and correspondence, and is housed in 7 manuscript boxes. The collection is arranged in alphabetical and then chronological order. There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Robert L. Taylor Family Papers, 1877-1992, bulk 1878-1965, chiefly consists of numerous newspaper clippings dated from 1880 to 1983. There are several newspaper clippings on Hillsman Taylor (Robert L. Taylor's son-in-law) and his political career, his football career at Vanderbilt University, his father's kidnapping by the outlaw "Night Riders," and his 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. The collection also contains clippings on Millsaps Fitzhugh's political career and his death announcements. Despite these many clippings, most of the newspaper articles in this collection concern Robert L. Taylor and his political career. In addition, there are a number of clippings covering his death. Newspapers such as *The Knoxville Sentinel*, *The Chattanooga Times*, *The Nashville Banner*, *The Democrat*, *The Commercial Appeal*, *The Bristol Herald Courier*, and *The Journal and Tribune*, all devoted the front pages of their newspapers to Taylor's passing.

The collection includes a copious amount of correspondence. There are several letters written by Robert L. Taylor to his wife, Sallie, in which Taylor details his political travels and news to his wife, as well as questions of family and friend news. Sallie Taylor also writes her husband several letters while he is traveling, expresses her longing for him and tells of family and friend news from back home. In addition to these letters, there are letters that were written to Hillsman Taylor from friends, pertaining to Col. R. Z. Taylor's kidnapping and then, later on, condolences for his death. There are also other letters written to Hillsman Taylor from friends and family that congratulate him on his elected position as House Speaker, as well as political concerns and his sudden surgery. The rest of the correspondence in the collection is from various friends and relatives about a wide range of subjects.

The government documents included in the collection include House Resolution No. 37 (hand-written), in which the death of Hillsman Taylor's grandmother, Mrs. Elizabeth Ivery, is discussed and the resolution is adopted on March 4, 1909; an attendance sheet of the House of Representatives, n.d.; a bill that would regulate peremptory challenges of jurors in criminal cases, n.d.; a bill that would authorize and empower universities and other institutions of the state to donate or transfer portions of their endowment to other incorporated institutions of learning, n.d.; another bill that would act to promote safe and suitable schoolhouses in the state of Tennessee; and another bill that would amend an act entitled, "Act to Regulate and Restrict the payment of Costs and Fees in Criminal Prosecutions," n.d.

The pamphlets include Vanderbilt University's 31<sup>st</sup> Commencement Programme, June 20, 1906; the "Proposed Amended Charter of the City of Memphis, January 14, 1909"; the Department of Game, Fish, and Forestry, 1907-1909; "The Liberal View of the Drink Problem by the President's Home Commission"; a hand-made pamphlet on "The American Taylors-1733-1875" by Mathew Hillsman Taylor, n.d.; a pamphlet entitled, "Edward H. Crump Public Enemy No. 1," published by Loyal Tennesseans League in Memphis, Tennessee, n.d.; the "Memphis Press-Scimitar"; a pamphlet detailing "Tennessee's War of the Roses," n.d.; and a pamphlet on "Bob Taylor Books" issued by Bob Taylor Publishing Company in Nashville, Tennessee, n.d.

The collection also contains 35 photographs. There are several of Robert L. Taylor, as well as a portrait of Hillsman Taylor and one of Hillsman Taylor and his wife, Katherine (negative included). There is a photograph of Landon Carter Haynes (Robert L.

Taylor's uncle) and another one of his wife, dated 1903. The rest of the photographs are unidentified and not dated.

Additionally, the collection includes several speeches and poems, one of which is a speech by former Gov. Robert L. Taylor which he delivered at the Tabernacle in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 12, 1906, and another speech delivered on June 22, 1909, in Washington, D.C.; a speech entitled "A Literary Gem" delivered by Landon C. Haynes on East Tennessee, n.d.; a speech (with corrections) about Bob Taylor which was delivered at Plumerville, on June 5, 1906; a hand-written poem called "Old North State," n.d.; a poem titled "An Ode" by an anonymous author, n.d.; a hand-written political speech on House of Representatives stationery, n.d.; and two typed poems entitled "Our Bob and the White Rose" and "John and Bill," n.d.

The collection also contains telegrams, most of which were sent to Hillsman Taylor, expressing sympathies for his father, Col. R. Z. Taylor's, death, as well as his father's kidnapping by the outlaws known as "The Night Riders." There are also several telegrams congratulating Hillsman on being elected House Speaker.

There are 7 scrapbooks in this collection. One belonged to Robert L. Taylor and is dated 1896 and it contains clippings regarding his political career. Another of the scrapbooks belonged to Taylor's daughter, Katherine, and it includes an array of items, such as her wedding invitation, notes on P.H.S (?) prom in 1916, a letter to her father, a poem entitled, "If I Should Die," another poem called "John & Bill" that was written for the American Legion Banquet, November 11, 1923, a picture of the Virgin Mary and Jesus, and an essay entitled, "Power of Habits." Katherine also had another scrapbook in the collection that has two little girls hugging on the cover. This particular scrapbook includes more newspaper clippings concerning wedding announcements and her father's career, as well as telegrams and poems. There is a scrapbook that belonged to Edward Duncan that includes speeches for the Tennessean Republican Association of the District of Columbia and a list of its members, as well as a quote from Abraham Lincoln, and a political newspaper clipping dated in the late 1800s. Another scrapbook contains newspaper clippings and magazine articles detailing black market adoptions during the 1940s and the lady responsible for these adoptions, Georgia Tann of Memphis, Tennessee. It also contains information from an investigation that was done in the early 1990s by CBS News. There is also a scrapbook with Greek decorations on the cover that includes an article on Robert L. Taylor from the *Sunday Magazine of the Sunday Herald*, Chicago, Illinois, February 23, 1913.

Also in the collection are several items of ephemera. These include postcards, Bob Taylor voting ribbons, an invitation from The Watauga Club and a fee receipt, a greeting card from Frank H. Baker, a check signed by Robert L. Taylor, a Maxwell House hotel receipt, Robert L. Taylor's daughter's wedding invitation, Katherine T. Taylor's 1968 Federal Income Tax Forms, a list of "Vanderbilt Songs," biographical notes of Robert L. Taylor for the *Encyclopedia of American Biography*, and a certificate appointing Mrs. Robert L. Taylor as Woman Commissioner of Washington County for the Tennessee Centennial Exposition, dated October 25, 1925.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - ROBERT L. TAYLOR**

Robert “Bob” L. Taylor was born in Carter County, Tennessee, on July 31, 1850. He attended East Tennessee Wesleyan University in Athens, Tennessee. In 1878, Taylor ran and won the general election as a Democrat, after his brother, Alf, lost the Republican nomination for the First Congressional District. In 1881, Robert Taylor ran for the U.S. Senate, but lost. Afterwards he helped found the Johnson City *Comet*, served as a presidential elector in 1884, and was appointed pension agent in Knoxville in 1886. That same year he and his brother, Alf, ran against each other for the Governorship of Tennessee. This political race became known as the War of the Roses (after the English conflict of 1455-1485), but the race between the two brothers was amicable and Robert was ultimately victorious. In 1891, Taylor left his government office because of poor health and became a lecturer. In 1893, he ran for the U.S. Senate seat again, but lost to William B. Bate. In 1896, Robert Taylor accepted another Democratic nomination for the governorship and won. During this term he presided over the state’s Centennial celebration. In 1906, Taylor defeated Edward Ward Carmack for the U.S. Senate and held the seat for the next three years. In 1910, he accepted his party’s nomination for the governorship once again, but lost the race to Ben Hooper, the Republican candidate. In 1912, while still in the Senate, Robert L. Taylor died, following a gallstone attack.

\*Source: *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH - HILLSMAN TAYLOR**

Hillsman Taylor was the son of Col. and Mrs. R. Z. Taylor of Gibson County, Trenton, Tennessee. His father, Col. Taylor, was a Confederate soldier under Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and was kidnapped by a group known as “The Night Riders.” Hillsman attended the University of Tennessee and then Vanderbilt University School of Law, where he played football and graduated in 1906. Hillsman married Robert L. Taylor’s daughter, Katherine Baird Taylor, and later moved to Nashville, becoming a prominent lawyer. In 1909, he was elected Speaker of the State House of Representatives and, in 1915, he was appointed attorney-general of the Thirteenth district by Governor Rye.

\* Source: The *Nashville Tennessean*, entitled, “Taylor Named Atty.-General of Thirteenth,” dated, February 10, 1915.

## CONTAINER LIST

### Box 1

1. Clippings--Taylor, Hillsman, 1915-1954, n.d.
2. Clippings--Fitzhugh, Millsaps, 1936-1956, n.d
3. Clippings--Taylor, Robert L.--Death announcements, 1912
4. Clippings--Taylor, Robert L.--Politics, 1880-1983
5. Correspondence--Taylor, Robert L., 1877-1909, n.d.
6. Correspondence--Taylor, Sally, 1891-1900, n.d.
7. Correspondence--Incoming--Taylor, Hillsman, re: father's kidnapping and death, 1908, n.d.

### Box 2

1. Correspondence--Incoming--Taylor, Hillsman, re: election congratulations and politics, 1909, n.d.
2. Correspondence--Incoming--Taylor, Hillsman, re: health concerns, 1921
3. Correspondence--Various, 1876-1901, n.d.
4. Correspondence--Various, 1903-1952, n.d.
5. Ephemera--1886-1968
6. Government documents--1908-1909, n.d.
7. Pamphlets--1906-1907, n.d.
8. Speeches & poems--1906-1912, n.d.
9. Telegrams--1908-1935, n.d.

### Box 3

1. Book--*Songs and Stories From Tennessee*, by John Trotwood Moore, 1897
2. Scrapbook--Edward Duncan, n.d.
3. Scrapbook--Katherine B. Taylor, n.d.
4. Scrapbook, n.d.
5. Scrapbook, n.d.

### Box 4

1. Scrapbook-- Taylor, Robert L., 1896

### Box 5

1. Scrapbook--Taylor, Katherine B., 1903-1927

### Box 6

1. Scrapbook--1912-1913

**Box 7**

1. Scrapbook--1938-1992

**Box 8 (Photographs)**

1. Family photographs---Unidentified, n.d.
2. Pages from album, n.d.
3. Portrait paintings, n.d.
4. Robert L. Taylor, 1885, n.d.
5. Taylor children, 1903, n.d.
6. Unidentified couple, ca. 1850's