

opened a store on Brushy Creek (near present-day Hutto) sometime around 1848 before moving to the new county seat of Georgetown in 1849. The elder Taylor opened a store on the courthouse square where the M. B. Lockett Building is now located, and sold merchandise that was brought to Georgetown from Houston by ox cart.

Emzy Taylor clerked in his father's store until 1861 when he left to join the Confederate Army. Taylor enlisted in Hood's Texas Brigade, which fought with General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Taylor fought in Virginia until he became sick having lost about 86 pounds. His discharge papers were signed by J.B. Hood himself as they were intimate friends. After regaining his health, he organized an infantry company that became part of 16th Texas Infantry under the command of Colonel George Flournoy. The company fought in a series of battles along the Red River in Louisiana that were known as Red River Campaign and Taylor rose to the rank of captain. He was in the battles of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill, taken prisoner and held for 10 days at Grand Ecore.

After his service in the Red River Campaign, Taylor received a furlough



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*Photos courtesy Winnam Ewing*

# The Amazing Emzy Taylor

Confederate captain figured prominently in  
Georgetown's growth after the Civil War.

By Ellen Davis

**N**o matter what was going on in Georgetown in the 1870s and 1880s, Emzy Taylor was probably involved with it.

The former Confederate officer helped start Georgetown's First National Bank, its water works, its college, its first rail line, and served as the town's first fire chief.

"Taylor made Georgetown into the community it is today," says Mickie Ross, director of the Williamson Museum.

Taylor was born in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1841 and was brought to Texas by his father, Josiah Taylor, who was one of the first merchants in Williamson County. Josiah Taylor

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and returned to Williamson County, where he married Margaret Corinna Henderson of Round Rock on July 7, 1864.

Taylor inherited the family business after his father died in 1868 and figured prominently in Georgetown's growth after the Civil War. He served as secretary of the committee that helped bring what is now Southwestern University to Georgetown and also helped initiate the local Chautauqua organization, which brought renowned speakers and entertainers to Georgetown beginning in 1889.

In the early 1880s, Taylor sold his mercantile business and opened a private bank that became the First National Bank of Georgetown. The bank was located across the street from the store on the lot where the Bank of America now stands. His other enterprises included a water works, which was started in 1877 and later sold to the city of Georgetown, and a nursery business located on land that is now the City of Georgetown's dog park. According to Clara Scarbrough's book on the history of Williamson County, the nursery shipped locally grown produce as far as Colorado.



Taylor also organized Georgetown's first volunteer fire department, and served as chief of the company. A fire truck called "Captain Emzy" was pulled to fires by mules.

Taylor recognized the value of railroads to the growing community, and helped establish the Georgetown Railroad Company, which brought the railroad from Round Rock to

Georgetown in 1878. From 1892-1893, Taylor promoted another rail line to connect Georgetown to Granger, but



the project was beset by financial difficulties, which may have been what led Taylor to take his own life on June 29, 1895.

Taylor is buried in IOOF cemetery along with many of the other men and women who helped build Georgetown. An obituary from the Round Rock Republican at the time of his death said “one of the longest—if not the largest processions that ever was in Georgetown, followed his remains to the burial ground.”



Taylor's house still stands just north of the Georgetown Square at 105 E. 5th St. and occupies a whole city block. The house was originally built as a two-story native limestone dwelling in 1869–1870. The house has two foot thick stone exterior walls. The lower story also has similarly thick interior walls. The upper was left as an open barrack style loft. The house had many firsts for Georgetown, including a bathtub with running hot water and a private telephone line. Many of the original outbuildings remain on the property.

The house was remodeled in 1902 by the Belford Lumber Co. and remains in Taylor's family to this day. In



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fact seven generations of Taylor's descendants have lived in the house. A concrete hitching post in front of the house is inscribed with the initials of Taylor's son-in-law, R. T. Cooper, who was a cashier at the First National Bank.



Taylor's great- great granddaughter, Mary Winnann Ewing and her husband, William E. Ewing, currently reside in the house, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. An extra large cedar trunk the family used to move its belongings was brought from Bastrop by oxen along the Wilbarger Trail is still in use today. Reminders of Emzy Taylor can still be found outside the house as well. Taylor loved cultivating roses and at one time had a rose with nearly 100 grafts. Some of the roses he planted more than 140 years ago are still there along the side of the house. This includes a white Lady Banks rose 9 feet in diameter and about 7 feet tall which was planted before the house was even finished. ■

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