



# **ALBANY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC)**

## **SCHOOLS' PACK GENERAL INFORMATION PATRICK TAYLOR COTTAGE**

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## ***ALBANY HISTORICAL SOCIETY (INC)***

*Affiliated With The Royal Western Australian Historical Society (Inc)*

**Our mission:**

**"To Provide Leadership in Preserving and Promoting Albany's History & Heritage."**

Dear Teacher,

This set of Information Sheets is designed to ensure that your knowledge of Patrick Taylor Cottage is both instructive and factual.

Patrick Taylor Cottage is unique in the history of Western Australia. It is the oldest dwelling still intact in Western Australia.

It was built by John Morley c1832. It was then purchased by Patrick Taylor in 1835.

It remained with descendants of Patrick Taylor until the 1950s.

The original building shows the "wattle and daub" construction.

If you should require any information not contained in the following pages, please feel free to contact us. We will be happy to assist you.

Kind regards

Andrew Eyden  
Chief Executive Officer

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By Bonnie Hicks

## **PATRICK TAYLOR COTTAGE**

The Flemish-style town of Montrose in Scotland was the birthplace of Patrick Taylor in 1807. The family had a large well-endowed property at Kirktonhill and the family tree can be traced back to the 1500s. In the family tree an amazing assortment of versions of the Taylor surname is displayed - Tailour, Tailleur, Tailzeor. This is not entirely due to ancient spelling, Colonel John W. Renny-Tailyour, a sprightly old relative of Patrick's still living in the Scottish family home wrote in 1963, "The family name is Tailyour but a Patrick Tailyour married a daughter of George Taylor of Jamaica and took the name of Taylor on being promised to be made his heir. He never was! Most of the Kirktonhill Tailyours (if not all) have now changed back to the original spelling. I can trace our descent from John Tailyour, who was Bishop of Lincoln. Queen Mary ordered him burnt at the stake so he wisely hopped it. He died in 1554 in the County of Angus". The Scots Ancestry Research Bureau confirms the colonel's story, while the Western Australian branch of the family has virtually died out there being only two female descendants remaining in Scotland and England they are quite numerous and include a company director, a retired Brigadier, a Naval Commander and a Major-General in the Marines.

Why Patrick migrated is not known. He was well acquainted with Sir James Stirling, a fellow Scotsman, and may have been persuaded by him to invest in land in the new colony. Being a younger son and unlikely to inherit he probably welcomed an opportunity to branch out on his own. A Western Australian relative the late Doctor Robert Fairbairn, records that Patrick's parents died when he was young and that guardian brought him up. As a schoolboy, he was allowed £1 (\$2) a week pocket money (a princely sum in those days) to encourage him to be generous with his friends.

Whatever his motive, Patrick Taylor set sail in 1833 on the "James Pattison".

On board were Sir James and Lady Stirling, W. B. Sherratt, Peter Belches, Captain Cheyne and Mrs Bussell senior, and her eldest daughter Mary. The Bussells were on their way to rejoin the rest of the family settled at "Cattle Chosen", Busselton.

Mary wrote a fascinating diary of her shipboard life. Enjoying her role as the only eligible girl on board ship, she describes long conversations with various young men. Like most passengers of the period she was constantly engaged in attending her livestock – bees, fowls, a cat and a dog.

The family background was that of an Anglican parsonage. The deceased Rev. W. M. Bussell had been perpetual Curate of St Mary's Portsea and had baptised novelist Charles Dickens, so it is not surprising to find that Mary was deeply interested in religion. There are several accounts in her diaries of shipboard services, and once she and her mother were invited to Sherratt's cabin for Sabbath service. This somewhat upset Mary, for she had hoped for an invitation from Taylor, who conducted morning service for his servants.

Mary had to comfort herself with the "deep toned voice of the youngest patriarch issuing from the adjoining cabin."

When the "James Pattison" reached Australia it had followed the usual course Antipodean's-bound vessels sailed along the 40 latitudes.

Albany was reached on May 12<sup>th</sup> 1834. The weather was so stormy that the ship was forced to remain for two months. It seems certain that they met Sir Richard Spencer, the new Government Resident. Stirling and Spencer were well known to each other; Sir James had heartily recommended Spencer's appointment to the Home Government, especially to the Under Secretary for Colonies, H. H. Hay.

Mr. Robert Stephs supplied the information about Taylor's land purchases. June records for 1835 show: -

"Albany building Lot s44 offer for fee simple by Patrick Taylor:

Improvements buildings	£250 (\$500)
Enclosures	£ 10 (\$20)
Sundries	<u>£ 40 (\$80)</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>£400 (\$800)</u>

This lot originally assigned to John H. Morley 29 March 1832 and transferred by him to Patrick Taylor by public auction."

Among other things Morley, had been the local commissariat officer and occupied the Old Farm prior to Sir Richard Spencer's arrival. The Patrick Taylor cottage still stands upon Lot s44.

Taylor's early years in the colony were hectic. Having inspected land at Albany he was anxious to get back to it from the Swan and hitched a ride with Captain Blackwood, commander of the "Hyacinth", sloop of war. Due to contrary winds he was carried right past and ended up in Tasmania. Here he stayed with the Henty's, that well known Eastern States pioneering family who first migrated to the Swan, then transferred to Tasmania and later won fame as the earliest pioneers of Victoria. Old Mr Henty described Patrick to a friend as a "very pleasant well-educated gentlemanly young man who had come out for the benefit of his health and had entirely recovered."

1837 was a restless year. Early in January he made an intrepid excursion looking for land in company with Doctor Thomas Harrison. They visited the Hay River where Sir Richard Spencer's two eldest boys were farming. Almost upon return he set out once more into the hot brassy inland, journeying from Albany to Perth in 12 days travelling time with Mr James Harris and party. Mary Bussell and he were married in September, at Lieutenant Bull's house at Fremantle. The wedding was a quiet one for family friend Capel Carter had just died, but the guest of honour was Sir James Stirling, acting as father of the bride.

They almost hadn't got married, for native runners bringing Mrs Bussell's consent had dawdled and Mary was on the verge of returning to "Cattle Chosen".

The happy young couple returned to the Sound by ship, accompanied by bridesmaid sister Fanny. An ill-omen greeted them as they entered the harbour. Chief Constable James Dunne, who had been a passenger on the "James Pattison", had an arm blown off by the cannon, while firing a salute in their honour.

Their home was at "Candyup" at the time, another property bought by Patrick. This was on the Kalgan River, a farm now owned by Mr Sewell. At that time the house was situated just below the present one, on an elevated hill with enchanting vistas of the Kalgan and Oyster Harbour.

Fanny wrote: "The country is just now an exquisite green, and Candyup abounds in pretty grassy slopes covered with close fine sward. The cattle are looking extremely well, and when this house is plastered, their sitting room will be one of the finest in the colony".

This sylvan existence was soon shattered by a series of economic disasters. To his dismay his agent in Scotland absconded to America with a considerable portion of his fortune.

Nothing was going right at "Candyup" - cattle died and even the hens wouldn't lay.

Patrick wrote to his wife's sister that Mary was obliged to search the nests from early morning to night to obtain only a few eggs. Even if they had grown all their requirements and more besides, it would have been to no avail. Their problem was the same as all settlers of the first colonial days - there were no markets. Whaling ships calling to port were the only buyers of produce.

There was a family argument with the Bussells. At "Cattle Chosen" a decision had been reached about finances. In future only those who were sharing the work of the moment would share in the profits.

Patrick claimed that his wife had shared the early hardships, therefore she should benefit to some extent. John Garrett Bussell wrote a dramatic farewell to his brother-in-law, of whom he was genuinely fond, and from then on Taylor seems to have had little contact with his wife's relatives.

Patrick Taylor was a leading figure in the town's affairs for a number of years. A very religious man, he was deeply concerned with the death of clergymen in the new colony.

While on board the ship he had guaranteed £200 (\$400) for the stipend, claiming that the presence of a minister "would remove the only objection to a settler's life." Taylor was closely acquainted with Wollaston, who mentions him in both his Picton and Albany journals.

In 1841, the Government Resident called a meeting, "of the inhabitants to consider the propriety of building a church at Albany." Thus was born St John the Evangelist's Church.

The sixth of the 11 resolutions passed was:

"That it being well-known that Patrick Taylor, Esq., takes a deep interest in the promotion of religious instruction and desire the welfare of Albany, the trustees do write to him requesting his subscription".

This was the year of his great financial losses. Despite this in company with Lady Spencer, Government Resident Phillips, Peter Belches, George Grey (later Sir), Taylor donated £10 (\$20), Mary £5 (\$10), while humble tradesman and builder of the first local church, the Octagon, R. B. Sherratt gave £25 (\$50).

In an effort to decentralise responsibility for the maintenance of widely scattered districts, Governor John Hutt passed an "Improvement of Towns Act", in 1841. It was Western Australia's first experiment in local government and got off to a slow start in Albany, for it was not until 1843 that the first town trust was formed, with public minded T .B. Sherratt as its first Chairman.

A member of that body in 1845 was Patrick Taylor, as he also was in 1846 and 1847, while in 1849 the town trust failed to function.

Taylor was chairman of a public meeting in 1846, which was hurriedly summoned to deal with a local catastrophe. York Street had suffered one of its periodical flooding, which persist up to this day.

Patrick Taylor sent off a memorial to the Governor, asking for assistance for the town to rebuild the street, which had been scoured with gullies deep enough to hide a man.

The emphatic wording of the petition served no purpose. Resigned to official procrastination, the locals erected footbridges over the gullies and the road was not repaired until 1870, 24 years afterwards.

From the period of the unsuccessful petition, Patrick Taylor seems to have retired from public life. The original diaries of Mrs Taylor, spanning the years 1873 - 1875 tell of a dreary existence at Candyup.

Daughters Fanny and Kate did much of the hard work on the property assisted in a desultory fashion by a farm labourer and some local natives.

Eldest daughter Mary, who had been born at Candyup was married to Edward Dempster, son John, lived at Northam, Campbell was pioneering at Esperance.

Occasionally a visitor in the person of Sir T. Campbell, one of the Hassell, Egerton - Warburton or Spencer boys would drop in and the harmonium would assist in making the evening pleasant.

## SCHOOLS' PACK

Patrick Taylor died in 1877. He and his wife, Mary, who died on 11 March 1887, infant Christina, and son Campbell all share the same headstone in the cemetery on Middleton Road.

The building now known as the Patrick Taylor Cottage was misleadingly termed a beach cottage by Wollaston. The house is mentioned in the diaries, was sometimes used when they visited town, or rented to various tenants, and was repaired by young Sherratt.

None of Taylor's blocks were on the beach itself although this one is only a few chains (a few meters) away, nor was it the smaller brick cottage, now demolished, on the Stirling Terrace end of the same block. This consisted of one main brick room with dilapidated tin structures attached. The windows of the main room were as high as were the ceilings.

The first material used for houses in the colony was "wattle and daub". Windows were small because of the cost of glass, and ceilings were low. The central rooms of the Patrick Taylor cottage are "wattle and daub" and are rough and uneven. The roof is still shingled under the tin, and the house plainly follows the usual colonial plan of central rooms surrounded by a verandah. Later this was covered in to provide more rooms,

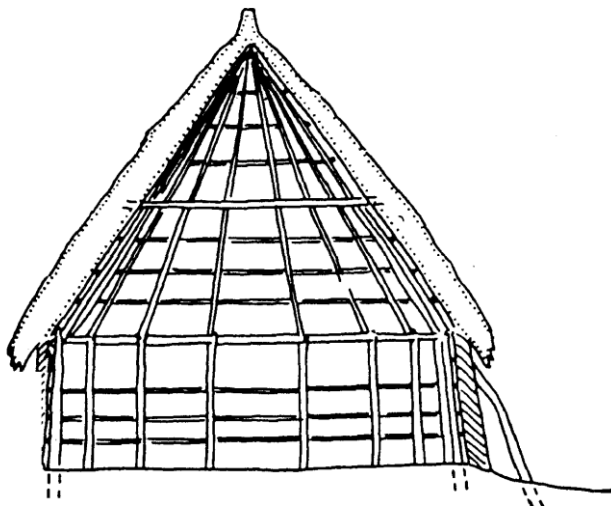
Among later pioneers who have resided in this historic homestead was Campbell Taylor, the eldest son and sister, Miss Kate Taylor (some elderly residents may remember for the large amount of cats she kept). Miss Lawndes, the first domestic science teacher at the local High School, the Western Australian poet "Dryblower" Murphy and kindly Dr Ingoldby and his wife.

Until the 1950's the property had always remained in the hands of a Taylor descendant, the last owner being Doctor Robert Fairbairn, of Peppermint Grove.

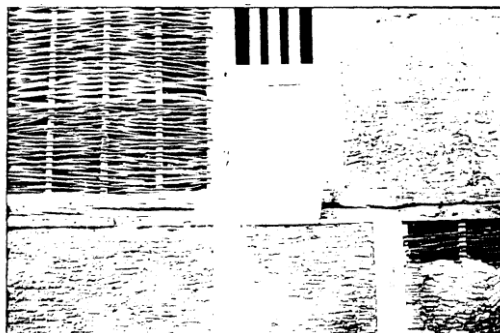
Albany is doubly fortunate in possessing two houses belonging to one of her most interesting periods of history - the 1830's, in the Old Strawberry Farm and the Patrick Taylor Cottage.

## WATTLE AND DAUB CONSTRUCTION

There are basically two main forms of house construction. The first is for the walls to be strong enough to support the *roof* structure. This is the method used for solid brick houses, stone houses; log cabins, and some mud brick dwellings. The second form of construction is for a frame to be built that will support the roof, and then the spaces in the frame are filled in to give privacy and provide protection from wind and rain. For thousands of years the most favoured infill in this form of building, was a weaving of thin pliable branches (wattles) which was then plastered with mud (daub)



Above is the typical round hut construction, the panels of which would have been in filled with wattle and daub (John Coles Archaeology by Experiment Hutchinson 1973) Below is a section of wall in a Tudor building showing the woven wattles and then the stages in applying the daub. The finished coat has been applied only to the panel below the window (Richard Harris Timber Frames Buildings Shire Publications 1978)



Because of their British background early settlers in Australia were aware of this ancient form of construction from the villages in which they lived and they applied this building method to their new homes. © Bill Henderson 2004