

In
LOVING MEMORY

OF

WILLIAM TAYLOR

BORN 8TH NOV 1833.

DIED 12TH OCT 1895.

ALSO

JANE BROWN TAYLOR

BELOVED WIFE OF ABOVE

DIED 24TH MARCH 1931

AGED 75 YEARS.

ALSO

EVELYN TAYLOR

BELOVED DAUGHTER OF ABOVE

DIED MAY 11TH 1938

AGED 45 YEARS.

THEY WILL BE DONE."

The Otago Provincial Council had long debated the need to procure the services of an Instructor in Music to initiate and superintend a system of instruction in music in the Public Schools throughout the Province.

In the Supplementary Estimates for May 1867 appeared the item "Music Master 400 pounds".

The man who took up the appointment in January 1868 was William Taylor, a man who deserves to be much better remembered in the story of southern New Zealand music. Taylor was born and educated in the Urquhart district of Elginshire, Scotland, where he trained as a pupil under Alexander Ayson, became a schoolmaster in Cromarty while still a young man, then in 1865 followed Ayson to Otago where he was appointed teacher at North East Valley.

Besides being a fine singer himself, he had had some musical training, and in 1869 he was named the first singing master for the Otago Schools. Shortly afterwards the job of Assistant Inspector was added to his duties.

In April 1872 he quit the service of the Education Board to try his hand at farming and flax-dressing at Whare Flat. He lasted a couple of years before accepting an appointment to the new Kensington School, Dunedin, and in 1875 the Board re-appointed him as sub-Inspector, raised to Inspector under the Education Act of 1877, responsible for the whole of Otago.

Taylor's personal popularity contributed greatly to the success of the new venture. Unlike most of the 19th Century inspectors, he retained his genial disposition while on the job, and won over the children he taught or inspected. One of his ploys was to challenge a class to hold their breaths on a note and try to outlast him. They never could of course, but they loved trying.

Away from school Taylor was an enthusiastic member of the Volunteer movement and a keen rifle shot. In 1868, when a sergeant in the Scotch Rifles he won the Rifle Championship of New Zealand.

Taylor set out his philosophy as follows:

"It has been my constant aim in every school I have attended, to have as many pupils as possible taught to 'sing at sight', or read music for themselves; for I am convinced that without this no permanent interest in the matter will be maintained. But to accomplish this, much time and concentrated effort are necessary. Grant these, and let the musical faculties be awakened and set thoroughly to work in early youth in the proper direction, and the fruits will undoubtedly and in due time manifest themselves to an extent even beyond expectation."

After inspecting the Waihola Gorge School, and returning by train to Dunedin in company with his fellow inspector, Peter Goyen, Taylor took a tramcar to Calton in the North East Valley where he lived, made it to his home with difficulty, and died from a heart attack before the night was out.

The date was 12 October 1895 and he was aged 62.

The funeral hearse was preceded by 40 pupils of North East Valley School carrying floral wreaths, all city and suburban schools were closed, and most of the town's schoolmasters, and many of his

former pupils accompanied the cortege. He is buried in Dunedin's Northern Cemetery with his wife Jane Brown Taylor who died in 1931, and a daughter Evelyn who died in 1938.