

Collection #  
SC 2874  
CT 2146–CT 2147

**HEBER L. TAYLOR  
ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW, 27 SEPTEMBER 1992**

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Processed by

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1994

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January 2011

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript folder  
2 cassette tapes

COLLECTION DATES: Interview conducted on 27 September 1992

PROVENANCE: Heber L. Taylor, San Diego, CA, 1992

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: Mary Lyon Taylor Negatives (P 0178); Mary Lyon Taylor Collection (P 0281); Allan Johnson Papers (SC 2336; Indiana Sheet Music (scanned and online)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1994.0858

NOTES: Transcribed by Ken McCune, January, 2011

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary Lyon Taylor (1872–1956), a pictorialist portrait photographer, worked in Indianapolis from 1906 to about 1910. Born Mary Gertrude Lyon in Ripon, Wisconsin on 17 March 1872, her family settled in Minneapolis in the 1880s. She received artistic training at home and abroad, and attended a finishing school in the East.

On 6 July 1898 she married Edward A. Taylor (20 January 1865–14 February 1934), whom she met while visiting her sister in Indianapolis. The couple lived in Indianapolis at 1941 N. Pennsylvania Street, today part of the Herron-Morton Place neighborhood. They had two sons, Edward Lord and Heber Newton Lyon Taylor.

When the Taylor family experienced financial difficulty in 1906, Mary began a home portraiture business. She worked in the soft-focus "pictorialist" style and developed and printed her own negatives and photographs. Her career came to a halt in 1907 or 1908 when she separated from her husband and moved with her two sons to Minneapolis. After about a year they reunited and she returned to Indianapolis. After an unsuccessful attempt at operating a dairy farm north of Indianapolis, the Taylor family moved to California in the 1930s. In the 1950s, Mary Lyon Taylor returned to Indianapolis where she died on 5 January 1956.

Heber Lyon Taylor, the son of Edward and Mary Lyon Taylor, was born in Indianapolis 3 June 1901. While in California he worked for the Pacific Electric Railway Company. His brother, Edward Lord Taylor held various jobs and served in the military during World War II. After Edward committed suicide in 1950, Mary and Heber returned to Indianapolis to develop the Orchard Hills property. Heber retired to La Jolla after his mother's death in 1956 and as of 1992 lived in a retirement home in San Diego.

Sources:

Material in collection.

"Artistic Photos by an Indianapolis Woman," *The Indianapolis News*, 2 November 1907, 22.

"Mary Lyon Taylor's Latest Song will be Heard Today," *The Indianapolis Sunday Star*, 12 May 1929.

"Photographic Studies of Home Life: How One Woman has Developed a Pastime into Work that Possesses Great Individuality and Charm," *Craftsman*, v. 13, October 1907-March 1908, 150-57.

"Woman Farmer, With Aid of Son, Merges Artistry and Practicality at Beauty View," *The Indianapolis News*, 17 June 1922.

Hostetler, Joan E. "The Pictorialism of Mary Lyon Taylor," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*, Winter 1994, 36-39.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

Heber L. Taylor, the son of Mary Lyon Taylor, was interviewed by Joan Hostetler as part of the Indiana Historical Society Education Division's Mary Lyon Taylor project. Besides the interview the project included the exhibition, "Pictorialist Photographs by Mary Lyon Taylor" co-sponsored with the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and the *Traces* article "The Pictorialism of Mary Lyon Taylor," 6(1):36-39.

In the interview Heber discusses his mother's background and photographic career, family life in Indianapolis and at Lake Maxinkuckee, development of the Orchard Hills property, the Lyon family, and the items he donated that are now in collection P 0281.

At the time of the interview Heber Taylor was 91 years old and residing at St. Paul's Manor in San Diego, California.

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Heber L. Taylor Oral History Interview,  
27 September 1992 [transcription]

Heber L. Taylor Oral History Interview [cassette tapes]

### CONTAINER

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