

TAYLOR FARM

How would it feel to go to a park and visit the site of your former home that you left in 1941? At family reunions each year, the Taylor family has watched the process of forest succession reclaim their farm land. The following information comes from an oral history interview taken on April 10th, 1985. Trudy McBride, a student intern from Mary Washington College spoke to Mr. John Taylor about life on the Taylor farm in what is now Prince William Forest Park.

On July 4th, 1899, Robert A. and Jennie Taylor married and moved to the farm. The land was all forested except for a small house. The Taylors raised nine children and extra rooms were added to the house to accommodate the growing family. Mr. Taylor cleared about half of the 150 acre farm and improved it until his death in 1936. He planted an orchard and built a barn with a basement, stables, a blacksmith shop, a smokehouse, two corn houses (cribs), an implement shed, a grocery store, and an outhouse.

Mr. Taylor held a number of outside jobs to supplement the farm income. He worked at the nearby pyrite mine and hand-bored wells for neighbors in a ten mile radius. He also hauled timber for several local sawmills using a horse-drawn wagon. He had a large garden, grew vegetables for sale and later raised corn, wheat and oats for bulk sales to local mills.

The Taylors operated a store at their house and later built a separate structure across the road. The store brought in extra money and allowed the family to buy groceries wholesale. The store sold salt, sugar, pepper, longhorn cheese, spices, patent medicine, cross-cut saws, files, axes, tobacco, gloves, blue work shirts and bib overalls. The latter were "standard wearing apparel" for most people in the area.

Mr Taylor planted apple, peach, pear, plum and cherry trees in the orchard. The family had a cider mill and sold sweet cider, hard cider and vinegar at the store. The Taylors also had three horses, three to five cows and eight to ten hogs. The farm did not have electricity so food like milk, butter, canned vegetables and salted or smoked meats were stored in the cellar. Some meat was used by the family and the rest sold at the store.

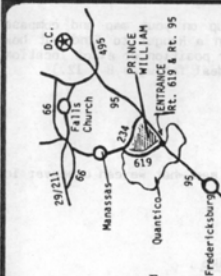
Many families in the area did not farm as extensively as the Taylors. These families simply cut wood from their land for sale, had gardens and worked at outside jobs. According to John Taylor, life on the farm left "memories of good times" to the Taylor children. Their farm and others in the area were purchased by the federal government. The forest was allowed to return to this marginal farm land which became Prince William Forest Park in 1940.



This long-abandoned farmyard, part of the Environmental Study Area in Prince William Forest, still contains an apple tree and some persistent garden flowers.



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The park is about 20 miles north of Washington and 20 miles south of the 495 Beltway.

PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK is administered by the National Park Service. As part of the Nation's principal conservation agency, we have a basic responsibility to protect and conserve our land and water resources, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the wise use of all these resources. Please observe regulations and remember, safety is no accident.

Turkey Caller

VIRGINIANA FILE
Historic Site

PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK
MARCH 86



PRINCE WILLIAM FOREST PARK

Prince William Public Library
Manassas, Va.
Wells - Betty Brewster
Collection

NATURALIST EVENTS

Saturday, 1st
1 p.m.
Nature Center
Orienteering ♿

A map and compass are valuable tools when navigating outdoors. Come learn to use these tools at the Nature Center. After the talk, equipment will be available for those who would like to try one of our orienteering courses.

Saturday, 1st
3 p.m.
Nature Center
Children's Hour

Join a Ranger for an hour of outdoor activities. Parents may explore the Nature Center or view a film while the children are outside.

Sunday, 2nd
8:30 a.m.
Nature Center
Woodpecker Search

Join a Ranger to locate and identify some of the park's woodpeckers.

Sunday, 2nd
1 p.m.
Nature Center
Taylor Farm Hike

Join a Ranger to explore the Taylor Farm site and learn more about the family that lived here until 1941.

Did You Know?

A robin pauses and cocks its head when looking for worms—not listening for them.



Saturday, 8th
11 a.m.
Nature Center
Camping Unexpectedly

Planning for wilderness emergencies is one of the keys to surviving them. A Ranger will talk about how planning and attitude, along with the right knowledge and skills can keep you safe when things go wrong.

Saturday, 8th
1 p.m.
Oak Ridge Campground
Oak Ridge Hike

Join a Ranger to explore an old farm site and see how the forest is reclaiming the land.

Sunday, 9th
1 p.m.
Nature Center
Land Navigation Hike

Learn or brush up on your map and compass skills. Then join a Ranger to find out how to determine your position or exact location while hiking. (Ideal for ages 8 - 12.)

Sunday, 9th
3 p.m.
Nature Center
Serendipity Hike

Join a Ranger to see what we can discover in the forest.

Saturday, 15th
1 p.m.
Nature Center
Compass Nature Hike

Learn how to use a map and compass. Then join a Ranger on a Nature Hike using the compass to locate points of interest.

Saturday, 15th
3 p.m.
Nature Center
Snakes Alive! ♿

Meet a Ranger and some of our other "special characters" at the nature center for a talk on the myths, folklore and natural history surrounding these fascinating creatures.

Sunday, 16th
11 a.m.
Nature Center
Signs of Spring?

Join a Ranger to search for signs of spring in the park.

Sunday, 16th
1 p.m.
Nature Center
Cemetery Hike

Join a Ranger to discover one of the old cemeteries in the park.

Saturday, 22nd
11 a.m.
Nature Center
Orienteering for Kids ♿

Join a Ranger to learn basic compass skills. This program is geared for children six and older.

Saturday, 22nd
1 p.m.
Parking Area G
C.C.C. Hike

Join a Ranger on this hike to explore some of the work projects done in the park by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's.

Sunday, 23rd
12n
Parking Area H
Beaver Hike

Join a Ranger for a hike to an active beaver site and a talk about one of nature's best conservationists.

Sunday, 23rd
3 p.m.
Nature Center
Children's Hour

Join a Ranger for an hour of outdoor activities. Parents may explore the Nature Center or view a film while the children are outside.

Saturday, 29th
12n
Park Headquarters
Pyrite Mine Hike

Iron Pyrite - Fool's Gold is what they call it. Join a Ranger for a 3 mile hike to discover the remnants of an old mine.

Saturday, 29th
3 p.m.
Nature Center
Tree Hike

Join a Ranger on this hike and become more familiar with the trees at the park.

Sunday, 30th
11 a.m.
Nature Center
Snake Talk ♿

Come in and meet King Tut, our king snake. Learn the facts and current myths about the reptiles of the park.

Sunday, 30th
1 p.m.
Parking Area A
Pond Life

Join a Ranger to discover the secret lives of the inhabitants of a fresh water pond.

Organized groups must call in advance to arrange for special programs at the nature center.



Information - 221-2104

Program held at an accessible facility or trail.