

JOHN TAYLOR. Among the oldest residents of Leechburg, if not perhaps the oldest, is John Taylor, who has been prominently identified with the industries of that thriving borough since 1848. He is the son of Matthew and Elizabeth (Crawford) Taylor, and was born near "Burnt Mills," in Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, August 1, 1824. The Taylor family is of English descent and its members have been remarkable for their longevity. One of them, John Taylor (grandfather), was a tall man, of fine physique, and lived and died in Lancashire, England. His son, Matthew Taylor (father), was born in 1793, and in 1819 came to Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania. He had learned the trade of weaver and tailor in England, and followed tailoring during part of his life-time. In 1829 or 1830 he came to the vicinity of Leechburg, which at that time contained only about six houses. He came on one of the first freight boats which ran on the Pennsylvania canal, and after settling at Leechburg worked for several years on the canal as a laborer. In 1833 he bought two town-lots at Leechburg, on one of which he built himself a dwelling, in which he lived until his death, on April 24, 1881. He was a genial companion, quick at repartee, fond of a joke and possessed of a natural ability for rhyming. He was a whig, but after that political party was disbanded he joined the republicans. He was a consistent member of the Methodist Episcopal church. He married Elizabeth Crawford, who was a daughter of Mathias Crawford, of Westmoreland county, and lived to be seven-seven years of age. To their union were born thirteen children, six of whom are living, and two of whom, David and Dallas, served in the Union army during the late war.

John Taylor was reared at Leechburg, attended the subscription schools of that town, and then learned the trade of tanner and harness-maker with S, S, Whitlinger's property, and successfully operated the tannery until 1888, when he gave up tanning, and since that time has given his whole attention to harness-making. While engaged in tanning he carried on an extensive business, employing several journeymen and apprentices.

He has been twice married. His first wife, whom he married February 21, 1850, was Julia Ann Bair, a daughter of John Bair, of Westmoreland county, by whom he had seven children. She died April 19, 1885, when in the fifty-third year of her age. (See sketch of M. F. Taylor.) On October 6, 1886, he married Anna M. Whitlinger, daughter of John Whitlinger, of Butler-county.

John Taylor is a prominent and useful member of the Methodist Episcopal church, and was an extremely liberal contributor to the erection of the first church of that denomination that was built at Leechburg. He has always taken a deep interest in religious matters and has served his church, at different times, as class-leader, steward, trustee and Sunday-school superintendent. In politics he was an old-line whig until 1856, when he joined the republican party, which he has supported ever since. He has served as school director and member of the borough council. No man takes a deeper interest in the material welfare of Leechburg than Mr. Taylor. He conducts his business on a straightforward as a man. Honorable and honest in business, he owes his success in life to his own energy and industry.