HISTORICAL NOTE: Orthopedic surgeon. Taylor was born in Williston, VT on April 25, 1827, the son of Brimage and Miriam Tatlin Taylor. He received his medical degree from the University of Vermont in 1856 after which he went to London for further study. There he was introduced to the “Movement Cure” or “Swedish System” developed by Per Henrik Ling, the father of modern gymnastics and physical therapy. Along with his brother, George H. Taylor, he was the first to practice this therapy in the U.S. and rapidly became renowned for his ability to cure difficult cases. In 1861 he published *The Theory and Practice of the Movement Cure*, one of the earliest American books on the subject. He gained widespread fame for his invention of orthopedic apparatus, particularly the Taylor brace still in use today.

In 1866, he persuaded several New York City businessmen, including Theodore Roosevelt’s father, to establish the New York Orthopaedic Dispensary to aid the crippled poor. Later known as the New York Orthopedic Hospital, it merged with Presbyterian Hospital in 1945; it also serves as the orthopedic surgery department of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Taylor served as the Hospital’s Surgeon-in-Chief until 1876 when he resigned due to poor health.

Taylor married Mary S. Skinner in 1854; they had four children one of whom, Henry Ling Taylor (1857-1923), was also a prominent orthopedic surgeon. Charles Fayette Taylor died on January 25, 1899 in Redlands, California.

SCOPE AND CONTENT: Forty-five letters comprising about 104 pages written in 1893 and 1895-1898 by Charles Fayette Taylor to family members while he was living in Southern California for his health. He usually lived in Redlands, but occasionally stayed in Los Angeles. The bulk of the letters are to either his wife, Mary, who remained in New York, or his son, Henry Ling Taylor, who was also an orthopedic surgeon. Topics discussed include his health and the state of medicine in California; family finances; his son Henry’s career as an orthopedic surgeon; and comments on the suitability of Southern California as a resort for invalids. He also writes of his early career and that of his brother, George H. Taylor. The last letter is written only weeks before his death.

LANGUAGE: English.

ACCESS: Open without restrictions.

LOCATION: Miscellaneous Manuscripts, Box 5, fo. 10.
PROVENANCE: Transfer from the Hibbs Library of the New York Orthopedic Hospital, 2015 (acc.#2015.003).

Subjects:
Taylor, Charles Fayette, 1827-1899.
Taylor, Henry Ling, 1857-1923.
California – Description and travel.
Health resorts – California.
Orthopedic surgery – United States – History.