



A Little Known Memorial Hidden in the Redwoods
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Much has been written about the life of Samuel P. Taylor and the State Park that now bears his name. Taylor came to Marin in 1853 after making a small fortune in the gold fields near Tuolumne County. He eventually purchased 100 acres of land from Rafael Garcia near present-day Lagunitas. There, he built a small empire based on the Paper Mill that supplied San Francisco's three daily newspapers with newsprint. What is not so well-known is that Mr. Taylor was aided in all his endeavors by his wife, Sarah Washington Irving Taylor, who also worked for many years to save young Chinese women brought to San Francisco from exploitation and prostitution.

In a small, secluded amphitheater in Camp Taylor's Orchard Hill campground is the Sarah Washington Irving Taylor Campfire Center. In September of 1958, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the California State Park honored Ms. Taylor by naming the amphitheater after her and placing a memorial plaque near the site. The amphitheater is used for talks by Park Rangers and informal gatherings. Samuel married Sarah in 1855 when he returned to Massachusetts to purchase machinery for his paper mill. Her journey to California included a voyage to the Nicaraguan Isthmus, a dangerous trek across land by mule to the Pacific Coast and another voyage to San Francisco.

The Taylors built a paper mill that grew into a sprawling community known as Taylorville as they bought more and more timberland. Spread out over a couple of miles along Papermill Creek, Taylorville would eventually have a hotel, tent campgrounds, a fur tannery, grocery store, saloon, butcher shop, dance hall, riding stables, tennis courts and a post office. In 1875, the

North Pacific Coast Railroad placed a depot at Taylorville which established the Taylor's tent campgrounds as a popular vacationer's destination, and built a hotel, eventually managed by one of the Taylor sons.

Ms. Taylor also raised seven sons and one daughter while "keeping-house" at their second home in San Francisco. She was very active in the San Francisco Westminster Presbyterian Church's Foreign Ministry Society, which worked to save young Chinese girls being brought to San Francisco to work as prostitutes in Chinatown brothels. According to Bertha S. Rothwell's manuscript, *Pioneering in Marin County*, Ms. Taylor boarded ships coming into San Francisco Bay and negotiated with captains to release the girls who were then placed in the church's Mission Home.

After Samuel died in 1886, Ms. Taylor and her sons managed the family business, but the economic crash of 1893 dealt it a fatal blow and it was sold to pay off creditors. Later in life, Sarah moved to San Anselmo and lived with members of her family that included twenty-one grandchildren. She died in 1907 at the home of her son, Will, in San Rafael; a quiet end to an adventurous and exemplary life for a woman, who as the plaque reads, "gave time, ability and culture to help build her adopted state."

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