Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0064

Taylor, Florence Mary

(1879 - 1969)

Born	18790101, near Bristol England
Died	19690213, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Architect, Engineer, Publisher

Summary

Florence Taylor was the first woman architect, structural engineer and civil engineer in Australia. For her contribution to architecture and civil engineering, Taylor was appointed an Officer of the British Empire on 8 June 1939 and later a Commander of the British Empire on 10 June 1961.

Details

Florence Taylor, the eldest of five daughters, of John and Eliza (née Brooks) Parsons immigrated to Australia with her family. She attended Presbyterian Ladies' College (Sydney), and commenced clerical work at an architectural and engineering firm, after her father passed away suddenly.

Realising that draftsmen received a higher scale of pay, she decided to obtain the qualification and enrolled in evening classes at Sydney Technical College – the only female in the class. Between 1900 and 1902 she was apprenticed to the office of Sydney architect Edmund Garton, where she was allocated the less interesting menial tasks. In 1902 she transferred to the office of John Burcham Clamp where she remained until she completed her studies in 1907. In that year her employer Clamp nominated her for associate membership of the New South Wales Institute of Architects. Her membership was granted 13 years later in 1920.

On 3 April 1907, she married George Augustine Taylor, an architect-engineer, whose hobbies included aviation and gliding. Florence Taylor, who shared her husband's interests, became the first woman to attempt a glider flight in Australia, on 5 December 1909. She flew from the Narrabeen sand hills near Sydney, in a guilder built by her husband, to became the first woman to fly a heavier-than-air machine in Australia.

Upon marriage the Taylors established their own company, the Building Publishing Company, a producer of trade and professional journals. Also the Taylors were founding members of the Town Planning Association in New South Wales in 1913.

After her husband's death in 1928, Florence Taylor continued to manage the company until she retired due to ill health in 1961, although she scaled down the company publishing list. Throughout her life Taylor continued to produce town planning schemes.

Events

2001 - 2001
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Resource Section
Taylor, Florence Mary (1879-1969), Ludlow, Christa, 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120195b.htm

Edited Book
Who's Who in Australia 1968, Legge, J S, 1968

200 Australian Women: A Redress Anthology, Radi, Heather, 1988,
https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20071105022623/http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/78644/20071105-1315/www.200australianwo

Resource
Victorian Women's Roll of Honour: Women Shaping the Nation, 2001,
https://herplacemuseum.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/2001-Honour-Roll-Booklet.pdf

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Sound recording
Architects of Australia, Freeland, J M, c1982

Book
The Complete Book of Great Australian Women: Thirty-six women who changed the course of Australia, De Vries, Susanna, 2003

Site Exhibition
Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html

Archival resources

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection
Florence M. Taylor - illuminated address presented to Florence M. Taylor by the Australian American Co-operation Movement, 1946

Kerwin Maegraith - recording of readings from his autobiography 'Little moments with big people', n.d., together with readings from his biography of architect Florence Mary Taylor, ca.1969

Taylor family photographs, ca. 1884-1968

Lorelei Booker - papers, ca. 1890-1991

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Florence Mary Taylor, engineer, architect and publisher, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

Author Details
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Created 4 July 2002
Last modified 21 November 2018