

Alice Bemis Taylor



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Alice Bemis Taylor (1877–1946) was an American philanthropist and art collector known for her dedication to supporting cultural and educational institutions in Colorado Springs. Born in Massachusetts, she moved to Colorado Springs in 1896 and quickly became involved in the community.

Taylor was a co-founder of the Day Nursery in 1897, which provided childcare services for working mothers in the area.

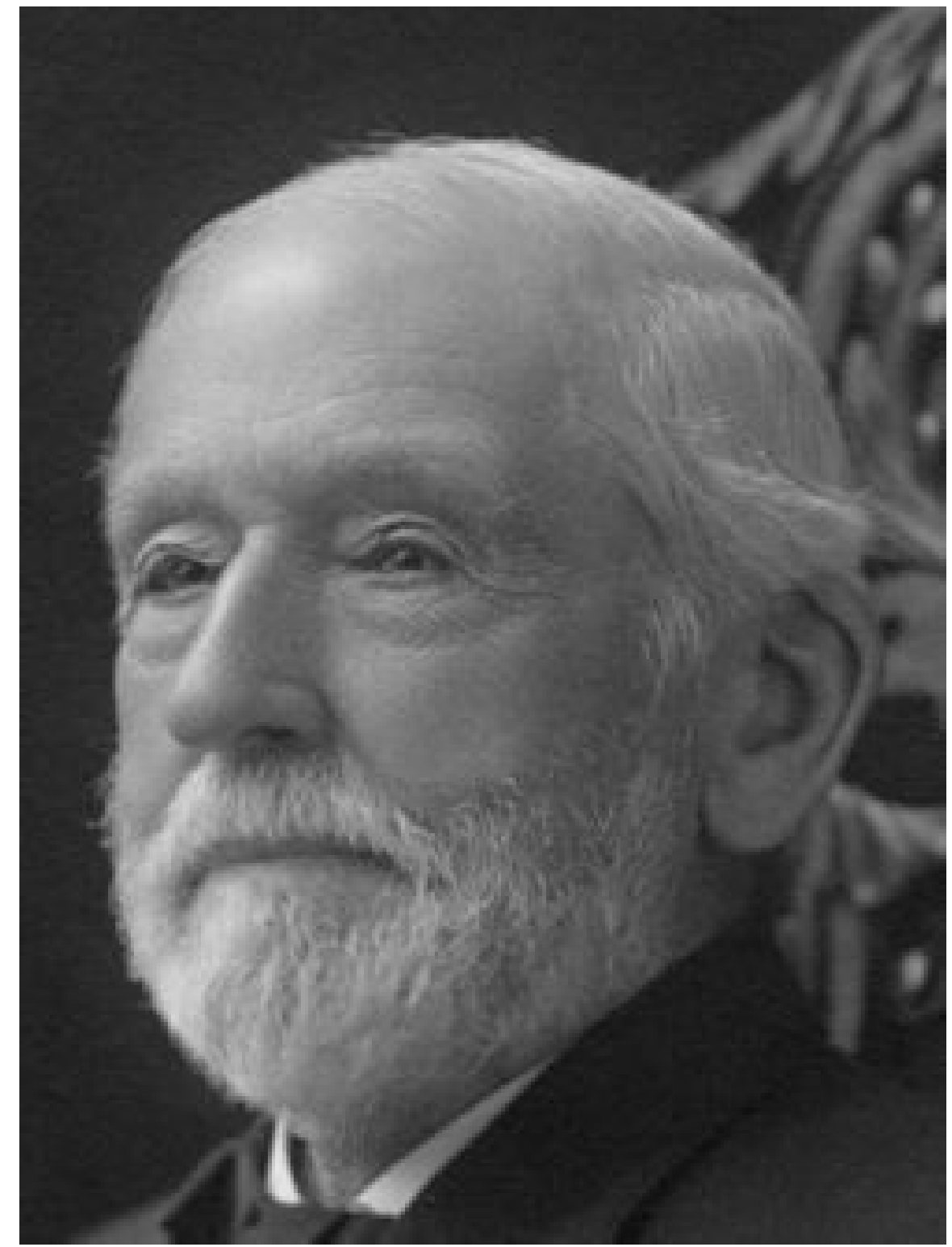
In addition to her philanthropic efforts, Taylor was an avid art collector and patron. She also founded a group that discussed the current state of the arts and contributed to the development of an art library in Colorado Springs. Taylor's personal collection included works by prominent artists such as Georgia O'Keeffe and Henri Matisse.

Taylor's legacy continues to be felt in Colorado Springs, where several institutions bear her name, including the Taylor Museum at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. Her dedication to philanthropy and the arts has inspired generations of individuals to support their communities and nurture their passion for creativity.



Alice Cogswell Bemis (Mother)

Mrs. Bemis (1845–1917) displayed great interest in the progress of Colorado Springs and was a pioneer supporter of the Day Nursery, which she co-founded in 1897. This establishment provided working mothers with daycare services, and in 1916, its yearly expenses amounted to \$5,000, some of which was funded by an endowment of \$3,000 from Mrs. Bemis. In February of the same year, she aided the local Y.M.C.A. by gifting two lots and a sum of money for the construction of their gymnasium. Furthermore, she was among the founders of the first Women's club in Colorado Springs, which established the Wednesday Art Class in 1885. The art library benefited greatly from this group, and its collections were later donated to the Colorado College library in 1926.



Judson Bemis (Father)

Judson Bemis (1833–1921) was an American industrialist and philanthropist known for his contributions to the development of Colorado Springs. Bemis moved to Colorado in 1881 and quickly established himself as a successful businessman. Bemis was the founder of the Judson Manufacturing Company, which specialized in the production of paper bags as one of the largest employers in Colorado Springs during this time. He was also a major contributor to the development of the city's infrastructure, including the construction of the Colorado Springs and Cripple Creek District Railway.

Wealth was not a reason for luxury and pleasure-seeking, but an opportunity for helping others.

Philanthropy

Contributions

Alice Bemis Taylor and her family are best known for their philanthropic contributions to the Colorado Springs community. Along with the magnificent Day Nursery Building, Taylor supported Colorado College, donated to the maternity ward at the Glockner Hospital (now Penrose), funded the Young Women's Christian Association, and took part in many other private contributions. She was dedicated to the arts, families, and women of the city, which is evident in her involvement with the community. She was also the first woman to serve on Colorado College's Board of Trustees and served from 1913–1918. Among her contributions to CC, the Day Nursery, and Glockner Hospital, she made possible the La Forêt Conference and Retreat Center, the Bemis–Taylor Memorial Chapel, the Grace Church organ, the Bemis Taylor Child Guidance Clinic (now the Pikes Peak Behavioral Health Group), the Bemis Art School, the Taylor Museum of Southwest Studies, and the Alice Bemis Elementary School.



Bemis Hall at Colorado College courtesy of Colorado College

Penrose (Glockner) Hospital

Continuing the theme of supporting mothers and children in the Pikes Peak Region, Alice Taylor also endowed the maternity ward at Glockner (now Penrose–St. Francis) Hospital. Founded in 1887, the St. Francis Health Center was built by Dr. D. P. Anderson, a physician for the Midland Railroad Company. It was the first hospital in Colorado Springs. St. Francis later expanded to the current location, adding a cancer facility named the Penrose Tumor Institute, endowed by Spencer Penrose, a friend of Alice Bemis Taylor. The building was eventually renamed to the Glockner–Penrose Hospital to recognize Julie and Spencer Penrose's contributions.



Photo of the Fine Arts Center courtesy of Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum



Photo courtesy of Pikes Peak News Finder

Bemis Hall

Bemis Hall is a women's dormitory given to Colorado College by Alice's parents, Alice and Judson. This historic building, built in 1898, hosts 76 single rooms, which is attractive to college students who wish to have more space and privacy. Bemis Hall was added in 1908. At the dedication of the building, Colorado College's president William F. Slocum stated, "There are great opportunities for good in this building. It is a home for the college student, where the atmosphere is to be that of refinement and cultivation and where the best ideals of a noble life can be realized." Cogswell Theater, named after Alice Cogswell Bemis, was added to the basement of Bemis Hall in 1910. Alice Bemis Taylor continued her parent's history of contributions to Colorado College, leaving the school \$400,000 upon her death in 1942.



Photo of Penrose (Glockner) Hospital courtesy of the El Pomar Foundation

Fine Arts Center

The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center was one of the most beloved philanthropic projects by Alice Taylor. Built to house her large art collection, the building hosts many galleries and a theater. Combining a gallery space with visual arts, music, and drama was incredibly innovative for this time. John Gaw Meem's design for the building was accepted by Taylor and construction started in 1934. Officially open by April 1936, the building drew inspiration from Art Deco Styles, Pueblo, and Native American Iconography. Julie Penrose donated the land for the FAC and Alice Taylor donated her collection of Southwest art.