

Welcome to Evergreen Cemetery!

Established in the 1850s, Evergreen is one of the first cemeteries in California. Here you'll find gold prospectors, artists, Chinese immigrants, mountain men, teachers, Yankees, Civil War veterans, lawyers, Masons, infants, and the forgotten -- all a part of Santa Cruz history. Originally there were 241 family plots, most of which are now filled. Over the years, the cemetery expanded to meet the public demand for burial space in Santa Cruz. There are over 2,000 individuals buried here and Evergreen remains an active cemetery for the descendants of those original families.

As you approach the main entrance, you can view the different sections of Evergreen. To your far left is the Masonic plot, which is next to the Grand Army of the Republic plot. Up at the top of the hill you will see the Chinese burial ground, recognizable by the memorial sculpture. Below that area is the "Old Section" where there are unmarked graves of people buried by the County. The remainder of the cemetery contains private burials including the area to your far right, which was an extension added in the 1940s.

In 1968, Evergreen Cemetery was officially designated as a "Point of Historical Interest" by the state of California. Today, the cemetery is managed by the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History. A group of dedicated volunteers and docents offer guided tours and contribute to the upkeep of this historic landmark.



1 Arthur Adelbert Taylor, 1849 – 1923

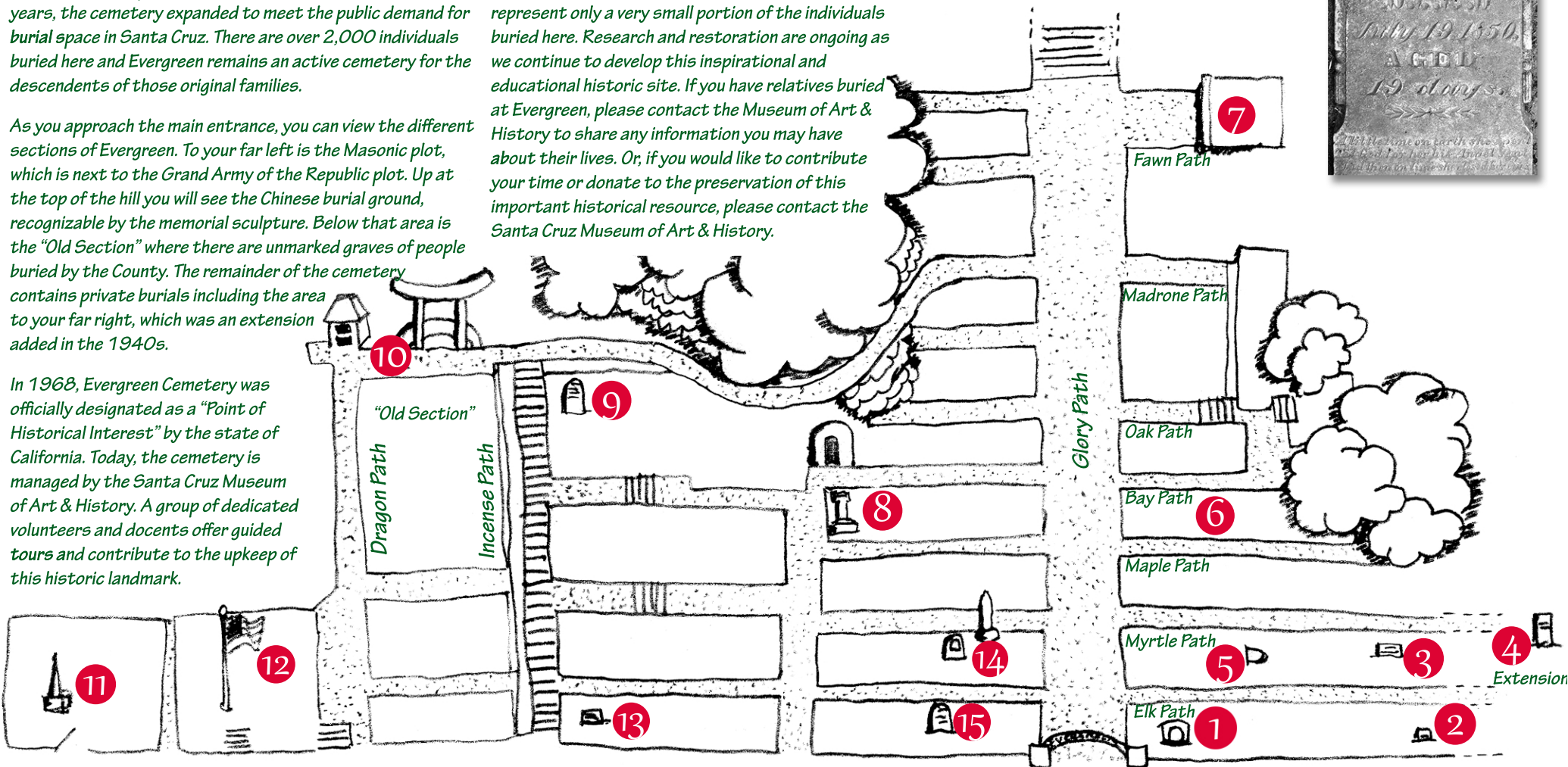
A.A. Taylor was the editor of the Santa Cruz Daily Surf newspaper from 1870 to 1919. Taylor was an advocate for many civic improvements, including the creation of scenic West Cliff Drive. He served as Mayor of Santa Cruz, helped to realize Big Basin State Park and was appointed one of California's first State Park Commissioners.

2 The Arcan Family Plot

The Arcan Family was stranded in Death Valley from December 1849 until February 1850, while seeking a short cut to the gold fields of California. This wagon train party is credited with giving Death Valley its name. In 1850, Baby Julia was born shortly after her mother Abigail arrived in Santa Cruz. She lived only nineteen days and is the oldest known recorded burial in Evergreen.

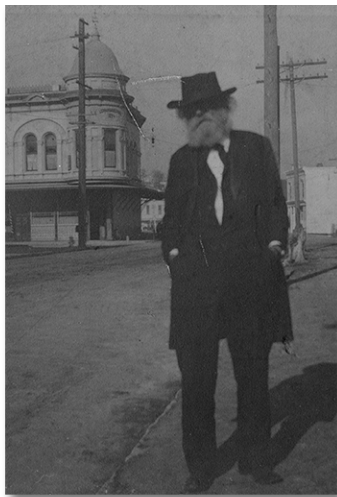


The stories outlined in this self-guided tour represent only a very small portion of the individuals buried here. Research and restoration are ongoing as we continue to develop this inspirational and educational historic site. If you have relatives buried at Evergreen, please contact the Museum of Art & History to share any information you may have about their lives. Or, if you would like to contribute your time or donate to the preservation of this important historical resource, please contact the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History.



3 Judge Joseph H. Skirm, 1831 – 1912

"Eccentric, hot tempered, towering intelligence, heart of gold, crusader of the underdog." Judge Skirm was a brilliant 19th century lawyer, who had a "disregard for personal appearance." He was an idealist who placed himself on the side of the underdog and took many cases gratis. In 1862, he engaged in a little gun play to win the hand of Mary Ord Berger. After being cleared in court, they married and had nine children. He is buried here along with his beloved baby daughter.



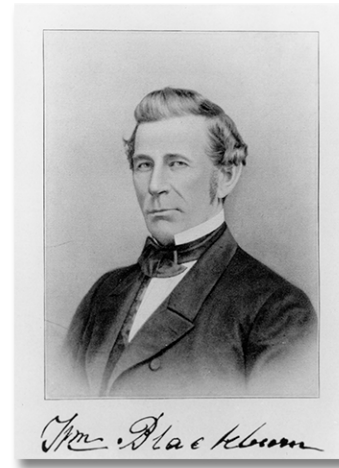
6 Belle Dormer, 1854 – 1937

Belle, accompanied by two small sons, was one of the first of the band of hearty souls who followed the lure of gold to Canada and Alaska. She was a dog sled leader, a tent rooming house owner, prospector and founder of the Alaska Independent Newspaper. Twice married, she accompanied her second husband to San Francisco shortly before the 1906 earthquake and had just settled when the great fire destroyed all her possessions. She was a staff writer for the San Francisco Chronicle and Call, The Bulletin, and Examiner newspapers. After moving to Santa Cruz in 1912, she contributed articles to the Santa Cruz Sentinel.



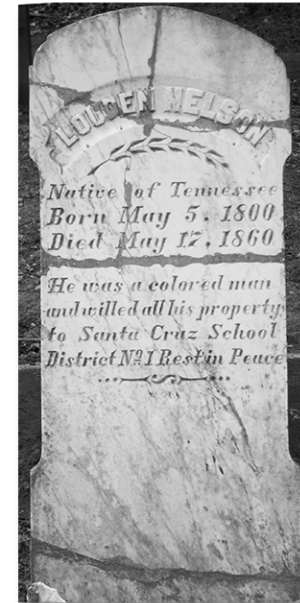
8 Judge William Blackburn, 1814 – 1867

Born in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, Judge Blackburn came to Santa Cruz in 1845. He was one of the first Alcalde/Mayors of Santa Cruz before California became a state. He marched with Fremont's Battalion to help take Los Angeles from the Mexican government. Judge Blackburn made a fortune by growing and selling potatoes to people in the Gold Rush era. His beautiful Victorian home still stands at 101 Cedar Street.



4 Marie Holmes, 1877 – 1898

The bronze plaque at the gravesite details the account of the sad and lonely "lady of the night" who lived in a brothel on Pacific Avenue. After many years of searching, her daughter found her grave in Evergreen Cemetery and wrote a letter to her Grandmother "...today I found where Mama died, It was here in Santa Cruz...and she must have been so unhappy, for the newspaper said she died by her own hand...Oh, God...it was so horrible...while here she called herself Marie Holmes...and so it is over for us Grandmother, it is finally over..."



9 Loudon (London) Nelson, 1800 – 1860

Born a slave in North Carolina, Nelson went to Tennessee and later to the Gold Rush with his master. He was either given or purchased his freedom and arrived in Santa Cruz in the early 1850s. He purchased property on Water Street near what is now the Main Post Office. He had a shoe repair business and a garden. From his cabin, he could see the two-room Mission Hill School. Nelson, who could neither read nor write, was saddened that the school was closed due to lack of funds. When he died, he left his entire estate, valued at \$372, to the children of Santa Cruz for their school. Today we have a community center, on Center Street, in his name.

5 Mary Etta Reed, 1886 – 1896

Mary Etta, a beautiful bright child, sold homemade candy on the streets, while her father picked up odd jobs. Her parents were impoverished and lived in a tent on the San Lorenzo riverbank along with her two siblings. On a cold February day in 1896, ten year old Mary Etta and her mother were gathering mussels from the rocks at Lighthouse Point. A large wave washed Mary Etta from the rocks and despite the desperate attempt of her Mother to save her, she drowned. A request to the public, for funds to help with the burial expenses, brought in an immediate response of thirty five dollars. (Santa Cruz Sentinel Newspaper, February 12, 1896)



7 Frank Heath, 1857 - 1921 and Lillian Heath, 1864 - 1961

This is one of the few above ground burial vaults at Evergreen. Frank and Lillian Heath were both artists who were the founding force of the Santa Cruz Art community. Frank co-founded the Santa Cruz Art League and was famous for his seascape oil paintings. Lillian taught at the Powder Mill School and painted on china and shells. She is listed in "Who's Who in Art and Women of the West."



10 Chinese Burial Ground
Traditional Chinese funerals were elaborate ceremonies with many important rituals. Chinese funeral processions began with firecrackers to frighten away evil spirits, followed by marching bands, wagon and mourners. Clothing, bedding and other belongings of the deceased were burned in the ceremonial oven so the deceased would have use of them in the spirit world. The original restored oven remains at Evergreen. Per custom at the

time, the bones of many Chinese from Evergreen were exhumed ten years after burial and returned to their homeland to be buried with their ancestors. The memorial sculpture was installed in 2014 by George Ow, Jr. to honor his ancestors, and invite the community's interest in the Chinese who were instrumental in developing Santa Cruz and California. The poem transcription: Chinese pioneers, Striving for self-improvement; Making achievements in hundred years, Ever told are their greatest stories.



12 Grand Army of the Republic
Since 1867 Civil War veterans have been buried here. They are a diverse and intriguing group. Their members include: Private Benjamin Hood, who helped "hold the center" at Gettysburg; Leander Prindle, a Colorado Cavalryman at the famous Sand Creek incident; and Private Stephen Esten, who charged Chapultepec in the Mexican War.



13 Mary Amney Case, 1800 – 1889
In 1847, Mary Amney Case, her husband Benjamin, and two sons joined a wagon train on their journey to California. They had many trials while climbing mountains and crossing the hot and dry deserts with worn out oxen. After settling in Santa Cruz, Mary organized a free public school for the children of early pioneers, thus becoming the first public school teacher in Santa Cruz. Her 42 years in Santa Cruz were summed up in

her obituary: "She was a woman of great mental capacity, good judgment and a warm heart and was the valued friend of the little American colony, who for a number of years found themselves so nearly isolated here."



14 Cooper Family Plot
Over 20 members of the Cooper family are buried at Evergreen. Descendants of author James Fenimore Cooper (The Last of the Mohicans) left Boston in 1849 and settled in San Francisco and Santa Cruz. Brothers John and William opened the Cooper Department Store on the corner of Front and Cooper Streets. The building had lovely wood carved counters where children enjoyed ginger snap cookies which were always on hand. John served two terms as a supervisor and in 1876 William was the first mayor of Santa Cruz.



11 Masonic Plot
Masonic Lodge #38 F & A.M. was formed in Santa Cruz on July 15, 1853. As the lodge grew, so did the need for a Masonic burial ground. In 1958, the Masons purchased two lots in Evergreen Cemetery in which to bury their Brethren. Much of the local history of Santa Cruz is revealed through the lives of individual Masons buried here. Henry W. Peck, a 49er from New York, married the daughter of a leading Californio family, served as a justice of the peace, was a county supervisor, and eventually became a leader in the pro-Union movement in Santa Cruz during the Civil War. Today, local Masons can be seen before Memorial Day tidying the plot, keeping alive the memory of their brothers.



15 Isaac Graham, 1800 – 1863
Isaac Graham's early life in Kentucky and Tennessee was spent as a rough and tumble trapper and mountain man. In 1830, he left his wife and four children in order to wander the western wilderness. He was an opportunist and gathered all sorts of unsavory characters around him. In 1836, Graham established one

of the first saloons and distilleries in Natividad (northeast of Salinas), and so began to acquire an acute sense of business. Graham joined Juan Alvarado in a successful coup against the Governor of Monterey in 1840. Later Alvarado turned against Graham and arrested him. This led to a diplomatic crisis involving Mexico and the U.S. known as the "Graham Affair." Eventually Graham was released and in 1841 he acquired a land grant known as Zayante Ranch where he was a partner in the first water-powered lumber mill in California. Graham Hill Road is named after Graham and can be seen by looking across the valley from his headstone.

All biographies and photos are from the Collection of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, with the exception of Isaac Graham's portrait, which is courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

Learn more at www.santacruzmah.org/evergreen or call 831.429-7019.



Santa Cruz
Museum of
Art & History
at the McPherson Center