



Sophia Kerr Taylor

1847-1930

Suffrage stories

Sophia Louisa Davis grew up in missionary circles in Kaitaia, but on her marriage to widower Allan Kerr Taylor in 1865, she became the lady of Alberton and a leading socialite. The death of her husband in 1890 left her with eight children and heavy debt. She survived through selling land and investments.

Unashamed of describing herself as a 'farmeress', Sophia and her daughters produced and sold fruit, vegetables, flowers and eggs to help with expenses. Her astute business sense helped her manage her fragile finances for 40 years.

In 1892, Sophia became a member of the first committee of the Auckland branch of the Women's Franchise League. She used her intelligence, wit and energy to make resolutions and speeches in favour of female suffrage. Sophia supported the franchise movement for practical reasons; if women had to obey law and pay taxes like men, surely they also deserved the vote? Like many other socially prominent women, Sophia supported the Auckland Tailoresses' Union.

Sophia and her daughter Winnifred signed the 1893 Women's Suffrage Petition on sheet 398. Even after women won the vote, she continued to champion social causes. In 1930, she died at Alberton, her beloved home of 65 years.



Sophia Louisa Taylor *Alberton Mt Albert*
Winnifred Kerr Taylor *Alberton Mt Albert*

■ TOP: Sophia Kerr Taylor surrounded by four of her children, c. 1890s. Credit: Alberton collection, Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga.
ABOVE: Sophia and Winnifred's signatures. Credit: 1893 Women's Suffrage Petition, sheet 398.



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