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Anna Paterson Stout: Portrait of a New Zealand Lady

1858 – 1931

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master
Of Arts in History at Massey University

Monica R. Webb
2015
Figure 1: Lady Anna Stout, 1926, oil on canvas, gold plastered frame by A.F. Nicholls, ref: G-830-1, reproduced with the permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z.
Abstract

Lady Anna Paterson Stout was one of the most widely-known advocates for women in New Zealand in her lifetime (1858-1931) and a leading figure of the early women’s movement. During the course of her life, which corresponded to New Zealand’s development from settler society to established Dominion, and due to her marriage to Sir Robert Stout, she knew personally, worked with or influenced nearly every leading political, social and activist figure of that period. Why surprisingly little is known about her today forms one of the central questions to this thesis. This thesis analyses Anna’s life in light of historians Mary Beard and Gerda Lerner’s advocacy of women as force in their generations. It also explores Anna’s deliberate use of influence within the unique context of early female political equality as well as her willingness to act deliberately and independently from her more famous husband as a conscious exemplar of the New Woman. This thesis broadens our understanding of the personal relationships between the early leading women of New Zealand, such as Kate Sheppard, with whom Anna worked closely and often controversially. It also looks closely at Anna’s transnational engagement with the British suffrage movement in London during the critical years of 1909 to 1914. A study of the life of Anna Stout opens up numerous further avenues of inquiry as well as contributing to our understanding of New Zealand’s development in the immediate post-suffrage era. The thesis concludes that Anna Stout was a radical for her time and one who consciously used her access to centres of influence to publicly advance the cause of women on multiple levels.
Acknowledgements

The decision to undertake post-graduate study while managing full time work and family commitments is inherently selfish and not one that is made alone. It affects many others and it is these people to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude. First and foremost, I thank my husband Ian and sons Douglas and Cameron; for their patience, the countless meals cooked on the family’s behalf, Sundays spent house cleaning while mum was researching, and their willingness to play the role of captive audience to my unfolding tale. My gratefulness is matched only by my pride in their achievements in the field of history.

I want to thank my good friend, Kate Jones, who was the first to call me a historian and helped me believe it. It has been a pleasure to share this journey with her as she wrote her own PhD.

I have been very fortunate to have the supervision of Professor Peter Lineham and Dr. Geoff Watson. Their enthusiasm for my topic as well as their very practical guidance has encouraged and guided me at every step of this two-year project. I am particularly grateful for their understanding of the demands that so many graduate students have to juggle. I wish to thank Professor Barbara Brookes of the University of Otago for the interest she expressed in my topic and the time she gave me in the early stages of my research. I am particularly grateful to her for sharing her preliminary research findings from Seacliff Asylum in regards to its importance to the Stout family. I also want to acknowledge the wisdom and experience of Assistant Professor Birgitta Bader-Zaar of the University of Vienna. Our conversations on the evolving nature of women’s history in academia have been an immense help to me. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the kindness and professionalism of the librarians of the Alexander Turnbull Library, the Hocken Library and Massey Albany Library. In particular, Sharyn Bonham and Vanessa Gibson of Massey Albany have provided me with unerring support. No request was ever too small for their attention.
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>DU:HO</td>
<td>Hocken Library, Dunedin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWG</td>
<td>Fabian Women’s Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUWSS</td>
<td>National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPWC</td>
<td>The Society for the Protection of Women and Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCTU</td>
<td>Women’s Christian Temperance Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSPU</td>
<td>Women’s Social and Political Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTU</td>
<td>Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington</td>
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Figure III  Lady Anna Stout in wedding dress, 1876, Clifford and Morris, Dunedin, Reference Port 1506, (c/nE6631/7A), reproduced with the permission of Hocken Library, Dunedin, New Zealand. Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago.

Figure IV  Sir Robert and Lady Anna Stout on their wedding day, 1876, photographer unidentified, Reference PA-Coll 7581-08, reproduced with the permission of Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Figure V  Lady Anna Stout, 1894, L.F. Jones, Dunedin, Reference Port 1507, (c/nE2910/15), reproduced with the permission of Hocken Library, Dunedin, New Zealand. Hocken Collections, Uare Taoka o Hakena, University of Otago.

Figure VI  The convention called by the Canterbury Women’s Institute which resulted in the formation of the National Council of the Women of New Zealand, 1896. Image from Christchurch City Libraries, file reference: CCL-PhotoCD8-IMG0086.