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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

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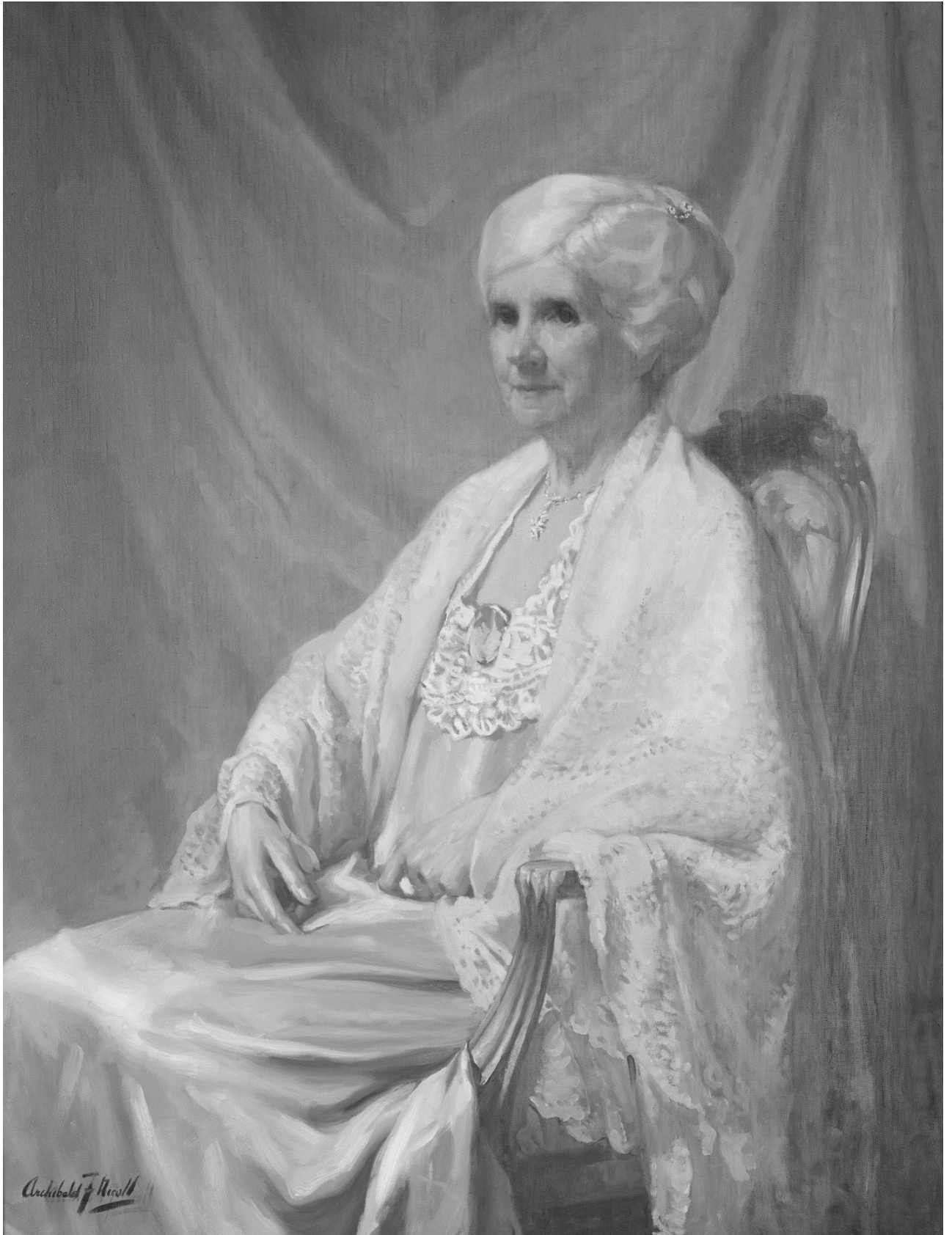


Figure 1: Lady Anna Stout, 1926, oil on canvas, gold plastered frame by A.F. Nicholls, ref: G-830-1, reproduced with the permission of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, N.Z.

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.

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Abbreviations

DU:HO	Hocken Library, Dunedin
FWG	Fabian Women's Group
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
SPWC	The Society for the Protection of Women and Children
WCTU	Women's Christian Temperance Union
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WTU	Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington

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- 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.