

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0127

Watts, Margaret Sturge

(1892 - 1978)

Born	1 January, 1892, Liverpool England
Died	31 December, 1978
Occupation	Migrant community advocate, Peace activist, Welfare worker

Summary

Margaret Sturge Watts was involved with numerous organisations working for women, peace, children’s welfare and displaced persons. She was founding President of the City Girls’ Amateur Sports Association.

Details

Margaret Sturge Watts was born Margaret Sturge Thorp, daughter of James Herbert Thorp, a medical practitioner, and his wife Anne Sturge, née Eliot. The Thorp and Eliot families were Quakers and Margaret was raised and educated in the Quaker tradition. In 1912 she travelled to Australia with her parents.

During World War I Margaret was involved in peace movements in Australia and in 1919 travelled to Europe where she undertook postwar relief work with the Society of Friends. After returning to Australia she was appointed first welfare superintendent at Anthony Hordern’s department store. She was involved in the formation of the City Girls Amateur Sports Association and was the first president. In October 1925 she married Arthur Watts, and in 1930 was appointed welfare officer to the New South Wales Society for Crippled Children, a position she held until 1946.

In 1947 Watts volunteered for service with the Quakers in the postwar reconstruction of Europe and during 1948 she worked in Germany. On her return to Australia she was appointed Executive Secretary to the Good Neighbour Council, working for many years with migrant groups around Australia. In 1957 she became a Member of the Order of the British Empire (Civil) on 13 June 1957 for her work in the ‘assimilation of new settlers.’

Before her death in 1978 Margaret Watts donated her personal papers to the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia. These papers, now held in the Mitchell and Dixon Libraries Manuscripts Collection (State Library of New South Wales), relate to her work with the Society and with many other organisations working for women, peace, children’s welfare and displaced persons. They include material about Margaret Watts which was collected by others interested in her work.

Published resources

Site Exhibition

She's Game: Women Making Australian Sporting History, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2007,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/sg/sport-home.html>

Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html>

Resource Section

Hinder, Eleanor Mary (1893 - 1963), Foley, Meredith and Radi, Heather, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A090310b.htm>

Watts, Margaret Sturge (1892 - 1978), Rutledge, Martha, 2006,
<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A160604b.htm>

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Mitchell and Dixson Libraries Manuscripts Collection

[Religious Society of Friends \(Quakers\) in Australia - papers concerning Margaret Watts, 1914-1982](#)

[Religious Society of Friends \(Quakers\) in Australia - recording of Margaret Watts reading two chapters of her unpublished autobiography 'Faith My Shield', ca.1970?Watts reading two chapters of her unpublished autobiography 'Faith My Shield', ca.1970](#)

[Ros Bowden - interviews conducted for radio programs and documentaries, ca.1975 - 1989](#)

Author Details

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