



NZSG Kiwi Collection

Record Type: **Electoral Roll 1893 - Women**

Description: An index of enrolled women generated from the 1893 electoral roll.

Time Period: 1893

Area: New Zealand.

Access to Source: National and some other libraries.

Further Assistance: Refer original roll.

Transcribed by: NZSG St Johns Branch members.

The NZSG thanks the St Johns Branch of the NZSG, especially the project directors, Judith McCracken & Diane Wilson, for compiling this index and for making it available to other NZSG members via this NZSG Collection.

Remember: Always treat genealogical information with sensitivity and courtesy. Good genealogical practice means returning to the original source for verification whenever possible.

Other comments:

This roll has the historical significance of being the first following the gaining of women's right to vote in New Zealand. The names were taken from the roll which contained both female and male enrolees.

This index of the first women enrolled to become voters in New Zealand represents only a proportion of the women who were living in New Zealand in 1893.

Registering names with the Registrar of Electors was not a compulsory requirement so this is not a census of the period. However, it does represent a significant number of women resident at the time in the 62 electorates that comprised the whole of New Zealand.

In some electorates, difficult terrain, distance from a Registrar of Electors and the busy time of year in October and November in the Southern Hemisphere may have precluded women from adding their names to the Electoral Register.

There could have been opposition, too, from male members of the community or their families. A number of the entries were found on the Supplementary Rolls to the Main Roll. Often there were two of these Supplementary Rolls which closed later than the Main Roll.

The last possible moment before the Roll closed was two weeks prior to polling day on 28 November 1883. A large number of women were found on the Supplementary Rolls which indicates that last minute registration took place.

An irregularity became obvious in the Waiapu Electorate on the North Island's East Coast. Supplementary Registers 1 and 2 were produced in 1893 and these were used as guides for the election. In 1894 the Main Roll was published and this included all the names of the Supplementary Registers plus new names collected after the election.

It was outside our brief to select which names to enter and which ones to exclude and therefore duplication of name has been inevitable. Sometimes it was difficult to decide whether a voter was a man or a woman especially if a guide could not be taken from the occupation listed. In this case an asterisk was placed beside the given name indicating that we were not sure and giving the person the benefit of doubt.

When researching, always remember to double check name spellings and place in the index; e.g. Von Haast can be Haast Von or de Vere can be Vere de etc.

When entering some Electorates it was found that there was an absence of a comma between the given name and the name of the district, farm or house, so it was impossible, with certainty, to accurately place the word; e.g., Smith Jane Seafield Mosgiel. Is she Smith, Jane of Seafield, Mosgiel or Smith Jane Seafield of Mosgiel?

The main thing is that the word is recorded and the decision is for the researcher to make. In some electorates it became obvious that the Returning Officer or Clerk suggested the occupation the women were to record; spinster, married or widow. In other electorates household duties or domestic duties became the occupation most recorded so there is no way of knowing how many were in paid work.

This is especially so when the occupation of housekeeper or matron is considered. It was also a frequent description for home duties. In many cases occupation has needed to be abbreviated in order that each entry take just one line. It was felt that such shortening of terms as Household dut for Household duties, or Domestic servant for Domestic servant were fairly obvious.

Where women owned land all relevant details were included. Location of block or section with significant numbers could be a preliminary help in locating titles. Sometimes it was necessary to abbreviate place names by leaving out vowels; hopefully the letters remaining will suggest themselves easily as a well inhabited area. A glance at a map of the region should dispel doubts.

Our further thanks go to the 1993 Suffrage Centennial Year Trust Whakatu Wahine in association with the NZ Lottery Grants Board for support given to St Johns Branch in this project.

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