

## STEPHEN MONTAGUE STOUT (4901)

Marcia Watson

Literate, Protestant, arrived per *Lord Raglan*, in 1858.  
Married with 1 child, land agent and surveyor.

The name STOUT caught my eye when I was reading the Surgeon's Journal of the *Lord Raglan*. My first impression of Stephen was, "sounds like a real pain!". He was mentioned 5 times in the journal.

List of Convicts: Stephen **STOUT**, aged 21, born France, attended Sunday and Day schools, could read and write, and was a good scholar on the voyage.

Journal:

Saturday March 13th. Weather squally and showery.

1.15 P.M. Lecture on the approaching Eclipse of the Sun and on Eclipses, illustrated by diagrams delivered by **Stephen Stout**, one of the Prisoners, and well received by the rest.

Saturday March 27th. Weather fine, cloudy.

A lecture on Australia delivered to all Prisoners on deck by **S. Stout** and well received by the majority.

Friday April 9th. Nearly calm, Sun powerful.

Weather being threatening, got down washed clothes and a Lecture on Australian employments was delivered by **S. Stout** instead of the usual afternoon schools being assembled.

Saturday April 17th. Weather very fine.

The first number of the "Life Boat", a weekly paper conducted by the Prisoners was issued today under the Editorship of **S. Stout**.

I have pieced together a potted history of his interesting life. He was a man of many talents and appears full of confidence.

He was born in France, the son of Kedgwin and Mary Stout, in about 1830. The family was possibly in France until about 1847. In 1848, Kedgwin was the station master at Waterbeach, Cambridge, so Stephen could have been in France until he was about 17 years old.

In 1851 at the Warwick Quarter Sessions, he was convicted of embezzlement while a servant, and received 12 months

AJCP Reel 2832 p 231 (adjourned, held Coventry 1 January 1851)

Stephen married Pauline Theresa ..... in the June quarter 1853. A son, Kedgwin, was baptised at Waterbeach on 09 Sept 1860, and buried on 14 Sept 1860, aged 4 years. Stephen, although he could not have been present at the baptism, was noted as a Bankers clerk. He possibly never saw the child who was born in the Sept quarter 1856, and registered at Greenwich.[Marriage:1b 354 Islington, June Quarter ; Birth:1d 447 Greenwich, Sept Quarter]

In April 1856 he appeared in Court again.

CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT (1856) (before the Recorder)

Stephen STOUT, 26, described as an agent, was indicted for feloniously forging and uttering an acceptance to a bill of exchange for £25, with intent to defraud.

Mr Parry prosecuted; the prisoner was defended by Mr Francis.

The case occupied the Court for a considerable time, but the facts lay in a very narrow compass. It appeared that the prosecutor was a gentleman named JUDKINS, a native of the United States, and that he had obtained patents for some scientific inventions, among which was a sewing machine. The prisoner entered his service in February 1854, and it appeared that in June of that year, upon the occasion of some public exhibition in the town of Plymouth, the prisoner was sent there with one of these machines to exhibit and with the liberty to dispose of it and to establish an agency for the sale of the machines to the public. The prisoner subsequently represented that he had sold the machine entrusted to him to a tradesman named CROSS, at Plymouth, and that he had given the bill that was subject of the inquiry in payment. The prisoner shortly afterwards was dismissed from the employment of the prosecutor and absconded, and it turned out that the prisoner had received payment for

the machine, from Mr CROSS, in cash, and that the bill was an entire fabrication and forgery. Nothing was heard of the prisoner until 2 months ago when he was given into custody.

The above facts were distinctly proved in evidence, but the learned counsel for the prisoner, in accordance with the instructions given to him, subjected the prosecutor and some of the witnesses to very a severe cross-examination upon matters that appeared to have very little to do with the inquiry, and with the object of showing that the charge had been trumped up for some purpose or other.

The jury, without hesitation, returned a verdict of guilty.

Some inquiries were then made by the Court, from which it appeared that the prisoner had been suspected of dishonesty on several subsequent occasions, and that he had undergone imprisonment of 12 months in Coventry Gaol for embezzlement. It also appeared that he had obtained his situation with the prosecutor by means of a forged certificate of character. The Recorder, in passing sentence, said it appeared to him that the malicious instruction the prisoner had given to his counsel greatly aggravated his offence. The crime of forgery was under any circumstance, a most serious one in a commercial country, and if this case had stood alone the Court would have felt it a duty to sentence him to a long period of penal servitude; but as it appeared that he had already undergone imprisonment for felony, and had been suspected on other occasions, this, coupled with the facts connected with the present charge led him to come to the conclusion that the prisoner

was a most dangerous man and to be allowed to remain in this country, and that it was his regret to pass upon him the sentence of transportation for 14 years.

The Times, 12 April 1856, 11d

- 1858-1861 Teacher at the Government school at Australind. Dismissed from the position.  
1859 Ticket of Leave 30.04.1859 Bunbury.  
Perth Academy for Young Gentlemen, teaching a range of subjects (French, English grammar, Geography, History, Mathematics, Book Keeping and rudimentary Latin), was established in High Street Fremantle.
- 1862 Conditional Pardon 01.09.1862 Fremantle  
1868 Married Elinor BROWN, 17, at Australind on 28 July. Stephen was 38.  
Elinor's father died the year she was born and her mother, Fanny, died in 1867. Fanny had re married in 1859 to Nathaniel Howell, a Perth solicitor.
- 1869 Son Ernest Augustus John baptised at Bunbury on 04.07.1869.  
1866-1870 Accountant, doing book keeping for William SPENCE, Bunbury;  
Photographer at Bunbury (1869); Wellington Academy at Bunbury (1868-9).  
1868 Photographer in Perth and Fremantle. Daughter Frances Mary born Fremantle.
- 1872 Son William Lawrence born Perth.  
1874 Schoolmaster at Pensioners Barracks, Perth, until 1878. Daughter Rose Templar born.
- 1875 Stephen was described as a storekeeper, schoolmaster, commission agent and boarding house keeper when the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of his creditors was summoned in the Supreme Court on 21 April.
- 1876 Daughter Alice Maud born Perth and died aged 3yrs at Geraldton on 1879.  
1878 Editor of the Victoria Express newspaper (11.09.1878 - 05.05.1880) in Geraldton and teacher at Government School
- 1879 Elinor Victoria born Geraldton (godparent was Isaac Walker)  
1880 Annie Grace born Geraldton.  
Stephen appears to have had a falling out with the owner of the Victoria Express, Isaac WALKER. He was accused of embezzlement and appeared in the Geraldton Court.

#### GERALDTON COURT, 01.09.1880

Stephen Montague STOUT, editor and sole proprietor of the Observer Newspaper, Geraldton, was brought up on a warrant, on a charge of having embezzled certain sums, the property of his late employer, Mr Isaac WALKER of the Victoria Express. He was remanded until the following week on bail of £500 with 2 sureties of £250 each. The following week he was ordered to stand trial on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

At the trial, it was stated that STOUT was employed as editor and manager at a salary of £3 per week and 5% commission on gross earnings, and with a house rent-free. He was, until

January 1880, empowered to collect debts due to Walker and Co, at the same commission. He was to hand over all monies collected to Isaac Walker and was not authorised to use any of the money collected for any purpose. At the start of 1880 Mr CARSON was appointed as the collector.

Three witnesses were called.

Israel JONES of Northampton, who paid STOUT 10/- in April 1880 and received a receipt. He complained when he received an account and produced the receipt.

James Waterson JOHNSON of Dongara paid 12 months subscription by cheque in January and made out to the editor of the Victoria Express. Stout's signature was on the back of the cheque. Isaac WALKER claimed he never got the money and STOUT had not accounted for it.

Henry GRAY of Geraldton and Greenough Flats had some printing done by the Victoria Express. He paid 11/- to STOUT on the 13<sup>th</sup> April and had a receipt. He received an account for 14/6 and went to the office, as he couldn't remember if he had paid. STOUT told him he had paid before.

Isaac WALKER said STOUT kept a petty cash, credit and debit book, and he gave him £1 whenever he needed it for incidentals. STOUT balanced the book and he never checked them. He claimed £1.11.6 was missing and he dismissed STOUT on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1880.

The trial, for all accounts was rather heated at times. The jury took only a few minutes to return a verdict of not guilty. Victoria Express, 01.09.1880

After Stephen had been dismissed from the Victoria Express newspaper, he started the Observer Newspaper that ran from 31<sup>st</sup> August 1880 until 25<sup>th</sup> October 1881 (last known edition at the Battye Library). It was published weekly on a Tuesday. Mr Henry GRAY appears to be the backer of the paper and was also a friend.

The editorial in the Observer, after the trial, said:

- ▶ Stout was arrested 3 times and conveyed to the lock-up. 3 times bail has been demanded at an amount so extravagant as to be the joke of the place.
- ▶ 3 times he was placed in the dock on charges with little and trivial support by those that bear him ill will.
- ▶ Walker had not paid commission that was due.
- ▶ Walker admitted that if money was paid to Stout, after the appointment of the collector, it was Stout's duty to receive it and hand it over.
- ▶ Stout earned about £250 per year and would not risk his job for 3 amounts of 10/-, 11/- and 16/-.

1881            Joined the Inquirer (Fremantle) and also wrote for the Daily News and Morning Express.

1884            Daughter Elsie May born at Fremantle.

1885            His wife Elinor, aged 34, died.

1886            Stephen died at Perth, leaving 7 children aged 2 to 17 years.

#### INQUEST

Held Monday afternoon, before the Coroner

Mr Stephen Montague STOUT, journalist, who suddenly expired in front of the Colonial Hospital the day before. Inquest held in the hospital.

Samuel STEPHEN, resident medical officer: On Sunday afternoon, between 1 and 2 o'clock I went outside the hospital in consequence of what a boy had told me and found the deceased lying dead.

With the assistance of his son and another person, I took him into the dead house. I have just held a post mortem examination on the body

Lungs, much congested, especially left which had many adhesions to the pleura; liver slightly enlarged; left kidney a little degenerate; heart weak and the walls very thin; slight serous effusion on the brain.

The cause of death the resulted from general break-up of the system, and, in my opinion, the weak state of the heart was sufficient to account for sudden death

There were no marks of violence on the body.

The inquest too 4½ minutes.

[no entry in Pioneer Index of any sons]

Death Certificate: No wife or children mentioned. Death: heart disease but no medical certificate issued.

Western Mail, Saturday 17.04 1886, p18 and Inquirer and Commercial News, 14.04.1886.

35 years after his death, an article appeared in the Western Mail newspaper.

Journalist Stephen Montague STOUT, commenced his Western Australian career as a photographer artist at Fremantle during the late 1860's. His studio was in a room of the home of the old Duffield family in the vicinity of "Mannings Folly", a large building that is to be seen in Packerham Street, today. Like in any of Fremantle early built houses, the walls and Mr and Mrs Duffield's home were composed of glass bottles that were held together by pug - a combination which made very cool and comfortable living quarters. This building was one of the Port's earliest telegraph offices, the first being in William Ketts wood yard at the rear of what now are Wiltshire and Feeleys premises.

In the middle of the 1870's Stephen Montague moved to Geraldton, where his activities were directed in establishing that centres first newspaper the "Victorian Express", which was owned by Isaac Walker, of Crowther and Co, and of which the old journalist was the first editor. With the advent of Joubert and Twopeny's exhibition, that was opened by Governor Robinson, on the Perth Esplanade, in 1881, Stephen Montague joined the staff of the "Inquirer", the parent paper of the "Daily News" and in the establishment of the latter paper in 1882, he exercised a lively interest.

He was one of the states best French scholars and as an all-round newspaper man, Stephen Montague added a valued quota to early Western Australian journalism - his alert spare figure, long frock coat and white bell-topper hat being familiar features of the terrace, as his cane each morning aided his quick city walk from the Courts and other news haunts to the old "Inquirer" chambers, which, from the year 1840 stood upon the site that is now occupied by Saint Georges House.

Western Mail, 07.07.1921, p38

Stephen Stout has left a lasting legacy. His photographs are believed to be part of the RW PASSEY collection at the State Library. A more detailed account of his photographic exploits is given in *The Brand on His Coat* by Rica Erickson.

This 'story' only touches briefly on his life of Stephen Montague Stout but hopefully gives an insight to how one convict contributed to our state's history.



Other references:

WABI; Biographical Index 1788-1939, Vol 2

Inquirer 15.02.1871, 23.11.1870

Perth Gazette 26.07.1861

CSO 12.05.1859

Pioneer Index

Photo of Stephen Stout in Battye Library of Stephen (no copy on show), Acc. 351B/1

Waterbeach Parish Register, Waterbeach 1841 Census [WAGS]

Stephen Montague Stout (Western Mail, 07.07.1921)

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References and Notes:

First wife may have been Pauline Maria Lea [FreeBMD]

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