

## **Anna Shelton**

### **August 20, 1861 - August 28, 1939**

Anna Shelton was born August 20, 1861, just north of Fort Worth, to Dr. John Foster Shelton, Jr. and Martha Bronaugh Shelton. She was the youngest of 4 children born to the family. At the young age of 13, Anna's mother died, leaving her father a widower. Anna attended several local schools in Fort Worth, but was sent to her mother's alma mater, Bethel College in Kentucky, to attend finishing school.<sup>1</sup> Anna returned to Fort Worth to care for her widowed father in 1890, and moved in with her sister's family after her father's death the following year. After witnessing the divorce of her sister, Lizzie, Anna vowed she would never marry in order to avoid the financial and business ramifications she witnessed. The divorce also gave Anna a new found sense of confidence as she began to reject the traditional female roles of the time and "became civic-minded, informed and a 'new woman.'"

Anna began her professional career as a teacher and tutor of English at the Fort Worth University, a local Methodist Episcopal college. In 1902, Anna decided to leave teaching and studied French and Spanish literature in Paris and New York City for six months. Ultimately, she would return to Fort Worth and become one of the city's first female realtors and real estate developers. Anna's success did not stop there, as she was active in the development of many social welfare organizations, many of which focused on the advancement of women.<sup>2</sup> In 1923, she founded The Woman's Club of Fort Worth<sup>3</sup> and held the office of President until June 1939.<sup>4</sup> With the success of the club, in 1926, an additional banquet and lecture hall was constructed at 1316 Pennsylvania Ave. The building was named the Anna Shelton Hall in her honor and is still in use to this day.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the numerous organizations she was a member of, Anna was also a member of the Mary Isham Keith Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

On August 28, 1939, Anna passed away after a lengthy illness with arteriosclerosis, a vascular disease. Her funeral was held at The Woman's Club in the hall that bore her name.<sup>6</sup> She is buried in the Shelton family plot and now rests in eternity next to her parents and brother. She was never married and has no known children.

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<sup>1</sup> Paddock, Buckley. *Fort Worth and the Texas Northwest*, 1922, Pgs. 583-584.

<sup>2</sup> Sherrod, Katie. *Grace & Gumption : Stories of Fort Worth Women*. TCU Press. 2007, Pgs. 69-71.

<sup>3</sup> "Funeral Held For Miss Anna Shelton." *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Three Star ed., 31 Aug. 1939, p. 2. [NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current](#), Accessed 13 Aug. 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Naylor, Pauline (1939-05-28). "Miss Shelton's 16-Year Tenure as Woman's Club Head Was Period Marked by Record Expansion". *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, Three Star ed., 28 May 1939, p. 34. [NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current](#), Accessed 14 Aug. 2023.

<sup>5</sup> "Anna Shelton Hall - Pennsylvania." *Historic Fort Worth*. 2022. Retrieved 14 Aug 2023 ; <https://historicfortworth.org/property/anna-shelton-hall-pennsylvania/>.

<sup>6</sup> "Funeral Held For Miss Anna Shelton." 1939.