

tion in James Cowan's *Hero Stories of New Zealand* (item 49). Her remarkable story has made her one of the few Maori women that historians have noted, hence the disturbing brevity of the section on 'Tangata Whenua: Maori Women'.

Pakeha women have fared better in the historical record though often it is the privileged such as Lady Barker who have left observations in print. Perhaps Susan McKearney's *Just me: the life story of a nobody* (item 137) offers some insights into everyday domestic life. It is by supplementing published material like this with work in archival and manuscript sources that we will be able to put women's lives in a wider social context. A guide to such material would be an invaluable supplement to *Victoria's Furthest Daughters*.

The publication of the bibliography is timely, with many groups around the country engaged in the search for women for the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. It has already been of great use to local committees and will be an indispensable tool for others interested in the history of New Zealand women. The ease of locating material within the bibliography is assisted by indexes to authors, titles and biographical subjects. Taken as a whole, the volume reminds us that there is much to be done, and many gaps to be filled. Indeed, the very fact that women have contributed to the enrichment of our past has often been overlooked by men. It has been left to women to record their own stories, as the author index to *Victoria's Furthest Daughters* makes abundantly clear.

With this publication the subject of 'women' is brought decisively to our attention. But it is important to remember the wide spectrum of experience, shaped by class and ethnicity as well, within New Zealand's past. If we know little of the experiences of Maori women, how much less do we know of the lives of the 50 Chinese women whose presence in New Zealand in 1907 made one Member of Parliament claim it was 'imperative' to control Chinese immigration (See Ng Bickleen Fong (1959) *The Chinese in New Zealand: A Study in Assimilation*, p.26). Research on women demands new and imaginative approaches to source materials. *Victoria's Furthest Daughters* suggests some skeletal outlines — it is up to historians to flesh them out.

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Glimpses into Early Manawatu: the Saga of Amos and Lydia Burr. By Vera L. McLennan-Boman. Heritage Press, Waikanae, on behalf of the author, 1985. 222 pp. N.Z. price: \$29.95.

AMOS BURR was an eighteen year old seaman on the New Zealand Company's survey ship *Cuba* when she entered Port Nicholson in January 1840. When the emigrant fleet arrived a little later Burr did his duty with the signal gun by firing a salute. A shot misfired. As he attempted to withdraw the charge it exploded, flinging him into the water with both arms shattered beyond repair; yet he recovered and lived to the age of 85 wearing wooden stumps fitted with hooks, eating tools and other implements. In 1855 he married the attractive and capable Lydia Hoskins, whose father

had a bootshop opposite Parliament House grounds. The marriage faced heavy odds: a fifteen year gap in ages, the husband's handicap, his past association with a Maori woman to be glossed over, a home to establish on the lower Manawatu where, shortly before, a major earthquake had shattered the nearest settlement. Burr was no helpless cripple. He worked successively as stock farmer, dealer, overseer of roads, hotel keeper and Native agent, and had thirteen children. Yet financial troubles assailed him, sapping his temper until his wife separated from 'Mr Burr' (as she always called him) and set up as a hotel proprietor herself, while Amos subsided into a morose and drunken old age.

Burr belonged to a numerous and interesting class on the Wellington west coast — adventurous, rough, humble men, whalers and traders and come-ashore sailors. They lived on an equality with their Maori hosts and usually founded Maori families. Their contacts and their knowledge of the language were used by their social and political masters to facilitate land deals. Some, for a while, rented large areas from the tribes, yet few established lasting estates. Parts of this story are well known, but the whole process awaits full analysis.

There are several good things about this book. It is tidily produced. The author, a grand-daughter of Amos and Lydia Burr, has shown enormous diligence in assembling family history. Above all, the story centres on two robust and distinctive characters, struggling against injury, floods, bankruptcy, officials (such as John Bryce, who both used and ignored them) yet surviving, moving from job to job, passing on to a widening circle of descendants more stories than land.

Unfortunately the task of controlling and shaping the data of these lives has proved too difficult for the author. She has assembled official documents, published accounts, letters and family oral tradition — a fine range of resources — but has lacked techniques for linking them into a coherent narrative. An experienced editor could have helped to disentangle the essential from the trivial, to suppress irrelevant digressions, and to establish chronology and cause and effect. An experienced copyreader would have eliminated a host of confusing shortcomings in layout, punctuation and citation which fail to do justice to the author's work. But those defects survived and they make the book unusually trying to read continuously.

The parts are much better than the whole. I particularly liked a group of letters from the author's father, at a time when he was working a punt across the Manawatu River.

The book has its merits. It is rare to find published such a wealth of detail about the lives of ordinary people. If a more active relationship of mutual respect and help can be developed between the professional historian in the university centre and the genealogical enthusiast in the small town then we may find resources and develop techniques that will yet uncover unexpected social patterns and new ways of explaining how we live in New Zealand. In the meantime, *Glimpses into Early Manawatu* is a good book still waiting to be written.

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