

together to enjoy themselves, take stock and prepare for the year ahead. And as with other forms of cultural identity, British migrants brought with them to New Zealand holiday traditions and rituals which either flourished or declined in their new setting.

The book's three main chapters discuss in detail the holidays and traditions which surrounded Christmas, New Year and Easter in nineteenth-century New Zealand. Readers can come to grips with the ways in which these traditions have played a role in shaping New Zealand cultural life. Seasonal differences changed holidays from winter celebrations in Britain to summer festivals in New Zealand. Food and drink choices had to be adjusted and the New Zealand tradition of outdoor activity on holidays began to develop. But some British traditions remained — as Clarke points out, many Pakeha families continued the English tradition of roast beef at Christmas. Others bemoaned the distinctiveness of the antipodean Christmas and New Year holidays. They longed for the snow and yuletide cheer that were often a feature of this time of year in the northern hemisphere. Clarke's discussion of Easter explains the importance of Christian ritual to nineteenth-century Anglicans and Catholics in New Zealand. The chapter also explores how established religious practices fared in the new colony. For example, observing the self-denial of Lent in late summer rather than at the end of winter was a difficult seasonal adjustment for nineteenth-century Pakeha. While the book focuses on Pakeha traditions, Clarke also asks how Maori reacted and adapted to the European customs that had been transplanted to colonial New Zealand.

This book is a lovely and thought-provoking look at something familiar to all of us. Generations of New Zealanders have enjoyed the beach and the bach at Christmas and New Year as our cultural life has moved away from ties to Britain. In an era when more and more New Zealanders are interested in the social life of their past — the ways in which traditions have played out — *Holiday Seasons* tells an engaging story. It will appeal in particular to readers interested in New Zealand leisure and social life, the roles of men and women in social activities and the development of cultural customs. Those interested in processes of cultural migration and the transplantation of social customs will also find much to stimulate them. While the book does not offer comparisons with other similar cultural settings, a reader wanting to take the topic further could draw some conclusions. This is the fourth in Auckland University Press's series *Studies in Cultural and Social History*. These books are intended for general and academic readers, and this volume should satisfy both groups. The interesting illustrations grab attention, encourage further inquiry and reach out to us in a lively way.

EMMA DEWSON

*Ministry for Culture and Heritage*

*Women in British Imperial Airspace, 1922–1937*. By Liz Millward. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston, 2008. 249pp. Canadian price: \$80.00. ISBN 978-0773-53337-0.

THIS IS AN ELEGANTLY WRITTEN MONOGRAPH that brings new understanding to women in British imperial airspace during the interwar years. Focusing largely on New Zealand and Britain, Millward draws upon an impressive range of primary and secondary sources, including the Amy Johnson and Jean Batten papers at the Royal Air Force archives in Hendon, London. She is in command of an impressive body of interdisciplinary literature that includes a Maori perspective. While individual pilots are showcased, the primary focus is how gender, class, race, sexuality, nationalism and imperialism variously collided in the development of aviation.

Indicative of Millward's academic training the book has an overtly geographical

perspective. She asserts that 'spaces have to be imagined, discussed, defined, and mapped in addition to physically occupied' (p.37). After an introductory and context-setting chapter, five forms of airspace provide the focus for each substantive chapter of the book. Under consideration first is private airspace, as manifest through the fight for women to learn to fly in light aeroplane clubs. As the next chapter reveals, the mission of women to be included in commercial airspace was more extreme, with the International Commission on Air Navigation banning women pilots from holding a 'B' Licence between 1924 and 1927. Gender discrimination grounded in notions of the sky as inappropriate for women is an enduring theme of the book. Millward suggests 'the pathologization of women's bodies, fear of the older social spaces of women's power, and myths of racial descent' (p.67) as important reasons why women were considered unfit to fly commercial aeroplanes. A third pivotal chapter concerns imperial space and specifically the part that empire played in gender, race and interwar airspace. The focus is then on New Zealand as national space, featuring Jean Batten as 'The Godwit Flies Home', a reference to Robin Hyde's novel about the same generation of New Zealand women. Lastly, Millward takes an inward turn to examine the body space of the woman pilot as a challenge to heteronormativity. Did interwar women pilots offer all women a sense of escapism and more generally signal the possibility for societal change?

New Zealand features strongly in this book. Jean Batten appears on the cover, and she is the pilot who has captured Millward's attention more than Amy Johnson. The dominant work on Batten for nearly 20 years has been Ian Mackersey's *Jean Batten: The Garbo of the Skies* (1990), which psychoanalyzed Batten in a negative light as a manipulative loner whose flying achievements faded in contrast to the story of her body ending up in a pauper's grave in Spain. The message was that women who reached for the skies were undesirable and would end up forgotten and miserable, dying alone. In a tempered fashion, Millward rehabilitates Batten, and in a manner evocative of newspaper and magazine coverage from the interwar years, and imperial children's literature, quietly casts her as a heroine. This is Batten as a model adventurer in support of empire. Here Batten's voice, as collated from written documents and secondary publications, is taken too much at face value. Millward does not successfully address Mackersey's contentious assertion that Batten was successful at least in part because she used her sexuality to gain money and planes from men. Rather, she whimsically suggests that Batten 'represented economic independence' (p.154). The irony that without her glamorous looks Batten would not have succeeded, and therefore that she represented the continuation of women's objectification, rather than their emancipation, goes unresolved. Subversively, it is Batten's appeal to women that Millward chooses to focus upon, arguing that heteronormativity was challenged. In sharp contrast to Mackersey's portrayal, Millward's Batten, albeit playfully lesbian, is simultaneously lacking in energy, bravery and courage. Yet overall, the decentering of Batten and her depiction in the book as one player in a larger imperial picture is refreshing.

Despite chronicling gender discrimination, this is an optimistic book. Millward emphasizes the transformative significance for gender and imperial relations that women pilots offered. She argues that the very existence of these women pilots challenged the idea that the British Empire of the sky be naturalized as masculine. She intelligently places the women in her study in an interwar context regarding women's status in society. Millward advances that it was during those years that women managed to make a difference and influence the future. But was this really the case? World War II, however, saw the air become re-masculinized and rather than an advance into gendered masculine domains, the post-war era was dominated by women's staid gender roles. Rather than becoming pilots, the objectification of women in the sky took a passive, domestic turn as women's greatest chance of being in the sky was as mascots for new jumbo jets as 'air hostesses'. By the end of the twentieth century, gender discrimination may have decreased, but the

importance of glamour and the objectification of women in relation to the technology of the aeroplane remained. What had faded more rapidly was the demarcation of British imperial airspace, and many of the racist attitudes that accompanied it.

This is a thorough, thoughtful and important study that encourages further work on the subject. It successfully writes history beyond, yet mindful of, national boundaries and will be useful to a wide variety of scholars.

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*Being Māori Chinese: Mixed Identities.* By Manying Ip. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2008. 264pp. NZ price: \$44.99. ISBN 978-1-86940-399-7.

ORAL HISTORIES PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHTS into the lived experience of a wide range of groups whose lives rarely leave traces in the written archive. New Zealand has a strong Chinese community, about which now much more is known because of the work of James Ng, Brian Moloughney, John Stenhouse, Barbara Brookes, Manying Ip and others, who have explored the social world of early Chinese goldminers, the arrival of female migrants, examined market gardens as economic sites as well as loci of gendered racial fears, and traced immigration restriction and intolerance in an era of growing colonial nationalism. An important part of the history of Chinese settlement in New Zealand is the intimate relationships formed between Chinese and Maori. But as Ip notes, these 'cross-cultural relationships have been largely overlooked in the formal historical and sociological discourse of New Zealand'.

*Being Māori Chinese* is not concerned with tracing the detailed history of interracial encounters between Maori and Chinese. As the word 'being' in the title suggests, this book is largely about the lived experience of being mixed descent in late twentieth-century New Zealand. *Being Māori Chinese: Mixed Identities* offers a glimpse into the lives of seven families of mixed Maori–Chinese descent as they attempted to negotiate the political, economic, cultural and social worlds of twentieth-century New Zealand. While only seven families feature in the book, they cover a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences, deriving from both rural and urban backgrounds and diverse religious affiliations. While some families were formed out of alliances of a casual, fleeting nature, others grew out of committed relationships, and some out of economic need. Interracial relationships are associated with a history of shame, dislocation and intolerance, all of which resonate in the family histories showcased in *Being Māori Chinese*. Ip treats these individuals and their histories with respect and sensitivity, and clearly admires the achievements and gains made by them over the generations. Heart-warming stories of struggle and survival are scattered throughout *Being Māori Chinese*, to show 'the human side of the story of our nation building' through 'intimate first-person accounts'.

Historians may find this book frustrating. Because the focus is on individual and family experiences, the historical and sociological contexts for explaining, interpreting and examining these experiences are pushed into the background, and largely left undigested until the short conclusion. In part, *Being Māori Chinese* is problematic because a tension exists between a desire to highlight and celebrate the history of a diverse set of families and forms of encounter in New Zealand's past through the lived experience, and a determination to link this history to contemporary politics concerned with the relationship between biculturalism and multiculturalism, and between migrants and indigenous peoples within the framework of Treaty rights and the meaning of citizenship. None of the key terms used, particularly biculturalism and multiculturalism, is unpacked for the reader, and anyone unfamiliar with the application of these terms in New Zealand will not