

Holding On To Home is a solid book. The covers are broad, with rounded edges, alluding to the soldiers' diaries or scrapbook albums of the time. There is something precious inside here. This design feature and the choice of colours soften the impression of the book and broadcast the thoughtfulness of the design. The designer, Anna Egan-Reid, has noted that the book is aimed at women, which adds a point of difference. The photographs are full colour and generous. As well as beautiful design, the book has an index and comprehensive image references.

I had a few minor difficulties with the book. It is intended to be accessible to a wide audience, likely unfamiliar with the chronology or circumstances of the First World War. This means that there is often a long lead-in to the chapters in order to provide context. I found Chapter Six, which is about opposition to the war, less effective than the others. The very fact that few material culture objects survive is very important in itself, because of the dangers of retaining them during the war, and Hunter and Ross have done well with limited resources to cleverly represent the various reasons for opposition to the war. Understanding these constraints, I was surprised that the stories of conscientious objectors were not included. The impact of a man's objection on his family and community, and his own experiences and writings (even those published after the war), could have contributed another layer to the significance to the themes of home and loyalty. However, these are minor concerns and did not stop me from appreciating the authors' approach to the story they were telling.

Holding On To Home realizes its intentions to be a fresh take on the First World War and to bring stories of New Zealand at home to the forefront. The objects in the book connect us to how individuals, both soldiers and civilians, experienced the First World War, at home and abroad.

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Rough on Women: Abortion in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand. By Margaret Sparrow. Victoria University Press, Wellington, July 2014. 195pp. NZ price: \$40.00 ISBN: 9780864739360.

In this companion volume to her *Abortion Then & Now: New Zealand Abortion Stories from 1940 to 1980*,¹ Margaret Sparrow sheds light on the often harrowing experiences of New Zealand women who chose to terminate their pregnancies a hundred years earlier. To date, little work has been done on abortions in New Zealand prior to the twentieth century. Abortions were – and remain – an intensely private incident in a woman's life and only became public when something went tragically wrong. As a result, the availability of historical sources makes a book such as this an achievement. Sparrow's main sources of information were the coroners' reports on women who died and court reports on cases of procuring an abortion, resulting in 'the inevitable focus on

the negative aspects of abortion to the detriment of a more realistic perspective' (p.xi). Despite this bias, the cases in the book challenge assumptions regarding women's agency in controlling their own fertility in New Zealand during the nineteenth century.

The book opens with an examination of how women in nineteenth-century New Zealand responded to an unwanted pregnancy, using cases of adoption, baby farming, infanticide or, in extreme circumstances, suicide. Although abortion was not limited to single women, the stigma of illegitimacy, especially within European society, pervades many of the cases in this first chapter. Sparrow then contextualizes the book through chapters on contraception and abortion law and practice, before an examination of the Coroner's Courts and Courts of Justice, which provided most of the surviving evidence for abortions. This latter chapter explains the relationship between the two courts. It shows how the judiciary became involved if the evidence from the Coroner's Court suggested the need for police investigation. Abortion was considered a serious crime and cases would be referred to the Supreme Court for trial. This chapter highlights the difficulty in securing evidence – it was not always clear if a miscarriage was natural or induced, and although women were usually offered immunity from prosecution in return for giving evidence against an alleged abortionist, not all women were willing to do this.

The limitations of the sources in providing more information about the women concerned, and why they made the choices they did, become evident as the majority of the remaining chapters focus on those who performed or assisted in procuring abortions: qualified doctors, 'bogus' doctors, chemists and female abortionists. Despite these limitations, this section of the book is perhaps the strongest for clearly articulating the situation faced by the women who underwent abortions in nineteenth-century New Zealand. The sense from these chapters is that although the penalties were severe, the abortionists and those who assisted in procuring abortions, both men and women, were willing to take the risk and saw what they were doing as an important and necessary service. These chapters illustrate the divide between the law and society's perceptions of abortion.

Despite the perception that abortions were necessary, the sense of shame associated with an unwanted pregnancy, whether legitimate or not, is clearly apparent from the evidence provided in the courts by those closest to the women. In many cases Sparrow has been able to provide considerable details about the women's lives and actions in the weeks leading up to the abortions. However, it is clear that those who knew them best preferred to deny all knowledge in an attempt to protect the women, and possibly themselves, from the stigma of an unwanted pregnancy and possible legal action for assisting in procuring an abortion. This veil of silence encompassed family, friends, and most notably the male sexual partner. It is this absence in many of the cases that underlines the difficulty and isolation some women faced. However, in the chapter headed 'Helping Others' Sparrow provides several cases together in which the male sexual partner played a key role in assisting the women to terminate their pregnancies.

The book closes with a chapter on 'Lessons from History', where the author examines how far New Zealand has come since the nineteenth century. Here Sparrow outlines the medical advances, legal changes and social issues surrounding abortion

in New Zealand since the nineteenth century. As in the cases examined in this book, there remains something of a disconnect today between the law and the provision of abortion services which is accepted within society. So has the country really come that far? This chapter is not only thought-provoking, but challenges New Zealand to move away from its currently restrictive attitude towards abortion and recognize that it is a health, not a criminal, issue.

There were times that I felt the need for more contextualization in the book. For example, the first chapter mentions several ways that women responded to unwanted pregnancies. However, the context in which women chose these is under-examined and individual cases are left on their own to illustrate the restricted choices faced by women. Likewise, the chapter 'Helping Others', which deals with the involvement of male sexual partners, could have had more discussion about the role that these men played, perhaps drawing from other cases mentioned in the book. Overall these chapters seemed a bit short and left me wanting something more. It is also difficult to ascertain how relevant the British and American debates about access to contraception were to New Zealand at the time, and which English abortion laws, of the several that are mentioned, were applied in New Zealand. There are also a small number of editorial issues, such as hyphenated words in the middle of sentences. This, however, does not detract from the accessibility of the book and the important contribution that it makes to a better understanding of the lives of everyday women in nineteenth-century New Zealand.

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1 Margaret Sparrow, *Abortion Then & Now: New Zealand Abortion Stories from 1940 to 1980*, Wellington, 2010.

The Rise and Fall of National Women's Hospital: A History. By Linda Bryder. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2014. 323pp. NZ price: \$49.99. ISBN: 9781869408091.

In this important book Linda Bryder uses a particular medical institution – National Women's Hospital in Auckland – to examine the interconnected and overlapping themes of childbirth services, medical research and training, the care of babies, reproductive medicine and changes in ideas about fertility and reproduction over time, contraception and abortion, and much more. In this manner, her work pays homage to other significant contributions to medical history on the international stage, including Australian, British and North American studies of institutional worlds and narratives of health and medicine over time. There has been a resurgence of interest in the 'institution' as a site of history-making in medical history circles, perhaps in