

A History of New Zealand Women

By *Barbara Brookes*

Notes for
Teaching History

A History of New Zealand Women places the story and perspective of women at the centre of New Zealand's history. Emphasising the richness and diversity of women's contribution and experience, it also explores many of the challenges and barriers that have been met and, largely, overcome.

Drawing on a wide array of official and unofficial, published and unpublished sources, the book presents stories of women from different times, social backgrounds and ethnicities with clarity, frankness and impact as well as providing a clear and authoritative discussion of the broader political, social, cultural and economic contexts.

KEY FEATURES

- The fourteen chapters are structured chronologically – from Hineteaparangi's sighting and naming of Aotearoa to a concluding discussion that points to current issues.
- The emphasis on key forces/dynamics operating in each period gives extra analytical focus. This leads to some useful and clarifying overlapping, especially on the two chapters that explore the interwar years (a period poorly served in most current school history programmes).
- A mix of general analysis and specific narratives alongside critical analysis of historians' perspectives makes it particularly useful for exploring how 'history' is constructed.
- It is richly illustrated with portraits, posters, works of art, and photographs of people, places, events, fashions and objects.
- The extensive endnotes and the detailed index provide excellent aids to further research.

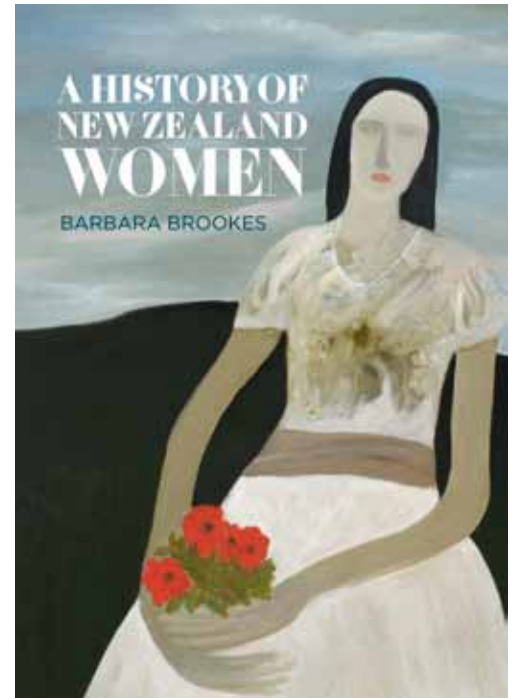
RELEVANT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

Level 2:

AS91229 (2.1) Carry out an inquiry of an historical event or place that is of significance to New Zealanders.

AS91230 (2.2) Examine an historical event, or place, of significance to New Zealanders.

AS91232 (2.4) Interpret different perspectives of people in an historical event that is of significance to New Zealanders.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara Brookes is a Professor of History at the University of Otago with an international reputation, who has produced a range of acclaimed publications on health, colonial, gender and women's history.



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Level 3:

AS91434 (3.1) Research an historical event or place of significance to New Zealanders, using primary and secondary sources.

AS91435 (3.2) Analyse an historical event, or place, of significance to New Zealanders.

AS91437 (3.4) Analyse different perspectives of a contested event of significance to New Zealanders.

AS91438 (3.5) Analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event.

AS91439 (3.6) Analyse a significant historical trend and the force(s) that influenced it.

USING A HISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND WOMEN IN YOUR HISTORY PROGRAMME

A History of New Zealand Women offers rich pickings when applied to specific standards, especially when the broad and flexible definitions of ‘event’ and ‘place’ in the Explanatory Notes of the standards are factored in.

At Level 2:

Generic tasks for AS91229 and AS91230 provide a framework for students to research:

- Issues such as education, marriage, legal status, property rights, employment, equal pay;
- Comparative studies looking at issues across time e.g., women’s education/sport/activities in the 1890s compared with the 1990s;
- Women’s organisations and their impact: WCTU, Plunket, Maori Women’s Welfare League;
- The role/impact of specific women in specific organisations, issues or events.

The format (an issue for AS91230) should be substantial enough to ensure students meet the requirement to examine the place or event in sufficient depth to achieve Excellence. Most – if not all – of these research tasks also provide opportunities for students to explore AS91232.

At Level 3:

Students can be assisted by being given suggested contexts. These could build on or adapted from those suggested for Level 2 (above), but should be more demanding in both scope and depth. With care in the choice of research context, it is possible to gather material and develop the analytical expertise to address both research standards (AS91434 and AS91435) as well as the standard that focuses on perspectives of a contested event: AS91437.

New – and potentially more searching contexts – could include:

- The impact of Christianity on the status and role of Māori women;
- Māori women’s responses to the First World War;
- Women and families in and after the First World War;
- Women and peace movements;
- Comparative studies between countries focusing on an issue – employment, education, health, indigenous rights etc.;
- Women and politics;
- The impact and legacy of the Women’s Liberation Movement.

For many of the contexts, interviews are potentially useful sources of both information and insight, providing further opportunities to develop historical skills and methodology.

Using the text to provide the context for student research and incorporating seminars and group work before, during and after the research process should provide students with the substantive knowledge to address the external standard, AS91439. This standard is almost purpose-built for *A History of New Zealand Women*, with Professor Brookes’s exploration of the trends in women’s experience and the social, political, economic and cultural forces that were causes and consequences of such significant events in New Zealand – and world – history.

INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY IDEAS

Used as an anchor text, this work provides possibilities for discussing and developing students' historical literacy and grasp on historical methodology. Aspects that could be explored include:

- Constructing a narrative to include general and specific ideas and weave critical analysis throughout;
- Incorporating visual evidence;
- Analysing visual evidence in various forms;
- Incorporating the views of historians and presenting contesting/contrasting perspectives.

Some possible approaches:

- Use the 'Introduction' to explore the role of the historian's intent and methodology. Discuss the value of having such access to the mind of the writer. What would readers miss if it were absent?
- As preparation for 'contested' perspectives: critically read and discuss Chapter 1: Origins, Tradition and 'Civilisation'. Compare this to the tone and approach of other histories of New Zealand (e.g., King, Sinclair, Oliver, even Reeves). What are the differences/distinctions in purpose and tone?
- Explore the illustrations and the captions. How do they enrich the text? Do they challenge preconceptions and present perspectives that shift the viewer/reader? What power do they have in themselves and to what degree does the contextualisation provided by the narrative strengthen the effect?

FURTHER READING

Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney and Aroha Harris, *Tangata Whenua: An Illustrated History*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 2014

Sandra Coney, *Standing in the Sunshine: A History of New Zealand Women Since they Won the Vote*, Viking, Auckland, 1993

Ruth Fry, *It's Different for Daughters: A History of the Curriculum for Girls in New Zealand Schools, 1900–1975*, New Zealand Council for Educational Research, Wellington, 1985

Megan Hutching, *Leading the Way: How New Zealand Women Won the Vote*, HarperCollins, Auckland, 2010

Bridget Williams, Charlotte Macdonald and Merimeri Penfold (eds), *The Book of New Zealand Women/Ko Kui Ma Te Kaupapa*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington, 1991

<https://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs>

<https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz>

<http://www.teara.govt.nz>

<http://timeframes.natlib.govt.nz>

<http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz>

■ BWB Publishing Trust would like to thank Paul Enright for these notes for teaching history.

The BWB Publishing Trust: Books in School Libraries

Books in School Libraries sets out to enrich school library collections and enhance New Zealand students' understanding of their country. The project allows supporters to sponsor titles from the Bridget Williams Books catalogue for donation to secondary school libraries.

The Freemasons Foundation

We thank the Freemasons Foundation for their generous support for *A History of New Zealand Women* in the Books in School Libraries Programme.