

# Born to a Changing World

## Childbirth in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand

By Alison Clarke

Teacher Notes  
History

### BOOK OVERVIEW

*Born to a Changing World* traces Māori and Pākehā experiences of childbirth in nineteenth century New Zealand, showing how different contemporary childbirth experiences are to those of nineteenth-century women, as well as the major contrasts between Māori and Pākehā experiences. The book draws extensively on accounts from a wide range of written and published sources, allowing the voices of the nineteenth century to tell their story.

*Born to a Changing World* takes a thematic approach covering hospital births, clothing and feeding of babies, rituals and religious influences, and both maternal and infant death.

### RELEVANT CURRICULUM/ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS

#### New Zealand Curriculum Level 8 Social Sciences

Students will gain knowledge, skills and experience to:

- understand that the causes, consequences and explanations of historical events that are of significance to New Zealanders are complex and how and why they are contested.
- understand how trends over time reflect social, economic and political forces.

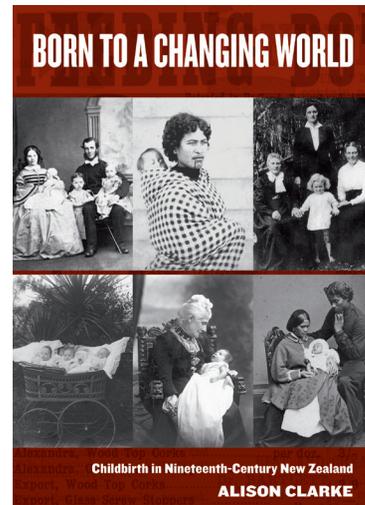
#### Achievement Standards

##### Level 3

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

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

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



### KEY FEATURES

- thematic approach, each chapter covers a different theme
- draws on diaries, letters, memoirs, medical texts, and newspapers
- illustrations include a photographs of people, places and artifacts, newspaper advertisements, table of infant mortality
- a list of court cases relating to concealment of birth or infant mortality is in an appendix
- concludes with abbreviations, endnotes, bibliography and index.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alison Clarke is a freelance historian, who also works part-time at the Hocken Collections, University of Otago. She previously worked as a nurse for twenty years, and she completed a PhD in history at the University of Otago in 2003. Alison continues to research various aspects of social and religious history of nineteenth-century New Zealand.

Books in School Libraries

## USING *BORN TO A CHANGING WORLD* IN YOUR HISTORY PROGRAMME

3.1 *Born to a Changing World* can be used:

- as a source of primary and secondary material for inquiry on nineteenth century health and medicine, lives of women in nineteenth century New Zealand, impact of colonisation on Maori health, child care, religion, mental health, maternal/infant mortality, midwifery.
- for research into nineteenth century social history. Bibliography allows students to follow up primary source material.
- to compare with more recent records of experiences of birth (eg with television programmes 'Call the Midwife' or 'One Born Every Minute').

3. Use *Born to a Changing World* and other sources to produce a museum display (primary sources plus supporting text) on the theme of nineteenth century health or lives of women or childbirth. Historical ideas could include social change, hospitalisation of birth, state intervention.

Other possible forms to present analysis on this theme: Research essay, Magazine/newspaper article, podcast, PowerPoint presentation, short video, diary/letter writing

3.6 Write an essay examining trends in healthcare or childcare or birth or lives of women focusing on issues of change and continuity eg. Local of births, mortality rates, training of midwives.

## INDEPENDENT ENQUIRY IDEAS

- Brainstorm topic – what do you think birth would be like in the nineteenth century, what differences could exist between Māori and Pākehā experiences, how could European practices impact on Māori communities.
- Use Appendix 'Court Cases' to look at issues of reliability and usefulness.
- Use Chapter One to look at the methods of an historian – what issues could there be in using evidence about Māori practices from European sources.
- Interpretation of statistics from Table 2 on pages 218–219
- Complete charts identifying change and continuity **or** cause and consequence.

## FURTHER READING

Philippa Mein Smith, *Maternity in Dispute: New Zealand 1920–1939*, Department of Internal Affairs, 1986

Lynda Bryder (ed), *A Healthy Country: Essays on the Social History of Medicine in New Zealand*, Bridget Williams Books, 1991

Frances Porter and Charlotte Macdonald (eds), *My Hand Will Write What My Heart Dictates*, Bridget Williams Books, 1996

Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie (eds), *The Gendered Kiwi*, Auckland University Press, 1990

[www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/pregnancy-birth-and-baby-care/sources](http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/pregnancy-birth-and-baby-care/sources)

■ BWB Publishing Trust would like to thank Carol Jarman for these teacher notes.

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