

Northey's account charts the development of AGGS from its precursor, the short-lived Auckland Girls' High School, through its reluctant acceptance into the boys' grammar school in 1888, to the growth of the independent institution for girls that was eventually established in Howe Street in 1909. It provides a detailed picture of school life and of changes in the character of the school during the twentieth century, with the help of some interesting and useful photographs. Its value as a work of reference is much enhanced through the appendices which list staff, prefects, scholars, graduates, some notable old girls, member of the Board of Governors, and officers of the Old Girls' Association. But it consistently misses opportunities to illuminate the changing social and cultural roles of girls' secondary education in Auckland over the past century.

The main method adopted is to treat the history of the school in terms of the attitudes of its headmistresses and the ways in which they coped with challenges and problems. All emerge vindicated and usually victorious from their battles with officialdom. Thus the dominant perspective for each period of the school's history, significantly divided up according to the length of each head's 'reign' or 'era', is that of the headmistress herself. This means that the book emphasizes in each case the official rationale for actions and responses to events, and little attempt is made to inquire more deeply. The book also fails to discuss in any adequate way the relationship between the school and long-term social change. There is some discussion of the early problems of girls' secondary education, but the issue of how far the school has enabled girls and women to achieve equality in society and employment in relation to boys and men is hardly examined and never clarified. Moreover, there is almost nothing here on the social class relationships of girls' secondary education, even when dealing with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century developments, during which time such aspects were especially striking. The rosy image of racial harmony and equality that is evoked does little to help us understand deep-seated educational inequalities and the ethnic conflicts of late twentieth-century Auckland.

The book makes no use of the important scholarship on the history of girls' education that has emerged in the past decade, either in New Zealand or overseas: the local work referred to goes little further than the work of Ian and Alan Cumming and a sprinkling of earlier school histories, and the British material cited is antediluvian. Nor does Northey make much of the very good primary source material that is available on the history of AGGS itself. These sources should certainly have led the author to question or moderate the benign and charitable interpretations of the school's role that permeate the book, for example on the issue of zoning in the 1950s and 1960s— if the book had not been designed for a very different purpose. In sum, while there is clearly scope and demand for this kind of exercise in organized nostalgia, the social history of grammar school education for girls in Auckland is still to be written, and it will be assisted in only a partial way by this particular work.

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Presbyterian Church Archives: Care and Conservation: Guidelines for the Keeping, Care and Preservation of Church Records and Archives. Published by the Historical Records Committee of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand, Dunedin, 1988. 44pp. NZ price: \$6.50 incl. postage.

THIS ADMIRABLE little handbook gives guidance on what records should be kept by church organizations; what are the best conditions for storage; how should one index, and

the like. It is of use to more than church groups alone. Recreational, social, and educational groups, indeed anyone involved in the small archival field, could use the advice given here as a sound basis for records management and archives preservation.

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