

# Working for children and social change

Tracing the endeavours of three Scottish lady teachers who immigrated to New Zealand in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century



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Cover illustration: Messrs Little, Jamieson and Inkpen  
Circle games in the primers, Te Aro School Wellington ABH0w4389, ANZ

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Introduction:

*A fragmented story of forgotten teachers*

Misses Agnes Inkpen and Isabella Jamieson emigrated together from Edinburgh, Scotland, to New Zealand in 1908. Miss Isabel Little, also from Edinburgh emigrated in 1912. All three women were primary school teachers, trained in Edinburgh, with interests and/or qualifications in kindergarten and teaching infant classes. Whether Miss Little knew the others prior to departure is not known, nor is there evidence of any connection in New Zealand, with Misses Inkpen and Jamieson based in Christchurch and later Hamilton, and Miss Little in Wellington. However, given their involvement in a criss-cross of local and national organisations associated with women's issues, peace, schooling and kindergarten it is likely they would have known of each other.

This is a story of three lady teachers whose teaching careers and endeavours on behalf of women and children have been mainly forgotten. It is an incomplete story, lacking in photographic records and collated from a myriad of fragmentary news clippings, writings, sightings and reports gathered over some years. The piecing together of the fragments for each of the teachers, by Helen in relation to Miss Little, and by Kerry for Misses Inkpen and Jamieson, and combined in this publication, reveals some richer insights. This was a long journey for three single but intrepid women to undertake from a long established and reputable education system in Scotland to the fledgling school infrastructure in New Zealand. But there were opportunities for single women teachers in a country that gave the vote to women in 1893. This was a new century and a new country interested in social reform and opportunities for all. The careers of our three teachers flourished in this environment. Their arrival coincided with the growth of the kindergarten movement in New Zealand and a school system cautiously welcoming of the modern methods of new education; influenced by kindergarten pedagogy but also the ideas of John Dewey and Maria Montessori.<sup>1</sup> The three women brought their Scottish expertise of teaching young children into a receptive education environment, and in their new home embarked on a range of endeavours in schools, kindergartens and the wider community. While New Zealand became their permanent home, their links to Scotland remained strong and their 'Scottishness' often noted. Misses Inkpen and Jamieson, at different times, travelled 'home' to visit family and friends.

This book is not only about revealing aspects of what has been forgotten, but framing the 1900s-1960s provides a window to view an era of turmoil, wars and crisis that both fuelled and stymied education, social and political reform. The three women in our story are small players in this process; demonstrating modern methods in the classroom, mentoring others, engaging in organisations with that belief that collective endeavour, locally, nationally and internationally would lead to change and improvement particularly in the lives of women and children. Our book yields vignette glimpses of the three teachers as agents of change in the various settings and stages of their life in New Zealand. Of interest too are their Scottish origins. Scottish teachers were highly regarded sought-after immigrants. Our three teachers from Edinburgh followed a trail of Scottish immigrants to the distant British colony of New

Zealand in the ‘whirlwind’ of the ‘settler revolution’ across the new world described by historian James Belich in *Replenishing the Earth and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939*.<sup>2</sup> Misses Isabel Little, Agnes Inkpen and Isabella Jamieson - were exemplars of this ‘whirlwind’ to the new world of the Dominion of New Zealand, proclaimed in 1907. No longer a colony, New Zealand was about to start charting its own course.

As historians of early years education in New Zealand our researches, collectively and separately, have included the archival unravelling and ‘discovery’ of the travels of early childhood people and ideas across transnational borders.<sup>3</sup> Some teachers travelled from New Zealand to seek and appraise new ventures, experiments and ideas, illustrated in Kerry’s ‘Traveling Teachers’ project.<sup>4</sup> Others teachers travelled to New Zealand, taking advantage of the perceived opportunities in the new world and/or recruited for roles offering early career advancement. An International Froebel Society (IFS) conference in Edinburgh in June 2020, seemed a fitting occasion to take our three teachers back ‘home’; more particularly because the conference was to be held at Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh which, in earlier times was the Free Church Training College where Misses Little and Inkpen had trained that from 1907 included too the Church of Scotland Training College, where Miss Jamieson trained. As long-time attendees at IFS conferences we planned our travel to Scotland but in March 2020 these plans and those of the IFS were crushed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Amidst weeks of lockdown isolation we worked on our papers, already in preparation, that became more fulsome texts than possible in a conference presentation. These papers have undergone further research and refinement as two case study chapters in this book. We have included too an overview of education in New Zealand and the influences of the Scottish migration drawing on a lecture ‘The Heather and the Fern’ Helen gave in Glasgow in 2005,<sup>5</sup> and in a concluding summary provided reflections on this era of early education and its women teachers, some of whom had broader agendas for change.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Helen May (2011) *‘I am five and I go to school’: The work and play of early education in New Zealand*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press.

<sup>2</sup> James Belich (2009) *Replenishing the Earth: The settler revolution and the rise of the Anglo-World, 1783-1939*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> H. May, K. Nawrotzki & L. Prochner, (Eds.) (2016) *Kindergarten Narratives on Froebelian Education: Transnational investigations*, London: Bloomsbury Press; H. May & K. Bethell (2017) *Growing a Kindergarten Movement: Its peoples, purposes and politics*, Wellington: NZCER Press; Helen May (2013 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) *The Discovery of Early Childhood*, Wellington: NZCER Press; (2005) *School Beginnings: A nineteenth century colonial story*, Wellington: NZCER Press; May, 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Kerry Bethell (2010) ‘To venture with purpose’: A colonial and transnational story of Miss Mary Richmond’s 1907 travels abroad, (eds.) K. Neumann, U. Sauerbrey, & M. Winkler, *Froebelpädagogik im Kontext der Moderne. Bildung Erziehung und soziales Handeln*, (pp. 113-127), Jena: IKS Garamond, Edition Paideia; (2016) *Froebelian Teachers Abroad: Implementing a modern infant education system in colonial Wellington, New Zealand, 1906 - 1925*, in (Eds.) May, Nawrotzki & Prochner; (2018) ‘[T]hen along comes Mr Carnegie’: Carnegie travel fellowships and the professional development of kindergarteners in 1930s New Zealand, *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 171-184.

<sup>5</sup> Helen May, Invited presentation, ‘The Heather and the Fern: Images and insights into *School Beginnings*,’ Early Years Series, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 25 August 2005.

Chapter one:

## *Education influences in colonial New Zealand*

In the aftermath of the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840 by the British Crown with Māori tribes planned settlement of New Zealand began in earnest, although there was already a small missionary and trading population. There were different kinds of settlements established across the country. In Wellington settlement was sponsored by the New Zealand Company (NZC) that sent four ships arriving in 1840. In 1848 a Presbyterian Scottish settlement was established in the lower South Island and named Dunedin – being the Gaelic form of Edinburgh - to become the ‘New Edinburgh’ of the South. Scottish education and church institutions were transplanted into the fledgling Dunedin settlement. The Church of England Canterbury Association established a similar settlement in 1850 around what became the town of Christchurch. Plans for the education of children featured in all three settlements including the schooling of child immigrants for several months en route. In Dunedin the first building in the settlement was a combined church and school. Each province established its own system of schooling. In 1877 by a national education system was established that was compulsory, secular and free.<sup>1</sup>



‘The Immigrants’ by William Allsworth, 1844. Te Papa Tongarewa.

### Scottish – New Zealand connections

For the purposes of the story of our lady teachers it is useful to cite some exemplars of the Scottish influence on schooling in the new settlement, not only in Dunedin. Scotland already had an education system incorporating a significant proportion of its child population even in remote areas. Scottish settlers brought their belief in education as a conduit to betterment and prosperity. A few examples are notable.

James Buchanan was the teacher employed by the industrialist and educator, Robert Owen, at the first infant school established at New Lanark, Scotland in 1816. Buchanan was later recruited by the NZC and given a free passage on the first ship bound for New Zealand leaving London in 1839. The NZC colonists were determined that the latest ideas in education should be transported to the new colony.<sup>2</sup> Included in the hold of the ‘Adelaide’ was a purpose built flat packed infant school including a gallery, and accommodation for Buchanan and his family. The outcome changed when Buchanan decided to leave the boat in South Africa. Buchanan’s assistant Miss Ann Tilke, who had also been given a free passage continued onto New Zealand and set up a small infant school on arrival. Such schools became an integral part of early schooling in the colony.<sup>3</sup> The schoolhouse landed in Wellington but was sold and instead became the first public building and a hotel. This was a story that did not happen but indicative of the colonists interests in schooling with the first public building in the settlement, intended as a school.



‘Barratt’s Hotel’ Wellington 1842-1845, by Samuel Charles Brees. The two-storey building with the veranda was built as an infant school. Author’s collection.

William Sanderson Fitzgerald (1838-1920) was a towering figure in New Zealand education in the nineteenth century, particularly in the Otago-Southland area of the lower South Island. Born in Musselburgh near Edinburgh in Scotland he trained as a teacher between 1857 and 1859 at Moray House in Edinburgh, later teaching in Glasgow.<sup>4</sup> In 1861 Fitzgerald with his wife Annie, an infant teacher, sailed to New Zealand firstly to the

settlement of Christchurch. En route he was the ship's schoolmaster and on arrival began organising a school in a small farming valley.



William Sanderson Fitzgerald,  
c. 1883, PAColl-6303-21, ATL

Fitzgerald later became a key figure in establishing education in the North Otago settlement of Oamaru. In 1867 he was employed by the Otago Education Board to establish a normal school and training college in Dunedin, after the model pioneered David Stow in Glasgow in 1836. The Presbyterian settlement of Dunedin had established the Otago Education Board in 1857. John Hislop (1821-1904), also a Moray House trained teacher, was recruited from Scotland in 1856 under a scheme devised by the provincial government, and was soon appointed as Secretary and Inspector of Schools. By 1859 there were 20 schools in the district but with the discovery of gold in the hinterland there were soon 100 schools across the province. Hislop lobbied the provincial government to establish a training college and a prime site in Moray Place in the centre of Dunedin. As Principal of the new college, Fitzgerald was credited with establishing a progressive system of training teachers at George Street Normal School, linked also to the new University College of Otago. This Scottish model was eventually established in the four other provincial centres. Fitzgerald was also a leading figure in the establishment of the New Zealand Education Institute, a professional and industrial organisation for primary teachers of which our three teachers were members. That Miss Inkpen was Fitzgerald's niece might be a clue to her decision to emigrate.



Free Church Training College, Moray House, Edinburgh. Moray Place Training College, Dunedin



The Scottish influence in the Dunedin kindergarten movement is also notable. Scottish born Learmonth Dalrymple (1827-1906) pioneered the establishment of a public secondary school for girls in the city that opened in 1871, the first in the southern hemisphere, and in the same year, after a seven-year campaign, was successful in gaining entry for women into degrees at the University College of Otago.<sup>5</sup> Dalrymple was a key figurehead for the establishment of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association in 1889, an organisation still operating today. Also of note is Sir Robert Stout (1844-1930), Premier of the colony of New Zealand (1884-1887), who was born in Lerwick in the Shetland Islands, Scotland. In 1858 he sat the teachers' qualifying exams and taught as a pupil-teacher in Lerwick before immigrating to New Zealand, arriving in Dunedin in 1864.<sup>6</sup> His contribution to the colony was wide ranging. Stout was a supporter of many education institutions, in particular the establishment of university education. Relevant to this paper is Stout's support of the fledgling kindergarten movement, firstly in Dunedin and later in Wellington. There is a curious story about Stout's kindergarten interest. Stout claimed to have been a kindergarten child himself in the Shetland Islands in 1849. He remembered playing with Froebel blocks, and reported that he recognised the voice of his teacher, Miss Jane Liston, thirty-five years later in the corridor of an Auckland school.<sup>7</sup> If correct this Shetland Islands kindergarten experience predates the first known kindergarten in Britain in 1851. In Dunedin, Stout's wife Anna, born of Scottish parents, became a foundation member of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association. She was also active in the suffrage movement that won the vote for women in 1893. At the fourth annual meeting of the Association, which both Robert and Anna attended, Stout supported the idea of annexing the kindergarten system to the public school system, but noted with a politician's caution, 'This was, of course, a question of finance, but if the people desired it there was no doubt it would be a wise and profitable expenditure.'<sup>8</sup> This did not happen, and while our three Scottish teachers all taught in primary schools, they were each involved at various times in the kindergarten movement.

### **Education in the new century**

Following in the footsteps of these Scottish pioneers, our teachers arrived in New Zealand in the early twentieth century. By then, there was a population of around one million that included Māori whose population had dropped to 40,000 from an estimated 114,000 in 1840. Thereafter, the Māori population increased but was outpaced by European immigration. By 1900 there was primary schooling from age five (and compulsory at age seven) available for children even in most rural areas, including a network of Native Schools for Māori children. Neither system was exclusive. There were also university and teacher training colleges, and secondary schools free for children who passed the proficiency exam in the final year of primary schooling. A smaller network of denominational fee paying private schools contributed to the mix. By the early twentieth century there were free kindergarten associations in the four city settlements operating inner city kindergartens. From 1909, there was a small government subsidy for each child. There was also a tradition of kindergarten

teaching in some city primary schools in which the first kindergartens in New Zealand had been established in the 1870s.<sup>9</sup>

The education achievements of the new Dominion in such a short span of time, including the building of a national school system, is to be applauded. Notwithstanding, the infrastructure was fragile. Keeping pace of population growth and settlement expansion was problematic but so too was the reality that by the turn of the century many buildings were not fit for purpose, particularly for the new education methods of activity, movement and conversation. Class sizes were large, older classrooms were still fitted with galleries and immovable desks, and despite the efforts of the new training colleges, many teachers were ill-equipped to manage the more kindly regime of new education. The kindergarten associations established their own training programmes that included half-day work in the kindergartens. Kindergarten buildings were makeshift and it was not until 1910 that the first purpose designed kindergarten was built in Auckland relying, as did several others that followed, on private patronage.

Belich describes the late nineteenth century as the end of ‘progressive colonisation’ when growth began to outstrip the available infrastructure and resources. After this, ‘history slowed down’.<sup>10</sup> Schooling was no exception. It was partly this change in tempo that created the possibility for a rethink of public education for the twentieth century. This appraisal included curriculum reform in the primary school, influenced in part by the international acclaim for Froebel’s kindergarten methods. The blocks, crafts, music and games provided the possibility of a specialist curriculum that could be adapted for infants in school.<sup>11</sup> Sufficient teachers were demonstrating its potential. Some school inspectors were advocating its pedagogical value, as evidenced in the 1900 report from Southland inspectors James Hendry and George Braik, both Scottish, who stated that, ‘There is hardly a school in the district in which kindergarten methods, or at least some of the principles of teaching given to the world by Pestalozzi and Froebel, has not been introduced.’<sup>12</sup> They noted how in previous years teachers had been ‘compelled willy nilly ... by the daily march towards the examination’. In contrast, they looked forward to the possibility of a child being ‘solaced by an occasional hour’s “learning by doing” during which his natural tastes may freely manifest themselves.’<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the practise of introducing the 3Rs at a young age was not overturned and continued to be a strong characteristic of New Zealand’s early schooling programmes, as it was in Scotland.

The new century rethink was made possible by the appointment of George Hogben as Inspector-General of schools in 1899. Hogben was supportive of new education methods. As a teacher in the 1890s, he had supported the establishment of a kindergarten in Timaru to which he sent his sons.<sup>14</sup> Hogben introduced a new primary school syllabus. At a conference of inspectors in 1904, he acknowledged the challenge:

All the best teachers have, step by step, been led to change their point of view, and have altered their methods accordingly. To you therefore, the change, though rapid has been an evolution in educational ideas and methods, to *others* who have followed it less closely, or have allowed themselves to fall behind the change appears as a sudden and complete revolution ...<sup>15</sup> [emphasis added]

This was overly optimistic and the ‘others’ who Hogben cited comprised a significant number of teachers, and indeed school inspectors, who for several more decades, resisted and/or were unable to implement the new curriculum approaches. Hogben claimed that ‘change was inevitable unless New Zealand was to be content to be left behind in the educational contest.’ His priorities were clear:

The important thing... is not the amount of things that are taught, but the spirit, character, and method of teaching in relation to its purpose of developing the child’s powers ... . We must believe with Froebel and others of the most enlightened of the world’s educators, that the child will learn best, not so much by reading about things in books as by doing: that is exercising his natural activities by making things, by observing and testing things for himself; and then afterwards by reasoning about them and expressing thoughts about them.<sup>16</sup>

Photographic evidence from kindergartens in the early twentieth century shows a mix of Froebelian methods, complemented by a range of activities. There are photos of children doing paper folding and using the Froebel blocks but also building with large blocks, painting, riding bikes, and playing with dolls.<sup>17</sup> From the 1910s interest grew in Maria Montessori’s methods with kindergartens and schools adopting and adapting some of her approaches and apparatus. This was not extensive, but rather added to the eclectic mix of ideas and activity evident in New Zealand kindergartens that, nevertheless, still regarded themselves as Froebelian.<sup>18</sup>

Such was the education environment our three teachers found on arrival in New Zealand. This was an era of experiment and innovation, combined with infrastructure overload and resistance. The state system of education was also grappling with new education ideas during times of war and an economic depression.<sup>19</sup> In 1908, kindergarten – infant mistresses were appointed the four Normal Schools attached to teacher training colleges. Each college ran a kindergarten class to introduce primary trainees to kindergarten methodology. The colleges, however, did not train kindergarten teachers; this was the domain of the kindergarten associations. The independent kindergarten movement, mainly funded through charitable enterprise, could act more nimbly than schools to embrace progressive changes. From 1912 the separate kindergarten associations worked towards forming a national advocacy voice, eventually constituted in 1926.<sup>20</sup>

Collectively and over time our three lady teachers worked across these settings, including both government and charitable education institutions. They were members of the main education and teaching organisations urging reforms to improve creaking and underfunded systems of schooling including the innovations of new education. Moreover, the three teachers joined a raft of community organisations exercising their voices and energies in local, national and international forums towards creating a better world in the new century for women, children and their families, in the new world they had made their home.



Kindergarten games,  
Logan Campbell  
Kindergarten,  
Auckland,  
*NZ Graphic*,  
22 November 1911



'Instruction in play'  
Kindergarten room at  
George Street Normal  
School, Dunedin  
Training College  
*Otago Witness*,  
24 October 1910



*Contrasts in schooling the infants in the 1920s*  
Unidentified infant classroom, 1919  
F-28162¼ ATL.



Kindergarten, Kelburn Normal School, Wellington 1923  
*Kelburn Normal School 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 1914-1989*

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> May, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Gerald Fitzgerald (2016) *The Life of William Sanderson Fitzgerald: Pioneer of New Zealand education*, Dunedin: The author.

<sup>5</sup> Dorothy Page (1990) 'Learmonth Dalrymple 1827? -1906' *DNZB*  
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1d2/dalrymple-learmonth-white>

<sup>6</sup> David Hamer (1993) 'Stout, Robert 1844-1930' *DNZB*  
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2s48/stout-robert>

<sup>7</sup> W. H. Dunn, & I. L. M. Richardson (1961) *Sir Robert Stout*, Wellington; Beryl Hughes (1989) *Flags and Building Blocks, Formality and Fun: One hundred years of free kindergarten in New Zealand*, NZFKU, Wellington.

<sup>8</sup> *Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association Fourth Annual Report*, Dunedin, 1893, p. 5, ARC-0261, MS1986/001, HC.

<sup>9</sup> May & Bethell, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> James Belich (2001) *Paradise Reforged: A history of New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000*, Auckland: Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> May, 2005.

<sup>12</sup> *AJHR*, 1900, E-1B, p. 41.

<sup>13</sup> *AJHR*, 1900, E-1B, p.42.

<sup>14</sup> Herbert Roth (1952) *George Hogben: A biography*, Wellington, NZCER, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> *AJHR* 1904, E-1C, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> May & Bethell, 2017.

<sup>18</sup> May, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> May & Bethell, 2017.

## Chapter two

### ***‘A Froebel trained “Scot” from Edinburgh’: Miss Isabel Little (1876-1937)***

Helen May

Discovering ‘Miss Little’ has been a 30-year detective story and mainly accidental until encouraged by Kerry Bethell to undertake a more systematic search.<sup>1</sup> Miss Little was first introduced to me in 1990 in an interview with a retired infant mistress, as ‘A Froebel trained “Scot” from Edinburgh’. A description of Miss Little’s playful classroom featured in the book *Teachers Talk Teaching* (1997).<sup>2</sup> Some years later while researching the book *I am five and I go to school* (2011) I found two more sightings of Miss Little including some school inspection reports.<sup>3</sup> My searches stopped but I sometimes wondered whether there were more traces of Miss Little who, in hindsight, can be described as one of the forgotten foot soldiers of new education methods across the 1910s-1930s. Teachers like Miss Little, were the mainstay of a kindergarten movement that transformed the early education of children in schools and preschools. Lessons can be learnt from frontline teachers who challenged rules, mentored others and joined collective action. While the documented voices of political advocacy and pedagogical innovation are crucial to the analysis of educational change, it is the frontline teacher who transforms the theory and rhetoric into practice thus making acceptable, a wider movement of change.<sup>4</sup> Like other foot soldiers, Miss Little’s activism was not confined to the classroom. There are glimpses of Miss Little’s wider endeavours on behalf of women and children in various organisations. This engagement is characteristic of Froebelian women teachers during the early decades of the twentieth century. This chapter combines newly sourced material with my earlier sightings but is written as an incomplete and unfolding detective story. Overall, Miss Little’s footprint in history is patchy and light. Planned searches in Edinburgh that might have sourced records of Miss Little during her early years of teaching did not happen due to COVID restrictions.

#### **The few early facts**

An ancestry.com search by Kerry revealed basic facts about the Little family confirming that, ‘Miss Little’ as Isabella Little was indeed from Edinburgh and following this lead contact was made with a relative Sheena Thomson, who gave permission to view the family tree.<sup>5</sup> This provided a wealth of information, much of it beyond the scope of this chapter, but also a photo of Isabella Little and of her parents.



Isabella Little and her parents Margaret Little and Jacob Little. The photos of Isabella and her mother appear to be in the 1890s and taken at the same time. ancestry.com 'Levenside' with permission of Sheena Thomson.

Isabella Duncan Bennet Little was born in Edinburgh in 1876. The few known facts combined with the images above indicate a well-dressed hard working family whose children through education were able to move into the professions. Her parents were Margaret (1837-1909) and Jacob (1821-1904) Little. Margaret was once a household servant, while Jacob was a retired Sergeant Major of the Royal Horse Artillery in the British army suggesting a skilled and able man. Jacob retired in 1866, cited for 'exemplary conduct' and recommended for the Victoria Cross at Crimea.<sup>6</sup> Census records suggest that the family supplemented Jacob's pension by taking in boarders. He is also listed as a coach-builder (1872), School Board Officer (1876) and a School Attendance Officer (1891).<sup>7</sup>

Isabella appears on the 1881 Scotland census as a 'scholar' age five living at 59 Forrest Road close to Edinburgh University. She was the second youngest of five siblings. Ten years later in 1891, Isabella is still a scholar and the family is at the same address but by 1901 the family is living at 40 Great King Street. Isabella is a 'school teacher' as is her younger sister Margaret. Two older brothers have professional work: James, a classics scholar in 1891, is a Church Minister in Nairn in 1901 while Isabella's oldest brother John is an Insurance Office Clerk who emigrates to Australia. Isabella's father Jacob Little died in 1904 leaving a modest estate of £134.8s. Her mother, Margaret, died in 1909, by which time the siblings had left home including Margaret who married William Page in 1908 and in 1909 emigrates to New Zealand, living in the middle-class suburb of Karori, Wellington.<sup>8</sup> Isabella emigrates to New Zealand in 1912, and appears in the 1914 education records as Isabel Little an assistant teacher at Thorndon Normal School, an old inner city Wellington primary school close to Parliament.

This skeletal record of Miss Little's life until the age of 38 years indicates that she had sufficient education to gain a teaching qualification, steady employment and the motivation to seek a new life in New Zealand with her sister. To win a teaching position at a

normal school Miss Little needed to demonstrate expertise as a teacher and assist in the training of students. A later section sets out information on the qualifications Miss Little presented to the Wellington Education Board confirming that she was indeed ‘a Froebel trained “Scot” from Edinburgh.’

### **Discovering Miss Little: an infant mistress in the 1920s**

By the 1920s there were increasing numbers of teachers, particular in the infant classes, demonstrating new education methods, but this was the exception rather than standard practice. Nevertheless, there was lively debate and interest in education circles about teaching methods involving playful and creative activity and choice, including new understandings of childrens’ emotional development. Transforming the theory and idealism into practice was more problematic; a story outlined more fully elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> Miss Little, who I liken to a ‘foot-soldier’, was one of a few teachers in the Wellington district noted for their ‘modern methods’. She would have been forgotten if not for the discovery of three reports from teachers who spent time in her classroom in the 1920s and who later recalled the impact Miss Little had on their own teaching. It was possible to check these recollections against the school inspector reports for the Wellington district held in Archives New Zealand. This was an education era characterised by its mix of progressive practice amidst conformity caused by a combination of large class sizes, old and run-down classrooms and poorly trained teachers including many who did not agree with the freedoms espoused by new education pedagogy.

In 1923, the Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, T.B. Strong, expressed concern about the ‘stagnant educational thought’ he perceived in ‘some quarters’. Strong placed the blame on certain head teachers, who had ‘grown out of touch with modern methods’ and were ‘damping’ the ‘enthusiasm’ of new teachers from the training colleges. Strong claimed he would be,

... inclined to welcome rather than to quell the revolutionary, who with his ‘mad theories’ at least stimulates thought and challenges contradiction. Anything is better than smug content with the ‘is’ or the ‘has been’.<sup>10</sup>

Comparing the qualities of the older and newer teaching methods, he stated:

The former made the child the passive recipient, and in most cases the unwilling storehouse of as much information as the teacher could induce him, or alas! force him to hold. The new methods of teaching aim at securing the co-operation of the child, mainly through the interest that certain subjects possess in themselves, or through the satisfaction gained in acquiring knowledge by self effort.

In addition, the new methods required a teacher who would ‘point the way and, as it were, to accompany the child in his search for truth. He and the child become co-workers.’<sup>11</sup> By the 1920s Miss Little was likened as such a teacher. The three reports of Miss Little are presented in the order they were discovered.

### ***Miss Gallagher reports:***

In 1948 Miss Moira Gallagher became the first Preschool Officer in the Department of Education, charged with implementing the new policy of state partnership with kindergarten associations; heralding an expansion in preschool provision and the establishment of a



professional rather than charitable preschool education service. Her appointment caused surprise, as Gallagher did not have a kindergarten background. It was clear that Dr. C. E. Beeby, the progressive Director of Education (1940-1960), wanted someone who could steer the policy reforms but also encourage the free-play programmes that were a hallmark of new education.<sup>12</sup> While the kindergartens had periods of free play, their programmes were still quite regimented. This was why I was interviewing Miss Gallagher in 1990. At the time of her appointment Miss Gallagher had a reputation as an infant advisor to schools supporting teachers to introduce free play activities into their classrooms. I asked Miss Gallagher how she had been introduced to these ideas and she recalled her time as a first year probationary teacher in 1929 at Karori School in Wellington. Miss Gallagher cited two infant teachers in the city who 'led the way', Miss Isabel Little at Karori School and Miss Dorothy Edwards at Te Aro School (whose class is seen in a circle game on the front cover). Miss Little had been appointed Infant Mistress at Karori School in 1928 in charge of the classes for children aged 5-7 years. Miss Gallagher described her experiences:

There was at the school a wonderful woman called Isobel Little. She was a *Froebel trained Scot from Edinburgh*. And more than anybody else she taught me the whole understanding of children; what they stood for and how they learned. She was doing what came to be described as an activity programme [my emphasis].

I will describe my classroom. Instead of rows of desks I had three tables that were placed around the room. We had coconut matting on the floor. The way she taught me was that we got on with our work in the morning and after playtime we had a free choice of all sorts. During my time we changed to having the activity first thing in the morning, on the principle that the children were fresher in terms of energy and their most creative time . . . During this activity time we had wooden templates of all sorts and sizes, which were a hangover from the Montessori template pictures. There was a reading table with picture books, paper and crayons. We didn't have paint at that stage. We did sewing activities. . . . There were about ten different things you could do. There were shelves with curtains along the wall, and the children could have free access to them. They could do anything we thought would help them.<sup>13</sup>

The 1929 inspector's summary report for Karori School confirms the presence of both women, but there is little indication of anything radical:

The infant department is well organised and efficiently conducted. The physical instruction and rhythmic exercises being particularly good. Probationer receiving careful attention.<sup>14</sup>

Miss Little probably adjusted her programme to fit the expectations of the inspectors. Miss Gallagher recalled the change when Miss Little retired from the school:

The inspectors came in the next Monday after she had finished and said, 'There is going to be no more of that nonsense.' They came and put things right. We were told to get on with the serious business of learning. I just carried on with my wicked ways!<sup>15</sup>

Possibly, the inspectors did not think Miss Little's playful programme appropriate for a probationary teacher to manage. In the event, Miss Gallagher continued to experiment: allowing more choice and freedom, introducing new activities and teaching reading based on the children's interests and drawings. She even invited parents into the classroom. Miss Gallagher told me that she felt alone but clearly her efforts were recognised when she became one of the first infant advisors appointed by the Department of Education in 1938. Miss Gallagher showed me letters from teachers thanking her for the ideas she gave them, and for her advice about how to convince the headmaster that removing desks to make space for play was necessary.

***Miss Elsie Andrews reports:***

In 1924 Miss Little had been the infant mistress at South Wellington School in Newtown, an old working-class suburb of closely packed small wooden houses; a different setting to the more rural valley of Karori where her sister Margaret lived and where Miss Little later taught. Around 2008, as I was searching for glimpses of life in the infant classroom in earlier times I found a memoir about Elsie Andrews (1888-1948) in the archives of the New Zealand Educational Institute - Te Rui Roa (NZEI). Andrews had been an infant teacher and involved in the Women's Teachers Association (WTA), an affiliated advocacy organisation founded in 1901 by a group of Wellington women, a number of whom were infant teachers with links to the Wellington Froebel Society as well NZEI.<sup>16</sup> The manuscript provided insight into the activities of the WTA as women campaigned over a raft of measures concerning their low pay and status.<sup>17</sup> Soon after Miss Little was appointed to Thorndon Normal School in 1914 she presented a paper to the Wellington branch of WTA, an event detailed in a later section. It is likely that Miss Little came to the attention of Miss Andrews through the WTA. In 1924 Miss Andrews was the infant mistress at Fitzroy School in New Plymouth and was given leave to observe the 'latest methods' in the infant department at Kelburn Normal School, and to visit 'a school in Newtown' where she described:

A little Scottish woman ... in a large room with small chairs here and there around the walls, mats scattered over the floors and no desks. This was a startling phenomenon. 'Where are your desks?' I asked. She replied, 'I pushed them under the school.' She continued, – 'On cold mornings I often break one up and burn it.' – seeds of revolt began to burgeon in my soul!<sup>18</sup>

This extraordinary response spurred Miss Andrews to make changes to the infant classrooms in New Plymouth. It gives a glimpse too of a brave and defiant 'Scottish' Miss Little. The inspector's report on South Wellington School in 1925 gives a hint of the tightrope Miss Little was walking while keeping onside with the inspectors' expectations

Miss Little is a capable infant mistress. She secures harmony and efficient work in her department in addition to teaching a large class. Her outlook is modern. A fine tone prevails. Approved schemes of work are used.<sup>19</sup>

Miss Little's 1926 report included the less favourable observation that, 'the probationers have not been trained and instructed according to the [Wellington Education] Board requirements.'<sup>20</sup> Possibly suggesting that, like Miss Gallagher's experience at Karori a

few years later, Miss Little was allowing her probationary teachers freedom to practice ‘modern methods’ too.

Under the auspices of the WTA in the early twentieth century some infant mistresses formed local Infant Mistresses Circles or Groups. Except in Christchurch,<sup>21</sup> records have not survived, but there are glimpses of the advocacy, interests and activities of members. There is no record of Miss Little’s attendance at Wellington meetings, but it would have been extraordinary for her not to be a member. In 1922 the Wellington Infant Mistresses Group forwarded remits to the national conference of the WTA. The *Evening Post* (8 April 1922) reported their demands:

1. That in all new infant and main school buildings provision should be made for assembly halls, separate cloak room, and lunch room, and windows in keeping with modern ideals of education.
2. That the Department of Education should manufacture kindergarten material as suits New Zealand schools and conditions, and supply all infant schools recommended by the inspector.
3. That no class in the infant department should consist of more than 25 children.
4. That the Education Department recognise the extra qualifications possessed by infant teachers holding the higher Froebel certificates [from England].

One can imagine Miss Little offering her opinions in support of such demands, and in particular Remit No 4, as she held this qualification. Maybe she tabled the remit!

#### ***Sylvia Ashton-Warner reports:***

In 1926 Sylvia Ashton-Warner was a trainee teacher at Wadestown School with an unfortunately named Miss Whackington, one of a series of indomitable infant mistresses that Sylvia, as she would prefer to be cited, later described as ‘saintly maiden ladies’:

She saw strapping to be indispensable to productive teaching. There was a lot of it ... Far too much for young children. I myself felt the severity of the discipline. I could never stand to see the strap come down on a reluctant hand, especially a small one even though I had been schooled likewise. Yet it was not administered in anger ... . She strapped in sorrow ... She emanated a saintly patience. The clock and the strap did much of the teaching ...<sup>22</sup>

This was written by Sylvia in her memoir, *I Passed this way* (1979), and by then famed as a novelist and pedagogue who used the Māori infant classroom as a creative setting.<sup>23</sup> Her bestselling book *Teacher* (1963) outlined her approach to teaching Māori children to read using their own interest words and experiences rather than the standard reading texts about the lives of middle-class European children often living in England!<sup>24</sup> When re-reading Sylvia’s memoir I found a description of Miss Little written in the mode of a creative storyteller. Unlike Miss Gallagher and Miss Andrews, who portrayed Miss Little as a mentor who inspired their own forays into the ‘modern methods’ of free play, Sylvia cites Miss Little as someone she did not want to emulate.<sup>25</sup> In 1926 Sylvia had a teaching practice with Miss Little at South Wellington School where Sylvia portrayed herself as a ‘vagabond’ in the

classroom who, along with 'Andrew' a child who cried for attention, was one of the 'irregularities in the ranks of the regiment spoiling the look of the parade.'<sup>26</sup>

Sylvia's description of Miss Little does not tally with Elsie Andrew's perception of Miss Little being 'little' in size or capable of 'stirring 'revolt'. Yet Sylvia's caricature provides an inkling of the demeanour of the ideal infant mistress of the time. She reports Miss Little as always being calm and kindly with children and in contrast to Miss Whackington, there was 'never a sign of the strap or even a word of reproof' in her classroom. 'The infant room' Sylvia adds, 'was seen to be a very good one... Miss Little's department was not much less than flawless.'<sup>27</sup> Order, however, was a problem for Sylvia, whose own creative but chaotic classrooms in later years became her downfall as well as the hallmark of her creativity:

The way those five year-olds rolled off the other end of the assembly line reading, writing, adding up, subtracting and obeying to supply in the future good little Soldiers of the Queen m'lad' ...<sup>28</sup>

Her grouping and system of promotion was fool-proof so that each little child was working to capacity the whole time. Some leapt ahead and some stayed behind until they knew the work... The children were happy, even Andrew in time, and since there was a high level of order it says something for order. Order and happiness went hand in hand ...<sup>29</sup>

A programme based on individual and group work would have earned the description of 'modern methods'. It could also have been encouraged by inspectors, as long as the order and discipline Miss Little ably engendered was evident. The inspectors report for Miss Little in 1927 aligns with Sylvia's recollection:

Miss Little teaches this class of 50 children (with only 36 present) and supervises the whole of the infant division. Measles, mumps and other complaints are affecting the attendance. The programme of studies is well considered. The pupils are orderly in conduct, neat in drawing and writing, skilled in handwork and ready in dealing with number. Miss Little is very successful in organizing children's games; her musical abilities are of value in the classroom.<sup>30</sup>

In 1926, according to Sylvia, Miss Little got the highest grading in the Wellington region: 'The crispness of success crackled through the classrooms.'<sup>31</sup>

With years of hindsight and the experience of fostering creativity in children, Sylvia later wrote:

I myself see Miss Little's teaching to be nearly all input material foreign to the native content of the mind so that you didn't see the personality showing through ... What you came up with was sixty small imprints of Miss Little, which I think is not desirable. It was the kind of schooling that produced efficient rather than interesting people ... No variations of the human theme were encouraged.<sup>32</sup>

The three sightings described above present Miss Little in her prime as an infant mistress, providing clues to her appearance, demeanour and expertise managing large groups of children without using physical punishment or verbal admonishment. This in itself was remarkable, but we also get an insight into how Miss Little balanced her instincts and

understanding of modern methods alongside meeting the expectation of school inspectors. Apart from the archived inspector's reports no reports or photos have been traced of Miss Little in surviving school records. She is an absent figure in later jubilee reports. Between 1920 and 1929 Miss Little was an infant mistress at three schools. It is generally long serving teachers who get remembered. Nevertheless, further documented sightings are elaborated in the following sections.

### **Getting qualified**

Miss Little was reported to have trained as a teacher in Edinburgh, but where and when were unknown. According to Miss Gallagher she was 'Froebel trained'. This could mean that either her teaching certificate was a Froebel qualification or she had gained a Froebel qualification later. Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Emeritus Professor from the University of Strathclyde suggested several possibilities for training in Edinburgh: St George's College, the Free Church Training College at Moray House. There was also the Free Church of Scotland Training College and Miss Isabella Jamieson trained that merged with Moray House in 1907. None of these colleges offered a Froebel qualification at the time Miss Little was training in the 1890s, although by the early 1900s St George's College and Moray House were offering courses in kindergarten methods, undoubtedly a response to the first kindergarten established in Edinburgh in 1903 although there had been a Froebel Society in the city since 1894.<sup>33</sup> I decided first to check the records of Britain's National Froebel Union (NFU), founded in 1886, and housed in the Froebel Archive Roehampton University library in London. During 1995 I spent some months at the archive researching my book *Discovery of Early Childhood* (1997) and am a member of the Froebel Archive advisory committee.<sup>34</sup> The Froebel Educational Institute (now Froebel College and part of Roehampton University) was established in 1893. Students were prepared for the NFU examination including an Elementary Certificate, being 'the minimum qualification that should be expected of any person who undertakes the education of young children' as well as the recommended Higher Certificate equivalent to the 'normal qualification of teacher' in a kindergarten or elementary infant school.<sup>35</sup> The exams were also taken by trainees from other colleges or directly through private study.

'Isabel Little' was duly found in the 1912 register, awarded the NFU Higher Certificate (second class) by 'private study' including details of her grades. Also available were the regulations, syllabus, examination papers and the examiners' reports across the subject areas for 1912.<sup>36</sup> The examination was in two parts, the first was examined in July and the second in December, which would mean Miss Little sat the Part One exams prior to her departure for New Zealand. In September she is recorded as a passenger on a boat sailing between Melbourne and Sydney, accompanied by a Mr and Mrs Little, presumably her brother John and his wife.<sup>37</sup> Part Two exams must have been sat in Wellington. The 1912 examination report lists Wellington as an examination centre, along with several other country outposts for 'private study' students. Possibly, Miss Little undertook this further study in anticipation of her shift to New Zealand. Her double qualification and years of experience would have been highly valued in New Zealand.

The Higher Certificate examinations for 1912 covered the following subject areas, each with several parts and detailed requirements:<sup>38</sup>

- Literature
- Nature Knowledge
- Elementary Mathematics
- Geography
- Child Hygiene
- Singing
- Principles of Education
- History of Education
- Practice of Education
- Class Teaching
- Blackboard Drawing
- Educational Handwork

Notwithstanding the rigorous assessment various examiners' reports expressed concerns about the knowledge and expertise displayed by candidates. Most significant was the gap observed between theory and the practice in settings that were not Froebelian. For example, during the 'Free Expression Lessons' the examiners' noted 'some improvement, but the children were often interrupted by unnecessary questions and criticism'. They criticised too:

... the tendency in the minds of the candidates to confuse freedom and license - the result being sometimes a complete absence of control, and it was evident in some cases that candidates had adopted their methods through no inner conviction, but rather in the attempt to appear up-to-date.<sup>39</sup>

Such comments could equally apply in New Zealand infant classes of the time.<sup>40</sup>

An enquiry to the University of Edinburgh library archive, which holds the archives of the three colleges cited above, yielded Isabel Little's record at the Free Church Training College, Moray House between 1896-1898. She was probably a pupil teacher prior to this because a New Zealand record in 1929 citing 34 years of service suggests that Isabel Little began teaching in 1894.<sup>41</sup> Her record from Moray House also detailed the courses and grades awarded.

Some points to note are that Isabel Little was a good student with 'virtually perfect' punctuality, with 'excellent skills in teaching' and 'exemplary' conduct. These clues of character foreshadow the New Zealand inspectors' reports 30 years later. Isabel Little entered the programme with passes in History and Geography achieved from her entrance exams. The other subjects illustrate the different emphasis to her later Froebel qualification:

- Religious knowledge
- English
- Penmanship
- Algebra
- Arithmetic
- Mental
- Theory of Music,
- Vocal
- Drawing
- Science
- French

- School Management
- Domestic Economy
- Sewing and Cutting

The subjects indicate the emphasis on a comprehensive general education. Handwritten on the record, dated 1901, are the names of two schools Miss Little presumably taught at: Musselburgh and Stockbridge. There are no further clues about her teaching in Edinburgh prior to her departure to New Zealand. Further research in Edinburgh is needed.

### **A paper on ‘Some Aspects of Education in Scotland’**

Miss Little presented this paper to the Wellington branch of the WTA and was subsequently reported in *The Dominion* (6 June 1914). While there was a collegial and professional function to the association its primary focus was advocacy concerning the status of women teachers and issues around the schooling of infants. Remits from the association were regularly tabled at NZEI conferences but the WTA had networks across a range of women’s organisations such as the National Council of Women (NCW). Miss Little probably joined the WTA after her appointment to Thorndon Normal School. Her talk about Scottish education was of sufficient interest for *The Dominion* newspaper to reprint it in full, including a summary of business matters discussed at the meeting. One item was a response from the Minister of Education to a letter sent by the branch requesting that women members be appointed to the proposed Council of Education. The Minister’s reply was read to members stating that, ‘the matter would receive attention.’ This kind of political interchange was characteristic of a small country and a small city.

Miss Little spoke to an audience of twenty-five and was well-informed about education matters in Edinburgh. We learn that Miss Little had always taught infants and that, ‘In the kindergartens and schools, in Scotland, all pictures that were not beautiful had been banished from the school walls and only beautiful prints allowed.’ She gave insights into the introduction of elements of new education into Scottish schools, echoing the beliefs of progressive educators that, after the failure of legislation and philanthropy to solve social problems, ‘many thinkers have decided that the future of our nation is in the hands of the teacher. This influences our system of handwork.’ Wellington was not devoid of slums and poverty, but Miss Little’s description of Edinburgh’s slums, social problems and unemployment would have reminded her audience and readers why they or their ancestors had emigrated. Miss Little described how there was no formal teaching for the first six months of schooling and no longer any ‘drill’ in the infant classes. There were,

... periods set aside for story-telling, singing, dancing and games as well as more time given to handwork... We also give time for drawing, allowing at least three periods a week...one for drawing objects, one for nature illustration, and one for story illustrating.

During recent years, teachers have become more and more persuaded that the child must be educated through his activities. Much more time is given to handwork in the

infant department ... especially handicraft ... the result of which might result in a real object – a cup and saucer made of clay, or a couch and chair for a doll’s house.

#### System

Miss Little also told her audience about the establishment of five free kindergartens in Edinburgh, in parallel to the establishment by Miss Mary Richmond of the first free kindergartens in Wellington (as distinct from private kindergartens and in earlier years a few school based kindergartens.)<sup>42</sup> Miss Little’s description of the work of Edinburgh’s free kindergarten would have resonated with Wellington kindergartners and possibly with Miss Richmond herself in attendance as a WTA member:

So many slum children are turned out to the street to play at the age of three. ... They pick up all manner of evil and become later the criminal. Now he is packed into a kindergarten, and begins to learn discipline himself. He becomes tidy, has clean habits, occupies his hands, and through them, his mind. He dances, he sings, he plays, he attends to his pots, and goes exploring and excavating a cartload of sand, or walking to the park, where the birds sing and build their nests, see the trees and many other delights only hitherto known to the middle-class child.



Lileen Hardy and the first Free kindergarten in Edinburgh opened in 1903.<sup>43</sup>

*The Dominion* newspaper reported an appreciative ‘vote of thanks’ for Miss Little’s ‘interesting paper’.

#### **Thorndon Normal School**

Miss Little was appointed as an assistant teacher to Thorndon Normal School in 1914: a school with an established history, responsibilities for teacher training and links to kindergarten. Her previous teaching appointment is listed as ‘Edinburgh’ so Miss Little did not teach during 1913 after arriving in New Zealand in late 1912. Thorndon School opened in



1852, being one of the early public schools in Wellington. In the 1880s the school established a kindergarten class for three and four year old children, as did several Wellington schools.<sup>44</sup>

At Thorndon Normal School, Dorothy Fitch, also a member of the WTA, was the Kindergarten Mistress with responsibility for the kindergarten class and infants. She was also a Council member of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association (WFKA). In 1914, the year Miss Little was appointed Miss Fitch's kindergarten class was shifted to the new Kelburn Normal School along with the training college. Miss Fitch had earlier appeared before the 1912 Commission on Education. She argued for smaller class sizes for infants and was concerned at the split that occurred between kindergarten and school: 'It is obviously not desirable to dissociate the work done with children of three to five from the work of children five to seven, as continuity is at all stages to be greatly desired.'<sup>45</sup> Fitch argued, along with other WTA members, for women inspectors for the infant classes, on the grounds that they would be more appreciative of the problems involved in teaching infants.<sup>46</sup> Miss Fitch's legacy of advocacy and support of kindergarten would have been evident to Miss Little during her time at Thorndon Normal School, although she would have noted too the locus of innovation shift to Kelburn Normal School as a showcase for modern methods under its Principal Winifred Maitland, appointed in 1915 after the retirement of Miss Fitch.<sup>47</sup>



Standard Two, Thorndon School 1919. PA-Coll-1867 ATL. These children would have been Miss Little's pupils in 1916. Note the Union Jack and the New Zealand flag displayed.

Information about Miss Little at Thorndon Normal School is scant. She does not appear in any historical records or photos, but only in the listings of the Department of Education's annual reports to Parliament that include her position as an assistant teacher and her annual salary which began at £210 and by 1920 rose to £235. The other sighting is in school inspection reports 1914-1920, which only list the classroom, teacher's name, children on the roll and those present that day. There is an occasional comment alongside Miss Little's class as being 'very satisfactory', 'very good', 'good'. More detailed comments are made about

the infant classes in general such as in 1916, 'A well-managed department of the school. Instruction is along modern lines. All classes without exception all children are bright and responsive.'<sup>48</sup> Noted in several reports were concerns about the unsuitable buildings. Up until the 1920s there were still classrooms with the tiered galleries of earlier times. The inspectors commend the staff for their 'excellent' work under the circumstances but to be expected with a 'specially selected staff of skilled teachers'.<sup>49</sup> While Miss Little was only an assistant teacher, well beyond the years of her experience, winning an appointment at a normal school was an acknowledgement of this and her qualifications.

In 1921 Miss Little was appointed infant mistress at the Hutt District High School. The Hutt Valley was an expanding semi-rural area outside Wellington although accessible by train. There are no records of the two years spent at the school except from inspectors' reports in which Miss Little got her own appraisal:

The infant department has thoroughly sound foundations being laid in all subjects and instruction. Modern methods are used and pleasing progress is made. A fine example of work is the kind and responsiveness attitude of the little ones.<sup>50</sup>

In 1922 the inspector states:

The class is under very good control. The pupils are trained in self control and carry on work in good style. Individual effort is fostered with remarkably good results. Miss Little is commended for the fine spirit of work which evident in her Department and for the good results of her work in her own class.<sup>51</sup>

References to 'self-control' and 'individual work' suggest the influence of Montessori. At nearby Eastern Hutt Primary School an infant classroom in 1920 displays Montessori apparatus and activities on desktops, probably an intermediary step before some teachers, like Miss Little removed their desks from the classroom to make more room for play.



Eastern Hutt Primary School, 1920,  
F-256041/2, ATL

The tone of Miss Little's Inspectors' reports echo later reports, cited earlier, from South Wellington School (1922-1927) and Karori School (1928-1929). Miss Little would have enjoyed her pay rise as an Infant Mistress, listed at £353 in 1924.<sup>52</sup> According to her probationer Miss Gallagher, Miss Little 'retired' from Karori School in 1929. Exactly why she left is unclear but was possibly seconded to Wadestown School for a short time where she is cited in a report in September 1929.<sup>53</sup> In May 1931 Miss Little was publicly farewelled from Karori School. There were speeches, a concert and supper served by the ladies' committee of the Home and School Association. She received a travelling clock and was presented with a bouquet of flowers.<sup>54</sup> In the speeches it was stated that Miss Little was taking up a new appointment as infant mistress at Ashburton Borough School a small town in the South Island; a position she held until her retirement and subsequent return to Wellington at the end of 1933.

There are no clues as to why Miss Little left Wellington nor are there inspector reports for Ashburton. The school committee's annual report for 1931 records the appointment of Miss Little, noting the 'calibre' of 'various infant mistresses' who 'have secured for the youngest children a successful start in their start in the their educational career'.<sup>55</sup> In December 1933, Miss Little retired and wrote thanking the school committee, 'for the consideration shown to her during her two and a-half years' association with the school'.<sup>56</sup> She was also farewelled from the Ashburton Cavendish Club at its Christmas party. This was a merry event, with 'carols, competitions, instrumental and vocal items'. 'A large Christmas pudding was handed around... the room was most artistically decorated with iris and sweet peas'.<sup>57</sup>

These glimpses and recollections of Miss Little – the teacher - outlined in previous sections provide an insight into her Froebelian understandings of modern methods in the early twentieth century. Miss Little may have been forgotten by history, but she made sufficient impact for several teachers to cite her influence. Her classroom legacy was the modelling of new methods, mentoring her staff and choosing battles carefully with education officialdom. Miss Little left no written records on her education views or experiences, unlike Winifred Maitland, also a graduate of the Froebel Educational Institute. As the headmistress of Kelburn Normal School Miss Maitland wrote:

Society demands that a child in order to be an effective citizen should be master of the arts of reading, writing and arithmetic. These are, however, only the instruments of education ... it is important that they should not monopolise a place on the timetable out of proportion with other equally important aspects.<sup>58</sup>

We are trying to bring children in contact with the finest in life ... . He has every opportunity to express himself in art, in music, and in words ... life demands expression in all forms, and a child desires more than anything to express himself.<sup>59</sup> Miss Maitland was critical of schools that restricted 'expression unnaturally', noting too that, 'Of course the inspectors paid their periodic visits to see that the three R's, the tools of education, were not overlooked.'<sup>60</sup> Like Miss Little, inspectors gave praise as long as playful methods did not result in poor discipline or lagging in the 3Rs. This was the tightrope progressive teachers had to manage.

### **Wider community engagement**

There are many clues that Miss Little's life beyond the classroom involved a range of professional associations and social networks, such as her membership of the Cavendish Club in Ashburton. Like other Froebelians, Miss Little's activism extended beyond education with glimpses of wider engagement on behalf of women and children in various organisations. She arrived in Wellington to become an extended part of sister Margaret's family. Margaret's husband William Page, also Scottish, had an accountancy practice. The couple were involved in a community projects such as:

Arranging concerts for the Sailors' Friend Society during WW1 and hosting the annual Karori Horticultural Society flower show, for which William serves as president. William serves as the first president on the Board of Governors of Queen Margaret College, a private girls school in the inner city, and later as President of the school's Parent's Association. Margaret's work on the Women's Borstal committee represents just one of her many causes. Together Margaret and William become leading figures in Wellington society.<sup>61</sup>

Isabel Little was undoubtedly drawn into Margaret's well-to-do social life, reported on one occasion as the 'charming hostess' of the annual flower show at Karori. In 1931 the Pages move into a new house in Karori built in spacious grounds that they named Sunninghill. Isabel lived with the family on her return from Ashburton.

Digitised newspaper records, sourced by Kerry Bethell and summarised below give fleeting glimpses into Miss Little's interests:<sup>62</sup>

### ***Pioneer Club***

That Margaret and Isabel were both members of the Pioneer Club is evident from a report farewelling Miss Little as she shifts to Ashburton in 1931. Both sisters are mentioned.<sup>63</sup> The club was founded in because women were not eligible to be members of the Wellington [Men's] Club. Kindergartener Mary Richmond was the Club's first president. In the 1930s the club ran a Reading Circle and on the evening Miss Little was farewelled, the group read the play 'Alice sits by the fire' by J. M. Barrie with the 'actors' sitting on a stage appropriately decorated. Miss Little was not one of the actors but Margaret Page gave the vote of thanks.

### ***Women's Teacher's Association***

Miss Little remained active in the WTA and was elected to the national executive at the 1928 conference. Delegates were urged to 'zealously guard the status and privileges gained for women teachers by the pioneers of the association.' This was in response to a suggestion by the president of the NZEI, Mr Combs, in 1927 that to achieve unity across the profession the WTA should consider 'deregistration'. WTA branches resoundingly rejected the proposal. These were feisty times, and one wonders whether Miss Little added her voice to the debate. At the 1930 conference, she seconded the motion 'That separate boys' and girls' schools or departments, be provided, with women head teachers to be in charge of the latter'. After 'considerable discussion' the motion was 'heavily defeated'. Miss Little's support was

possibly linked to the improved career opportunities for women teachers or by arguments tabled that girl pupils would gain more 'opportunities for self-reliance and learning handicrafts'. An argument against was that the 'benefits of such a scheme to the teacher outweigh those to the child, which is not desirable.'<sup>64</sup>

### ***South Wellington School***

There are several reports of activities at South Wellington School during 1924-1927 when Miss Little was the infant mistress. On 10 June 1924 'a large attendance of householders and parents' met to discuss the inadequate playground and approaches to the school. 'Miss Little, representing the staff of South Wellington School in the absence of the headmaster, Mr Thomas, gave enthusiastic support.' She told the meeting that,

the small playground in use at present was a great disadvantage. The teachers were prevented from carrying out organised games, and the children were so badly cramped for space that the girls' basket-ball team was not able to obtain the necessary practice owing to their requiring practically the whole playground.

It was decided to appoint more members to the school committee who could organise functions to raise money.<sup>65</sup> The first of a series of fortnightly dances in the school hall was immediately arranged. 'The School Committee and their friends spent an enjoyable evening. Mr J. Thomas (headmaster), Miss Little (infant mistress) and the teaching staff were the guests of the evening'.<sup>66</sup> The *Evening Post* (22 August 1924) reported on the annual fancy dress ball for senior children. 'Large numbers of parents and friends attended to view this delightful throng of juvenile merrymakers.' A 'thankyou' was also given to 'Miss Little, infant mistress, and her staff, who were responsible for the infants' dance held during the afternoon'. A 1926 report of the infants' party listed prizes given to the children for their outfits: the 'prettiest dresses' 'most economic outfit', 'most original' etc.<sup>67</sup> Later in the year Miss Little hosted a farewell and paid tribute to 'the spirit of friendly co-operation which had characterised' Mr J. Thomas who had been headmaster for eleven years. She presented him with a travelling rug on behalf of the teachers.<sup>68</sup> In this working-class suburb such social events were undoubtedly appreciated and enjoyed.

### ***Home and School Associations***

In the late 1920s home and school associations of parents and teachers were established alongside elected school committees that managed everyday operations of primary schools. This was an initiative supported by Miss Little who is reported as a member of two home and school associations: at Wadestown School in 1929 and in 1930 she is listed as 'headmistress' an ex officio member of the Karori home and school association. Both schools were in the more affluent suburbs however, at Karori the news headline was 'A Plea for Interest' in the new association. The headmaster reported that the school's finances were 'very serious' and he 'appealed to the citizens of Karori' for assistance.<sup>69</sup> In contrast, the Wadestown association purchased, 'a new piano, a colonial couch, framed pictures, and an electric urn... and £5 was donated towards procuring new books for the library.' 'A visiting committee of ladies had been set up to visit the school at intervals to keep the association in close touch with the requirements of the school' and a social committee was to arrange events for children and

parents.<sup>70</sup> Wadestown was one of the most affluent residential areas of the city. The onset of the depression years sorely affected the finances of schools and families, particularly in poorer suburbs and even Karori.

### ***New Zealand Educational Institute***

Miss Little remained active within NZEI, the professional organisation representing primary school teachers to which WTA was affiliated. In 1930, she was a Wellington delegate to the annual conference and mentioned twice in news reports. Firstly, in support of a motion to reduce class sizes: 'One of the outstanding reforms needed in our education system'. Miss Little spoke to the challenges for teachers for children arriving at school when 'the average child had not learned control.' This was a difficult task to manage in large classes.<sup>71</sup> Despite a long campaign large class sizes were to remain for many more years. Miss Little also seconded a remit that an increase in grants to school committees was needed to make it possible to keep schools hygienically clean. She spoke about the 'insanitary condition of many rooms in which children were taught. Cleanliness was a primary necessity.'<sup>72</sup> With the worsening economic situation this did not happen. School budgets and teachers' salaries were cut. Not until the 1935 election of the first Labour Government was there a turnaround in the fortunes of schools and education more broadly. It would be interesting to know how Miss Little voted in the election.

### **Kindergarten links**

After retiring from Ashburton Borough School at the age of 58 years Miss Little was appointed to the Council of the WFKA in 1934, a position she held until her death in 1937. Miss Little began her new role in kindergarten management during challenging political times. The Depression years were easing and she witnessed the election in 1935 of the first Labour Government with its transformational agenda of social reform in which kindergarten would have a role. Free kindergartens were still in difficulty due the removal of their government subsidy in 1931 that halted all kindergarten expansion. This was described in the news headlines as a 'National Disaster' and generated huge public support for kindergarten.<sup>73</sup> The Wellington Headmasters' Association argued that it had, 'no hesitation in saying that in proportion to its cost to the State (a very small one) no educational agency is doing more for the ultimate moral and mental development of the child.'<sup>74</sup> The NZEI passed a resolution that, 'In view of the results of the work done, the Institute regards its relatively small cost as more in the nature of a saving rather than an expenditure.'<sup>75</sup> Wellington's *Evening Post* launched an appeal and gave space to a rash of protest letters, including one from the WFKA's founder, Mary Richmond:

I wish to point out that the Free Kindergarten Council ... fully appreciates the serious financial condition of the country and are prepared for heavy cuts. All they ask is that the subsidy to their schools should not be entirely withdrawn. If this were done we should lose our status as part of the education system of New Zealand, and - if we cease to function, many working-class mothers would lose enlightened help and co-operation, at a most difficult time ... We plead with [the Department of Education] to reconsider, and not sever completely the tie that binds us.<sup>76</sup>

Thirty-four thousand people signed a petition urging the Government to change its mind. A vote in Parliament opposing the cuts was lost. Peter Fraser, who became the Labour Government Minister of Education in 1935, reminded Parliament of ‘the work of the kindergartens in these difficult times in supplying food, fresh air, and sunlight to children for whom parents could not adequately provide.’<sup>77</sup> The subsidy was reinstated in 1935 and government support significantly increased thereafter.<sup>78</sup>

In 1936 the WFKA established its seventh kindergarten. The few years Miss Little spent with WFKA saw growing support across the political and education spectrum. Miss Little main contribution was expertise and knowledge of the early years of school. Miss Little retained her links with NZEI and the WTA, organisations supportive of kindergarten. In 1935, Miss Little was welcomed as a WFKA delegate to the Wellington Branch of the NCW with its wide-ranging member organisations for women.<sup>79</sup> She was accompanied by Maud England, a long-time WFKA Council member and founder of the Wellington Branch of NCW in 1917.<sup>80</sup> The pair also represented WFKA at the NCW annual conference in 1935. And in 1936, they were the WFKA delegates at the biennial conference of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union (NZFKU) representing six regional associations. This occasion was photographed and includes the only known photo of Miss Little during her years in New Zealand. Miss England had been one of the instigators of the Union, established in 1926 as an umbrella group for kindergarten associations. Messrs England and Little clearly made a good team; while Miss Little was new to the politics of kindergarten, she was experienced in the operations of advocacy organisations. Minister Fraser presented a challenge to delegates at the NZFKU conference:

I am anxious to know in a practical way, how we can extend kindergarten education what is the scope of your ideas in the future? ... I want to be in a position to judge how far your organisation can carry the work out and whether as at present constituted it can carry it out.<sup>81</sup>



THE NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION CONFERENCE, WELLINGTON — 1936. Front row, fifth from left: Lady Sidey, O.B.E., President. Front row, fourth from left: Mrs J. A. Hannan, Hon. Secretary. Front row, second from left: Mrs A. Kidd (Auckland), President, 1934-1941.

Miss Isabel Little (detail) attending the National Free Kindergarten Union conference 1936, NZFKU.

Miss Little died the following year on 23 July 1937, still a member of the WFKA Council whose members paid tribute to her knowledge of schooling matters.<sup>82</sup> She did not live to see the expansion of the kindergarten movement with increased financial support and regulatory control by the Department of Education. Miss Little's protégée, Miss Gallagher, and Miss England served on the Government's Consultative Committee on Preschool Education established in 1945 to plan the new blueprint. Miss Gallagher was appointed to lead the proposed kindergarten expansion with the Department of Education now intent of transforming kindergartens into an expanded professional education service. In my interview Miss Gallagher attributed Miss Little as the inspirational legacy for undertaking this challenge.

Two significant events in 1937 conclude this story of Miss Isabel Little: the New Education Fellowship (NEF) conference held in July, and the WFKA's celebration in August of the birth of kindergarten a century earlier. Miss Little would have been at both events if she had not died; one signified a looking back to the origins and aspirations of the Froebelian kindergarten and the other, was looking forward in a 'new era' of education which Miss Little, as a 'foot soldier', had helped forge.

New Zealand was a distant member of the NEF established in 1921 as a rallying point for like-minded educators in Europe, the United States, Asia, and later Australia and New Zealand. In 1937 the New Labour Government hosted an extraordinary NEF conference with fourteen eminent speakers travelling to New Zealand from Europe and the US ( and then to Australia). This included Susan Isaacs, who in 1933 was appointed to head the new Department of Child Development at the London Institute of Education. Several New Zealanders studied with Isaacs and her books and advice to parents were widely disseminated.<sup>83</sup> Minister Fraser closed schools and four regional conferences were held across the country. A total of 5883 teachers attended, including 1598 in Wellington, where the queues stretched around the town hall to hear Isaacs speak about: 'home and school', 'emotional difficulties', 'the pre-school child' and 'activity and modern education'.<sup>84</sup> Isaacs gave several radio talks and such was the overwhelming response from listeners that the WFKA provided support with the correspondence from parents. Mrs Ethel Kidd, President of the NZFKU summed up the event:

An event of wonder to New Zealand was an official visit of New Education Fellowship leaders who toured the country giving a series of lectures in the four main towns. Thousands of teachers assembled to hear them, none more eager than members of Kindergarten staffs and groups of students in training. Their message concerned human matters in education and international understanding. Dr Kandel of Columbia University who wrote a review of New Zealand education, visited our Kindergartens, showing keen interest in their welfare. A New Zealand branch of the Fellowship has been formed with organised groups for the study of educational problems.<sup>85</sup>

Kindergarten and infant teachers became collegial participants in study groups concerning younger age children that flourished in regional centres for several years thereafter.<sup>86</sup> These were times when realising the ideals of new education seemed achievable. Miss Little not only shared these ideals, but she had over many years practiced the possibilities of 'modern



methods' in her classroom and inspired others. And as the next chapter will show, so too did Misses Inkpen and Jamieson.

Immediately following the heady times of the NEF conference, kindergarten associations celebrated the centennial of the opening of the first kindergarten in Blankenburg, Germany in 1937. New Zealand kindergarteners still regarded themselves as Froebelian in their reverence of Froebel even though they had embraced new curriculum approaches and activities. Celebrations in Wellington included a street appeal for funds and invitations to the public to visit kindergartens. As a Council member Miss Little would have been involved in the preparations. A centennial party was held on 12 August 1937 for 400 people including Richmond, Wellington's pioneer founder and the Minister of Education. In his address, Minister Fraser acknowledged the work of Froebel and assured the audience, 'that whatever the present government could do to assist the movement would be done.'<sup>87</sup> Mrs Kidd's NZFKU 1938 report noted that centenaries were occasions for retrospect but there was need to look for ways to expand:

What have we achieved? We have built up an efficient organisation; won for ourselves a recognized place in the scheme of education; gained the cooperation of the mothers of the various clubs and witnessed to the efficiency of voluntary service. But we cannot congratulate ourselves while our Kindergartens reach less than 2,000 children.<sup>88</sup>

Miss Little did not live to see the political support for kindergarten expansion and the pedagogical value placed on 'playway' methods in the infant classes.<sup>89</sup> There was much government investment in both settings that collectively became a wave of reform across the education sectors, including teacher education, over the next three decades. Progressive practice and new education methods which had been experimental in Miss Little's time became mainstream. Teachers such as Miss Little who experimented and took the risks to discover through trial and error what new education might look like in classrooms were mainly forgotten. The glimpses of Miss Little's story provide a window into an era of pedagogical change influenced by an assimilation of Froebelian and new education ideals that began in a few classrooms and slowly moved into the mainstream. Likewise, there was the advocacy and networking that gradually created space for kindergartens on the political platform. Presidential speeches and delegations by the well known 'movers and shakers' of the kindergarten movement were important but so too was the staunch participation of foot soldiers such as Miss Little.

#### Acknowledgements

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- <sup>1</sup> Kerry Bethell (2020) Notes 1: 'Isabel Duncan Bennet Little 1876 – 1937'. Source: ancestry.com.
- <sup>2</sup> Sue Middleton & Helen May (1997) *Teachers Talk Teaching: Early childhood, schools and teachers' colleges*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- <sup>3</sup> May, 2011.
- <sup>4</sup> Helen May (in press, 2021) 'Enduring lessons from a forgotten Froebelian foot soldier in Aotearoa-New Zealand: Miss Isabel Little (1876-1937)' *Global Education Review: 'Finding Froebel: National and Cross-national Pedagogical Paths in Froebelian Early Childhood Education'*.
- <sup>5</sup> Kerry Bethell (2020) Notes 2: 'Isabel Duncan Bennet Little 1876 – 1937'. Source: ancestry.com accessed with permission from Sheena Thomson.
- <sup>6</sup> Email communication with Sheena Thomson, 10 April 2020. The Victoria Cross was refused due to a lack of witnesses.
- <sup>7</sup> Sheena Thomson, 10 April 2020.
- <sup>8</sup> Kerry Bethell (2020) Notes 3: 'Margaret Eleanor Bell Page, nee Little'.
- <sup>9</sup> Middleton & May, 1997; May, 2011.
- <sup>10</sup> Strong, T. B., Report of the Chief Inspector of Primary Schools, *AJHR*, 1923, E-2, Appendix A, p.iii.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Interview with C. E. Beeby, 1990.
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with Moria Gallagher, 1990.
- <sup>14</sup> 'School Reports 1929', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>15</sup> Gallagher, 1990.
- <sup>16</sup> F. A. Burton (1986) 'The New Zealand Women Teachers' Association 1901-1964', unpublished paper, University of Auckland, NZEI-TRR Library, Wellington.
- <sup>17</sup> A. J. Skelton, 'Elsie Andrews M.B.E., 1888-1948,' Typescript, NZWTA Mss., Folder 30, NZEI-TRR archives Wellington.
- <sup>18</sup> Quoted in Burton, 1986, p. 68.
- <sup>19</sup> 'School Reports 1925', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>20</sup> 'School Reports 1926', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>21</sup> 'Infant Mistresses' Circle', CH536, ANZ, Christchurch.
- <sup>22</sup> Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1979) *I Passed This Way*, Wellington: A. H. & A. W. Reed, p. 165.
- <sup>23</sup> For example, Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1961) *Spinster*, London: Secker & Warberg, was made into a Hollywood film.
- <sup>24</sup> Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1963) *Teacher: The testament on an inspired teacher*, London: Secker & Warberg.
- <sup>25</sup> 'School Reports 1926', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>26</sup> Ashton-Warner, 1979, pp. 153-4.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 159.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 152-3.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 159.
- <sup>30</sup> 'School Reports 1927', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>31</sup> Ashton-Warner, 1979, p. 159.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.159.
- <sup>33</sup> Email communication with Wendy-Aline Dunlop, August 24, 2019.
- <sup>34</sup> Helen May (1997) *The Discovery of Early Childhood: The development of services for the care and education of very young children*, Auckland and Wellington: Auckland University Press, New Zealand Council for Educational Research. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2013, NZCER Press)
- <sup>35</sup> *National Froebel Union Regulations for the Award of Teachers Certificates* (1911) London: Office of the National Froebel Union, p. 5; *The National Froebel Union Report of Examiners and Examination Papers and Examination Results for the year 2012*, London: Office of the National Froebel Union.
- <sup>36</sup> Email communications with Kornelia Cepok, 25 September – 8 October 2019.
- <sup>37</sup> Email communication with Kerry Bethell, 11 April 2020.

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- <sup>38</sup> *National Froebel Union Regulations for the Award of Teachers Certificates*, pp. 18-32.
- <sup>39</sup> *Report of the Certificate Examiners held during the year 1912*, London: Office of the National Froebel Union, pp. 4-14.
- <sup>40</sup> May, 2011.
- <sup>41</sup> Little's great niece, Sheena Thomson, indicated that her grandmother (Little's cousin) was a pupil teacher for three years before commencing training at Moray House in 1902. Email communication 10 April 2020.
- <sup>42</sup> Kerry Bethell (2008) '*Not [just] for a name that we plead*': *Fashioning the ideological origins of early kindergarten in Dunedin and Wellington, New Zealand, 1870-1913*, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Victoria University of Wellington,
- <sup>43</sup> <https://www.historyscotland.com/history/the-story-of-kindergarten-pioneer-lileen-hardy/>
- <sup>44</sup> Helen May, 2005.
- <sup>45</sup> Dorothy Fitch, submission to 1912 Cohen Commission, *AJHR*, 1912, E-12, p. 543.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 539.
- <sup>47</sup> Janet McCallum & Ginny Sullivan (1990) *Kelburn Normal School 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 1914-1989*, Wellington: Kelburn Normal School.
- <sup>48</sup> 'School Reports 1916', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>49</sup> 'School Reports 1919', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>50</sup> 'School Reports 1921', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>51</sup> 'School Reports 1922', WEB, EB-W-9, ANZ.
- <sup>52</sup> These lists do not appear in the education reports to parliament after 1922.
- <sup>53</sup> 'Home and School' *Evening Post* 18 September 1929.
- <sup>54</sup> 'Farewell to Teachers' *Evening Post* 28 May 1931.
- <sup>55</sup> 'The Borough School' *Ashburton Guardian* 18 February 1932.
- <sup>56</sup> 'The Borough School' *Ashburton Guardian* 7 December 1933.
- <sup>57</sup> 'A Christmas Party' *Ashburton Guardian* 11 December 1933.
- <sup>58</sup> Cited in McCallum & Sullivan, 1990, p. 27.
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.
- <sup>61</sup> Kerry Bethell (2020) 'Notes on Margaret Eleanor Bell Page, nee Little'.
- <sup>62</sup> <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>
- <sup>63</sup> 'Pioneer Club Activities' *Evening Post* 21 May 1931.
- <sup>64</sup> 'Separate Schools Suggestion Defeated' *Evening Post* 14 May 1930.
- <sup>65</sup> 'Improvements Wanted at South Wellington School' *Evening Post* 10 June 1924.
- <sup>66</sup> 'Advertisements' *Evening Post* 30 June 1924.
- <sup>67</sup> 'Women in Print' *Evening Post* 12 March 1926.
- <sup>68</sup> 'Personal Matters' *Evening Post* 20 December 1926.
- <sup>69</sup> 'A Plea for Interest' *Evening Post* 30 October 1930.
- <sup>70</sup> 'Home and School' *Evening Post* 18 September 1929.
- <sup>71</sup> 'An Urgent Need for Small Classes' *Evening Post* 13 May 1930.
- <sup>72</sup> 'Cleaning for Schools' *Evening Post* 14 May 1930.
- <sup>73</sup> 'A National Disaster if kindergartens ceased. Movement promises social stability, Dr R. Lawson's eloquent appeal', unsourced clipping, 1931, Minute book 1929-33, ARC-0261, Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association Records, MS-1986-001 HC.
- <sup>74</sup> 'Protest Made' *Evening Post* 20 February 1932.
- <sup>75</sup> 'Appeal for Kindergarten' *Evening Post* 10 February 1932.
- <sup>76</sup> 'A plea for continued recognition. Letter to the Editor' *Evening Post* 12 February 1932.
- <sup>77</sup> 'Free kindergartens, discontinuance of subsidies, criticism of new policy', 25 November 1932, unsourced clipping, Scrapbook 1931-1948, WFKA Records, MS-Group 0052, MSY 1922, ATL.
- <sup>78</sup> May & Bethell, 2017.
- <sup>79</sup> 'Housing Question' *Evening Post* 24 September 1935.
- <sup>80</sup> Beryl Hughes (1998) 'England Maud, Russell 1863-1956' *DNZB*

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<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4e11/england-maud-russell>

<sup>81</sup> 'Infant teaching' *New Zealand Herald*, 19 August 1936.

<sup>82</sup> WFKA, *1937 Annual Report*.

<sup>83</sup> Philip Graham (1909) *Susan Isaacs: A life freeing the minds of children*, London: Karnac.

<sup>84</sup> C. E. Beeby, 1990; A. E. Campbell (1938) *Modern Trends in Education: The proceedings of the New Education Fellowship Conference held in New Zealand in July 1937*, Wellington: Whitcombe & Tombs.

<sup>85</sup> Ethel Kidd, 'NZFKU Biennial Report, 1938', p. 2; Papers relating to the NZFKU 1933-1946, NZFKU records, MS-0605/129, HC.

<sup>86</sup> May, 2011.

<sup>87</sup> 'Centenary Party' *Evening Post* 12 August 1937.

<sup>88</sup> Kidd, 1938, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> May, 2011.

## Chapter three

### *Forever friends*

#### *Miss Agnes Inkpen (1880-1952) and Miss Isabella Jamieson (1881-1964)*

Kerry Bethell

In 1908, two Scottish primary school teachers, Miss Agnes Fitzgerald Rutherford Inkpen (1880–1952) and Miss Isabella Macandrew Jamieson (1881–1964), departed Edinburgh for a new life in Christchurch, New Zealand. Accompanied by Agnes's mother, Jessie Robertson Inkpen, the trio travelled on the same ticket as unassisted passengers. Their arrival in the new world in the early years of the new century coincided with a burgeoning of organisations working to improve the lives of women and children; in which it was imagined, women could gain full political and social citizenship,<sup>1</sup> and children might have access to equal education opportunities. Such ideals appealed to Jamieson and Inkpen, then aged in their mid-twenties and seeking to make a difference in their new country. Over the following decades, the two friends forged separate but linked lives using their mutual voices to challenge dominant ideologies constraining the lives of women and children.

#### **Edinburgh childhoods**

Agnes Inkpen was born in 1880, in West Ham, Essex, England, to Scottish-born Jessie Robertson Inkpen (née Rutherford). Agnes's first and middle names appear to honour the family surnames of her maternal Scottish grandparents. A second daughter, Marianne, was born two years later. In the late 1880s, Jessie Inkpen returned with her two daughters to her home town of Edinburgh to live at 94a Dairy Road. Census records indicate Jessie was the family's breadwinner if not in the 1890s at least in the 1900s. In the 1891 census, Jessie gives her status as 'Wife' and occupation as 'Draper'. A decade later, she records her status as 'Head' and her occupation as 'Ladies Outfitter'.<sup>2</sup> The identity of Agnes's father is unknown, as is his relationship to Jessie Inkpen.

Isabella Jamieson was born in 1881, in South Leith, Edinburgh, to Marie Wishart (née Thomason) and William Watson Jamieson, a police constable. Isabella's parents married in 1879 and settled in Edinburgh. Nine children were born in eleven years two of whom died. Isabella was the eldest of the seven surviving children.<sup>3</sup>

Isabella and Agnes attended separate elementary schools in South Leith. Both gained the new Leaving Certificate Examination, giving them a free secondary school place and the opportunity to work towards higher qualifications and enter the professions. They were fortunate to be born in a time and place when educational and vocational opportunities, while still limited, were opening up for girls. Fortunate also to be born into families seemingly supportive of higher educational opportunities for their daughters.

Agnes enrolled at the Free Church Training College, Moray House, in 1899 just before her nineteenth birthday, the year after Isabel Little graduated from the same college. Agnes graduated in 1901 with a primary teaching qualification having passed the Scottish

Education Department's final examination in the first class. She undertook 'special training in kindergarten work' and was 'specially qualified for teaching singing'.<sup>4</sup> Agnes also took advantage of the opening of university access for women to complete two years of study at Edinburgh University. Isabella enrolled at the Church of Scotland Training College in 1901, qualifying in 1903 with a primary teaching qualification. Both women gained teaching positions in Edinburgh with the Leith School Board.<sup>5</sup>

It not known when Agnes and Isabella became friends. A 1908 newspaper clipping referring to their departure for New Zealand with Agnes's mother, Jessie Inkpen, provides the earliest found reference linking the two together.<sup>6</sup> Their friendship remained constant thereafter until Agnes's death in 1952. Of interest is the nature of their friendship and the ways in which it underpinned their shared lives in New Zealand: as women, as social reformers and as teachers.

### **Three migrate to Christchurch, New Zealand**

In 1908, immigration from Great Britain to New Zealand was at its peak, viewed by many as offering opportunities for individual advancement beyond what was possible in the 'old country'. New Zealand's rapidly growing schooling system created a demand for teachers, stretching beyond the Dominion's capacity to train sufficient teachers. Senior educators and officials frequently travelled to Britain to recruit teachers. It is unknown whether Agnes and Isabella gained teaching positions through such a scheme or upon their arrival in New Zealand.

The families of both women had connections and relatives in New Zealand that probably contributed to their decision to emigrate. Agnes and Jessie Inkpen were likely influenced by family stories of the earlier migration of family members with Scottish teaching qualifications, including Agnes's uncle and aunt, William Sanderson Fitzgerald and Annie Copeland Fitzgerald (see Chapter One), or those of Agnes's aunt and teacher, Lucy Ann Fitzgerald.<sup>7</sup> More is revealed of Isabella Jamieson's motives for the move, due to a friendship established later in the 1950s between Jamieson and journalist, Joyce Ellen Neill. About ten years after Jamieson's death, Neill wrote an unpublished memoir titled, 'Isabella McAndrew Jamieson, MBE' and relates two events as told by Jamieson of her early life in Scotland and her decision to migrate to New Zealand.<sup>8</sup>

The first event occurred on a certain Monday morning when Isabella's mother decided it was time she learnt the important task of folding the men's Sunday clothes to be put away for the next Lord's Day. When Isabella realized it was assumed that this would hereafter be her weekly chore, she stated quite definitely that 'she would do it occasionally when she had time but not always.' Isabella realised then, that as the oldest surviving daughter followed by four boys and then a sister, 'she would become the family drudge'.<sup>9</sup> It was a future that did not appeal. The second event was the sudden death of a loved (unnamed) cousin—a son of Christchurch relatives who worked as a sailor. Neill explains the impact this event had on Miss Jamieson:

He had made the Jamieson home in Leith his UK headquarters whilst working on a ship sailing between New Zealand and Great Britain. It was during one of these trips

that he died. Isabella felt a compulsion to visit the lad's parents and this consideration brought her to this country.<sup>10</sup>

On 30 July 1908, Agnes Inkpen and Isabella Jamieson, along with Jessie inkpen travelled third class to Sydney, Australia, arriving 46 days later. The trio later boarded the steam ship *Ulimaroa* to sail to the city of Christchurch in the South Island via Wellington. Soon after, they disembarked at the port of Lyttelton, near Christchurch. Their new lives as teachers was a short train ride away.

### **Canterbury lives: The first decade 1908–1919**

The trio soon settled into shared accommodation as they waited for the school year to commence in 1909. In the interim, Miss Inkpen held singing and voice production classes for children and young people in their home, presumably as a source of income.<sup>11</sup> Over December and January, the trio experienced their first southern hemisphere Christmas and long hot school summer vacation, so different to the familiar wintery Christmases in Scotland. In February 1909 the two friends commenced their new teaching positions: Miss Inkpen as assistant mistress at Linwood School and Miss Jamieson as second assistant mistress at Christchurch West School. Later, Miss Inkpen taught at Addington School; Miss Jamieson taught at New Brighton School for around five years, moving to Heathcote Valley School in 1914.<sup>12</sup>

At New Brighton School, Miss Jamieson taught a pupil who in later life became the famed Director of Education (1940-1960), Dr Clarence E. Beeby. Miss Jamieson reportedly said to Beeby, then a pupil in her infant class,

“Beeby! What do bees do?”

“They make honey, Miss.”

“Yes, Beeby, but they work.”

“I want YOU to work.”<sup>13</sup>

Beeby fulfilled Jamieson's expectations, completing his primary schooling by passing his Proficiency Examination and becoming School Dux in 1913.<sup>14</sup> After completing secondary school he trained as a teacher. In 1924, Beeby graduated MA with first class honours in philosophy. In 1940, at the age of 37 years, he was appointed Director of Education by the Minister of Education, Peter Fraser, soon to be Prime Minister. Together, they worked to transform New Zealand's education system embracing progressive and democratic ideals.

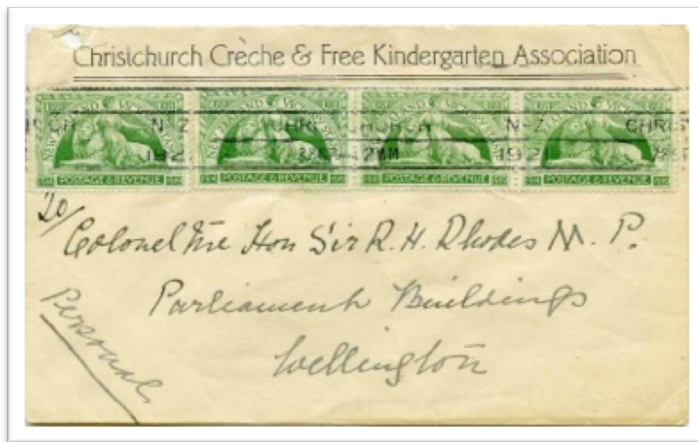
Back in Christchurch in October 1914, Miss Inkpen received news that her mother had died suddenly while on a visit home to England, Scotland and the Continent. Christchurch's *Sun* newspaper published a detailed obituary of the events surrounding Jessie Inkpen's unexpected death. When World War I (WWI) broke out, Jessie along with other British tourists, had been stranded in Geneva awaiting orders from the British Consul:

After many weary days of waiting, a special train was arranged to take the tourists to England, and a very long and trying journey ensued before she arrived in London. On arrival in Edinburgh Jessie Inkpen became ill and soon after, a sudden heart seizure sadly proved fatal.<sup>15</sup>

For Misses Inkpen and Jamieson, so far away from 'home', Mrs Inkpen's sudden death reduced the household to two.

### Professional organisations for women

Misses Inkpen and Jamieson became active members of several professional organisations, in particular, the Christchurch branch of the Women's Teachers Association (WTA), the Crèche and Free Kindergarten Association (CFKA), the Young Women's Christian Union (YWCA) and, through these organisations, the National Council of Women (NCW). Such organisations provided opportunities for personal and professional growth and friendship. Miss Inkpen, for example, became involved in early endeavours by the CFKA to establish an umbrella body for the informal crèches and kindergartens operating in Christchurch. After two failed attempts, a third try in 1911 took seed, due in part to the constant endeavours of Mrs Elizabeth Best Taylor, wife of Canterbury's socialist mayor, Mr Teddy Taylor.<sup>16</sup> Mrs Taylor was to be an influential figure in the lives of both women, especially for Jamieson, who worked with her for almost three decades. Another valued associate was Lucy M. Smith (later Lovell-Smith) who, as a long-term member of the NCW, offered support and guidance for Jamieson, especially during her time as vice-president and president in the 1920s and 1930s. On Lovell-Smith's death in 1936, at a meeting of the NCW, Jamieson paid tribute to her excellent work and role as a mentor.<sup>17</sup> As Canterbury's lady mayoress, Mrs Taylor was involved in decisions as to how Christchurch should commemorate the 1911 coronation of King George V and Queen Mary. Her suggestion to establish a Crèche and Free Kindergarten Association was accepted positively by her husband, declaring it as 'more appropriate than a military parade'!<sup>18</sup> Miss Inkpen joined a committee of teachers led by Taylor, who agreed to the proposed establishment. Mrs Taylor became the association's first president.<sup>19</sup>



Christchurch Crèche & Free Kindergarten Association envelope.  
Canterbury Museum, 1919, Accession Number: 1956.84.7095.

In the early twentieth century the reforming Inspector General George Hogben, spearheaded curriculum reform in the primary school and changes in the system of teacher training. There were opportunities to experiment, and teachers, such as the Misses Inkpen and Jamieson, keen to do so. Underpinning the changes Hogben promoted his belief 'that a teacher's task was not to pump information into children but to help them in developing their own talents for learning, thinking and doing.'<sup>20</sup>



In 1911, Miss Inkpen assisted the recently appointed Miss Helena Hull, principal of the CFKA in the development of a syllabus for a proposed kindergarten teacher training programme that was submitted to a conference of kindergarten experts and under Hogben's guidance was adopted by the Department of Education in 1913.<sup>21</sup> In conjunction with this work, a lecture series was organised for teachers in Christchurch. A hall—with gas and a piano—was secured at the YMCA for lectures to be given from 4pm to 6pm.

Misses Inkpen and Jamieson regularly presented papers to the CFKA and other groups on topics of current interest. In a paper titled 'A Word to Parents, by a Teacher' published in September 1916 in *Theosophy in New Zealand*, Inkpen argued the need to empower parents to actively build partnerships with teachers in the education of their children — a notion well before its time.<sup>22</sup> Drawing upon theosophical and Froebelian ideas, she rejected the prevailing notion of the 'good child who passively sits and listens to the teacher', arguing that,

modern educationalists want the live, natural child, full of curiosity and questions. They want to catch his natural interests and begin his schooling there, studying *him* all the time, filling his needs and leading him to *desire to know and to do* till no one can stop him.<sup>23</sup>

### **Christchurch Teacher Training College and Normal School**

Misses Inkpen and Jamieson both gained lecturing positions at the Christchurch Training College: Inkpen in 1911, a position she held until her marriage in 1919, and Jamieson from 1919 until her retirement in 1937. Increasing interest in the adaptation of Froebelian approaches to early education in the infant classes of primary schools brought demand for teachers with training in kindergarten methods. From the turn of the twentieth century, each of the country's four training colleges were attached to a normal school that allowed student teachers to observe kindergarten activities in infant classrooms.

In the early 1910s the teaching methods with its didactic apparatus promoted by Maria Montessori in Italy reached New Zealand.<sup>24</sup> In 1913, Miss Inkpen, then teaching at Addington School, collaborated with Miss Hull, principal at the Sunbeam Kindergarten, to implement Montessori's ideas into practice. Contact was made with Miss Martha Simpson of Blackfriars School, Sydney, who had recently visited Montessori in Italy and was undertaking experimental work using Montessori methods.<sup>25</sup> The CFKA procured Montessori literature as available and apparatus as needed.

Few kindergartens adopted Montessori methods fully but there was increasing interest in Montessori's early reading and number activities for infant classes. But again, educators were divided. Mr A. J. Morton, Inspector of Schools for the Westland District, argued against the Montessori method of spontaneous education, likening 'it to a fad and certainly impractical under the present system'.<sup>26</sup> Advocates for modern methods included Miss Annie Menzies, head teacher at East Christchurch Infant School, who penned a long letter to Christchurch's *Press* (6 March 1913) in support of 'the little ones attending our primary schools, as well as in the interests of a body of faithful women workers engaged in carrying out this interesting phase of work'. By the 1920s, teachers of infant classes would have been introduced to the teachings of Froebel, Montessori and the activity approaches of John Dewey in the US. These shifts, as Joce Nuttall shows, 'strengthened links beyond teachers in

junior primary classrooms with teachers and others within Christchurch's expanding kindergarten movement.<sup>27</sup>



The Montessori system in operation at Sunbeam Kindergarten, St Albans, Christchurch 1915, Christchurch City Library IMG0079.

In March 1911, Miss Inkpen accepted the position of Kindergarten Mistress at the Training College. The North Canterbury Education Board (CEB) annual report stated that Miss Inkpen 'possesses a wide knowledge, obtained in a Training College and schools of high repute in Scotland'.<sup>28</sup> The appointment, widely announced in local newspapers, emphasized Miss Inkpen's status as niece of William Sanderson Fitzgerald, 'lately an inspector in Otago, who has had a distinguished career in primary education'<sup>29</sup> (see chapter one). Miss Inkpen's appointment, however, sparked controversy amongst some local teachers, who felt the appointee should have more extensive New Zealand experience rather than someone from Scotland with less than two years' local experience in teacher training. In letters to the CEB and in newspapers, those who opposed the appointment quoted regulations relating to promotions that required (a) two years to be spent in a position before further promotion, and that (b) two years be spent in a country school. It was argued that the unnamed appointee] met neither requirement. The matter was formally taken up by the North Canterbury branch of the WTA, which in a letter to the CEB, set out their grievance and queried why 'practically the best woman's position in Canterbury would be given to a junior assistant of a lower grade than D1'.<sup>30</sup> In a response published in local newspapers, the CEB sought to remind the WTA,

that no teacher who wished to apply for the position of kindergarten mistress at the Training College was handicapped by any rule of the Board, and to point out that the Board's practice was to give every consideration to the claims for promotion of these applicants whose qualifications rendered them the best fitted to carry out the duties

required of them, irrespective of the particular kind of work in which they might be engaged at the time.<sup>31</sup>

The Board cited examples of primary teachers who taught older children who were then appointed to teach infant classes. The matter must have been resolved as, shortly after, both Inkpen and Jamieson became active in the North Canterbury WTA.

Miss Inkpen's position as Kindergarten Mistress involved the promotion of modern methods of teaching in the infants, and supporting early childhood education initiatives in the city. She embraced the task with enthusiasm. Sarah Penney, a student in the early 1910s, provides a glimpse into the teaching at the College:

We were all housed in the old grey stone building facing Cramner Square. Downstairs, at the north end, was the Infant Department, where Miss Inkpen was introducing 'activity' into lessons, and men and women alike learnt to skip and hop and 'to flap our wings like birds'. Above there were two lecture-rooms and a large room for 'Criticism Lessons', the tiered rows on one side filled with students who watched the quivering mortal take a lesson under the critical eye of Headmaster and Principal, with classes so used to the limelight that they knew few inhibitions.<sup>32</sup>

In 1911 a kindergarten class was established at the Christchurch Training College 'so as to afford facilities to those students who are desirous of taking up this branch,'<sup>33</sup> although the actual training of kindergarten teachers rested with the CFKA. Further cementing her preschool links, in 1912 Miss Inkpen was appointed by the CFKA as an 'inspector' of its kindergartens and 'examiner' of its training programme.

Miss Inkpen held the position of Kindergarten Mistress until July 1918, when she was appointed to one of two new national positions as Lady Supervisors of 'primary school girls and infants.' Applications were called from 'certificated teachers of wide experience in school, kindergarten, and Montessori methods of teaching'.<sup>34</sup> The new appointees were welcomed although the WTA that had been calling women inspectors for primary schools since its inception in 1901. The 'Lady Supervisors' albeit with lesser status than school inspectors were at least a step towards this.

Miss Jamieson accepted the position of acting Kindergarten Mistress at the Training College, offered in recognition of her work in Christchurch's primary schools since 1908. She held the position until the arrival of British educated, Miss Dorothy Baster in 1920.<sup>35</sup> Miss Jamieson was also reunited with her previous pupil, Clarence Beeby, now enrolled in the College's teacher training programme. Beeby later wrote of Miss Baster as a teacher: 'We were interested in the lectures of Dorothy Baster, the lecturer in infant methods, freshly arrived from England and bubbling with excitement about the new 'activity' methods that were being introduced into progressive infant rooms in Britain.'<sup>36</sup> In a 1990 interview Beeby explained his interest in infant teaching methods:

It is easier to start reforms in the infant room for several reasons. One is that it is furthest away from any qualifying examination. Maybe also that women's minds are more flexible than men. I decided it all had to start there.<sup>37</sup>

The reputation of the three Scottish-trained teachers, Misses Inkpen, Jamieson and Baster, having trained at reputable Scottish colleges, boosted the College's reputation for its support of modern methods in infant classes. The CEB Annual Report for 1922 recognised

the collective work of the three women, stating, 'Our infant rooms still remain almost the only field of experimentation with new methods. In these departments the results have been almost with exception of a beneficial nature.'<sup>38</sup> As Beeby progressed through his career, he did not forget his old teacher, Miss Jamieson. Neill's memoir of Jamieson records a later contact in the 1950s when Beeby was Director of Education and reportedly told Miss Jamieson that, 'when he was accused of introducing the playway of learning, he charged her with being the culprit.' To Neill, 'their teasing was an expression of their mutual respect.'<sup>39</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s there was increasing understanding of psychology and interest in the education provision for children with special needs.<sup>40</sup> After the arrival of Miss Baster, Miss Jamieson was part of a group which successfully advocated for the normal school to establish a class for the 'deprived and handicapped child'. Miss Jamieson was appointed as lead teacher, a position she held until her retirement in 1937.<sup>41</sup> Jamieson's influence and assistance, along with that of Miss Baster, encouraged other schools to establish such classes.<sup>42</sup> Miss Jamieson promoted these new ideas at the college and to women's organisations, such as the NCW in 1924, where [using the language of the time], she gave an address on the development of backward and mentally retarded children, and explained various methods of testing and developing the intelligence. She urged the need for an After Care Society to guard the interests of these children after school age.<sup>43</sup>

In September 1930, Miss Jamieson attended an evening of addresses organised by the Canterbury branch of the Australasian Association of Psychology and Philosophy. As an invited speaker, she discussed the 'methods employed in classes for retarded children at the Normal School, illustrating her account with a selection of work done by children in such classes'.<sup>44</sup> Beeby was also present and spoke on using psychological tests for so-called 'feeble-minded' children in order to discover their most useful vocation.<sup>45</sup> Miss Jamieson continued her advocacy for children with special needs over subsequent decades.

### **Working for women**

In 1918, Misses Inkpen and Jamieson were involved in efforts to re-establish the NCW, the umbrella organisation for women's organisations that had been in recess since 1906. There had been renewed discussion amongst Christchurch's women of 'the ways in which the welfare of women and children could be better safeguarded by the united action of women'.<sup>46</sup> Christchurch was one of three branches to re-open in 1918 where Miss Inkpen represented the YWCA and Jamieson the Canterbury WTA. During their long membership of both organisations and the NCW, Inkpen and Jamieson faced challenges and rewards. They encountered entrenched ideas about women's alleged deficiencies and confronted prevailing ideas as to what it is appropriate for women to be, to have and to do.



NCW Conference c.1940 (cropped). Miss Inkpen stands in front far left and Miss Jamieson in front, far right, NCW.

Before the discovery of antibiotics, epidemic outbreaks were commonplace. In May 1917, Miss Inkpen contracted diphtheria and had to take sick leave. By June, she was reported as having made ‘a good recovery and is now convalescent’ and by September had returned to work.<sup>47</sup> Later that month, Miss Inkpen contributed to a panel organised by the Christchurch Discussion Group on the topic of ‘The place of Handwork in Primary Schools’.<sup>48</sup> Two years later in 1919, she suffered a re-occurrence of diphtheria. In an effort to cope, she reduced her responsibilities, including resigning from preschool work as inspector and examiner for the CFKA, a position she had held since 1912.<sup>49</sup>

In December 1919, Miss Inkpen announced her retirement from a long career in education due to her pending marriage to farmer Donald MacIntosh and a shift to the Waikato in the North Island. It was a decision made partly because she would be living in the country with no training college nearby, but reinforced too by the opposition of education boards to employing married women. Miss Inkpen’s retirement sparked a series of farewell events, including the attention of local newspapers keen to provide news to Christchurch’s women readers. The *Sun* reported ‘a very happy little morning tea at the Cadena Tea Rooms in Cashel Street’ run by the Trent sisters, ‘at which there was a full attendance of members’<sup>50</sup> Amongst the speeches given, Mrs Taylor praised Miss Inkpen’s willingness to give,

the [Creche and Kindergarten] association the benefit of her clear and logical advice, her experience, and her undoubted gift of sympathetic understanding of the child mind’.<sup>51</sup>

Miss Inkpen said in reply,

that whatever she had done had been truly a great pleasure to her. She had always gone on the principle of finding pleasure in work, and that what she had done for the free kindergartens had been willingly and gladly performed.<sup>52</sup>

A week later, Miss Inkpen married Donald McIntosh becoming Agnes McIntosh. Isabella Jamieson served as bridesmaid. Following the ceremony, the newlyweds and a few friends attended a reception at Mrs Balch's residence in St. Albans.<sup>53</sup>

A number of handsome presents were received, including a piece of silver from the staff of the Normal School, silver vases from the infant pupils of the school, and a silver manicure set from the Creche and Kindergarten Association. The newly-wed couple left at midday about motor trip to the Coast, on route for their new home at Motueka.<sup>54</sup>

For the two friends parting after so many years of living together, their friendship remained close but maintained at a distance through letters and regular visits, in addition to their shared interests and ongoing voluntary endeavours.

### **Community service: 1920–1940**

Mrs McIntosh (Inkpen) later settled on a farm at Tuhikaramea in the Waikato. She became a tireless worker in voluntary groups, but mainly the Women's Division of the Federated Farmers (WDFE) and the Hamilton NCW branch where she was known 'as one of the most enthusiastic delegates, with a thorough understanding of the council's activities'.<sup>55</sup> Mrs McIntosh promoted the necessity of 'The intelligent voter' who was 'well informed on political problems, especially as affecting women'.<sup>56</sup> At a time when married women were almost universally defined as 'housewives', McIntosh identified herself 'as a farmer and as an active member of two very large organisations of women'.<sup>57</sup>

A forthright writer of letters, Mrs McIntosh, used local newspapers to highlight causes or expose a concern. For example, having read of an account of an inquest of a young mother who died in childbirth after being given chloroform for pain, she wrote a letter to the newspaper on the subject of maternal mortality. McIntosh's letter called for action, stressing the urgent need for efficient modern methods of childbirth to be made universal:

Insistent demand on the part of husbands and wives—prospective parents—public demand to British Medical Association, to individual doctors and, if necessary, to the Minister of Health and his Department, must surely bring results. Do those concerned know and care enough to organise and act?<sup>58</sup>

In Christchurch Miss Jamieson was also shouldering more responsibilities alongside her teaching tasks. She became vice-president and then president of the NCW branch and oversaw a range of issues needing investigation and, if agreed, action. One campaign was for a crematorium in Christchurch, the only city in New Zealand without one. After 'much quiet persistence',<sup>59</sup> a crematorium was built. Another campaign involved a petition to stop the sale of Christchurch's grand homestead, 'Holly Lea', a legacy to the city by Mr Allan McLean as a home for indigent gentlewomen. Miss Jamieson was the first to sign the petition; two hard-working stalwarts (and friends), Mrs Annie Fraer and Miss Emily A. Chaplin, followed.<sup>60</sup>

Miss Jamieson and Mrs Fraer were concerned with female employment-related issues. In 1928, as NCW representatives, they attended an all-male twelve member meeting with the Canterbury Members of Parliament Committee to draw attention to the treatment of women in the Public Service, particularly in the clerical division.<sup>61</sup> Stressing that the Public Service Act did not make a distinction between male and females, Miss Jamieson argued that girls

were being passed over in favour of boys, 'who had no more qualifications, and who, in some cases, came lower on the entrance examination list' and that 'girls of ability were appointed to positions that led to blind alley occupations'.<sup>62</sup> Jamieson also queried why girls were required to join a different superannuation fund to that offered to boys. To the response that boys should get preference because it is their life work, Miss Jamieson replied, 'Yes, to a certain extent, but all women don't get married.'<sup>63</sup> The committee chair, Mr D. G. Sullivan, then Christchurch's Mayor and later a Labour MP, agreed to look into the matter.

Amongst her responsibilities, Miss Jamieson represented the NCW on the Christchurch Girls Employment Committee, to assist girls gain employment and to find suitable girls for vacant positions. As secretary Miss Jamieson's role was, in part, to keep members in touch with what was being done for unemployed women and girls:

[T]he girl, if she has not left school, is encouraged to stay at school, provided that she is receiving instruction that will help her prepare for the job she wants. She may, if necessary transfer to a vocational school, and if it not possible for her to attend classes at any school she may attend 'opportunity courses', which cover a wide range of subjects, which cover typing, shorthand, book-keeping, needlework and dressmaking, salesmanship, singing, drill and dancing, English and Arithmetic. These classes have been in existence at the Young Women's Christian Association for some time, but they are now being extended by the new committee.<sup>64</sup>

Compulsory retirement regulations for women teachers prompted Miss Jamieson's retirement in 1937. She was farewelled at events organised by the Canterbury WTA<sup>65</sup> and at the annual meeting of the Christchurch branch of the NCW. Her work in education was acknowledged in local newspapers, one of which named her as one of the three foundation figures of free kindergarten in Canterbury, the other two being Mrs Elizabeth Taylor and Miss Laura Tabart.<sup>66</sup>

Some women felt the work of worthy women, including Miss Jamieson, deserved further recognition. Using the pseudonym of 'Wondering Women', a strongly worded and lengthy letter appeared in the *Press* (14 May 1937). On behalf of the paper's women readers, the writer/s sought the name of the person responsible for selecting recipients awarded the 1937 Jubilee and Coronation Medals. Concern was expressed...

... that both lists show a pronounced lack of recognition given to women in the community who are doing humanitarian work quietly and efficiently, in an honorary capacity.... It is not wise to make distinctions, but probably many of your readers without undue thought can bring to mind women who honestly deserved to be remembered, and who time after time, are left out.<sup>67</sup>

Examples of deserving women were presented, the first being Isabella Jamieson and her work with children with special needs and with young women,

[She] has done such wonderful work amongst retarded children, in special classes, who is retiring this month. She has done a tremendous amount over and above what she has been paid *for*, and her work amongst those less fortunate of our children has not ceased when they left school and were out of her hands. Apart from this, she has ever helped with all matters affecting the welfare of women and has given wonderful service on the National Council of Women which brings forward measures to better

the conditions of women and children in New Zealand. She has been a hard working member of the committee set up to look after girls' unemployment matters, and her knowledge of the slightly sub-normal child must have been of great help to this committee.<sup>68</sup>

The writer concluded with a suggestion that Jamieson [and Miss Frances Cooper who received a similar accolade] 'would rather have the affection in which they are held by many women and girls than any medal'.<sup>69</sup>

Nineteen thirty-seven was a busy year for Christchurch women educators with the organisation of two nationwide educational highlights (cited also in chapter two): the New Educational Fellowship (NEF) conference held in Christchurch in July, and the celebration in September of the centenary of Froebel's first kindergarten. Founded in England in 1921, the NEF was an international organisation promoting progressive educational ideals and equal educational opportunities. Membership included 'internationally recognised educators and psychologists within universities and teaching training institutions' including Christchurch where there was an NEF branch.<sup>70</sup> Inspired by the 1937 conference Miss Baster used the auspices of the NEF to establish an infant and nursery study group for parents and teachers in Christchurch.<sup>71</sup> It could be assumed that Miss Jamieson was an attendee. The Froebel centenary was celebrated with a gathering of kindergarten supporters in Hay's department store tearooms to pay tribute to Froebel who,

has had the greatest effect on the education of children to the present day, and his system, more or less modified to meet the change of time and circumstance, is used in most countries in the civilised world today.<sup>72</sup>

Representing the kindergarten education sub-committee, Miss Jamieson told the audience that, 'she felt sure there could be no greater tribute to Froebel's work and his memory than to point to well-equipped and modern kindergartens. One thought with gratitude of this man who had blazed the trail in educational thought.'<sup>73</sup>

### **Miss Jamieson's work for world peace**

Miss Jamieson's retirement year in 1937 had been busy but was not all work, debates and campaigns. Jamieson continued to find support and inspiration with other Christchurch professional women who gathered together at the weekly Friday Night Club in the Grey Room at Beath's department store tea shop catered by Miss Mildred Trent. This informal gathering of women met to discuss what the *Press* (23 January 1937) referred to as, 'the menu, politics, women's affairs and the deep thoughts of life.'<sup>74</sup>

Miss Jamieson attended the 1937 NCW annual conference where the issue of world peace was a significant item on the agenda. The looming signs of World War II (WWII) ahead strengthened the desire for world peace sparked in the aftermath of WWI. This was personal for Jamieson whose three brothers had been in active service. A report in the *Auckland Star* (28 July 1917), provides glimpses of information as to the brothers' fates. Two brothers served with the Royal Scots, and one was among the few survivors to cross to the front, although not without injury to his hand and his head. He received a Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry in the field.<sup>75</sup> A second brother, also wounded in France, returned to the trenches. The third brother, William Watson Jamieson, who fought with the New



Zealanders at Gallipoli, was wounded and sent home no longer fit for service.<sup>76</sup> These encounters strengthened Miss Jamieson's resolve and interest in the peace movement gaining momentum during the interwar years, including her attendance at several world forum events.

On 13 March 1938, Miss Jamieson boarded the ocean liner, *SS Monterey*, on a 15-month visit to Britain to visit her father, brothers and relatives in Scotland, and attend two conferences. She was joined by Miss Baster, who was also on a return visit to Britain. The previous Saturday, the two women had attended a shared farewell morning tea party organised by the CFKA at Beath's tea rooms. They were wished happy times overseas, thanked for their services 'so willingly and cheerfully given' and presented with books to read on the voyage.<sup>77</sup> Miss Jamieson was also farewelled by the Christchurch WTA and the Friday Night Club.<sup>78</sup> The news that she was to represent New Zealand at the Jubilee Conference of the International Council of Women (ICW) in Edinburgh was reported in the national news. Readers of the *Press* (9 September 1938) were informed that,

Miss Jamieson has been a member of the Christchurch branch of the New Zealand National Council of Women for 19 years, and has held every executive office in her branch, her experience making her a capable representative of the women of this country.

Miss Jamieson carried with her a history of the Christchurch Crèche and Kindergarten Council, compiled in conjunction with Miss Trent, to present at the conference.

In July 1938, Miss Jamieson was one of around 1,000 attendees at the ICW Jubilee Conference held in Edinburgh's old assembly hall of the Church of Scotland. In a report to Miss Trent published in the Christchurch *Press* (9 September 1938), Miss Jamieson identified two things of interest she gained from the conference. First, there was the number of 'young women taking active parts in the conference affairs—cultured, trained and professional women as well as titled leisured women'. She noted, too, the commonality amongst women and how they 'had the same problems and studied the same things.' The world, she felt 'was largely in the hands of women and one of the best ways of promoting better understanding amongst nations was to learn to know people of other lands.' Second, and more specifically, Miss Jamieson described how the issue of peace was dominating the thoughts of women from many countries. She noted, 'how eagerly and cleverly each speaker brought the idea of the peace of the world into her remarks, there did not seem to be a subject discussed which had no bearing on peace, and on which peace would have no bearing.' The issue of world peace was a significant force shaping Miss Jamieson's work over the next decade.

In October 1938, Miss Jamieson accepted a last-minute invitation to represent the New Zealand NCW at a meeting of the International League of the Comité Mondial des Femmes against War and Fascism in Paris from November 11–14. Elsie Freeman (Locke) described the leadup to the invitation and Jamieson's response:

In August 1938, we received a letter from the Women's World Committee for Peace inviting a New Zealand delegate to the conference in Paris. It was too late to send anyone, but eleven groups got together and forwarded the invitation to two New Zealanders in London. Mrs Jordan, wife of our High Commissioner could not go, but Miss I. M. Jamieson did.<sup>79</sup>

Miss Jamieson subsequently wrote an article for *Women Today* (February 1939) magazine, titled 'Peace Days: An account of the Armistice Day Function of the World Conference of Women.'<sup>80</sup> Freeman initiated and had edited the two groundbreaking magazines - *Working Woman* and later *Women Today* - that published articles on birth control, abortion, divorce, childcare and gender-based income inequality - controversial issues at the time.<sup>81</sup> Miss Jamieson also sent a report of her attendance at the Paris conference to an appreciative Miss Trent. Lengthy extracts were published in the *Waikato Times* (11 June 1940) on a page 'devoted to the interests of the country women of Waikato, and in particular to advancing and recording the activities of these two great national organisations, the Women's Institutes and the Women's Division of the Farmers Union.'

Over 2,000 women from 52 countries attended the Paris conference. Miss Jamieson attended all the sessions, finding...

... the proceedings most interesting but somewhat upsetting owing to the very evident feeling of strain and unrest. This was caused by the often expressed, and forcibly expressed opinions of those present on the result of the Munich agreement, their concern for Czechoslovakia and its people, and their sympathy with the Spanish people - especially Spanish children.<sup>82</sup>

Miss Jamieson, once an infant school teacher from Edinburgh, now stood on the international platform to speak for New Zealand efforts towards peace and closer relations in the Pacific:

I gave a greeting from New Zealand women and told how anxious we are for the peace of the world, spoke of the work of our affiliated societies along that line, especially stressing the ideals of NCW and finishing with a message sent to me from Mrs Freeman, 'That New Zealand women wholeheartedly support any constructive efforts for real Peace.'<sup>83</sup>

Miss Jamieson described conference speakers as 'mainly intellectuals' and noting that as far as she could judge "were Socialists politically".<sup>84</sup> What impressed her deeply was 'the enthusiasm of all and their very earnest desire to help those afflicted because of World War One and poverty'.<sup>85</sup> Jamieson concluded by saying that she had gained a new understanding of the international situation:

I gathered that the real enemy of Peace is Fascism and that war must first be made on it. Then we may expect peace, and only then. There seemed to be little hope of what I had always regarded as the true and only intellectual way of settling differences— mutual agreement after due discussion by all sides.<sup>86</sup>

The final day of the conference was spent in 'executive meetings' where Miss Jamieson was called upon to...

... tell what active part, if any, New Zealand women take in the work for peace, whether women joined or were interested in Trade Unions, was the co-operative movement strong in New Zealand, our hours of work, conditions for women, social legislation, and etc., were all enquired into. I answered these to the best of my ability. Luckily I had just received newspaper cuttings from Miss Trent telling about the preparation work for the Pan Pacific Conference in New Zealand. They were most impressed and interested to hear that the main subject for discussion is 'Economic Independence'. They were very interested to know, too, that New Zealand women had

for so long been trying to understand and co-operate with women of the Pacific countries.<sup>87</sup>

Miss Jamieson was a witness to the frontline of history and sent Miss Trent an account of a journey she made during the conference to a small city in northeast France, and the site of the WW1 Battle of Verdun fought over 300 days from February to December 1916. From here, the group travelled to Donaumont to the burial site of the over 130,000 German and French soldiers who died during the Battle of Verdun. It was a distressing day:

On November 11 we left Paris by train at 7 a.m. for Verdun and Donaumont. ... The sight of so many graves, ruined buildings, broken forests that have been replanted and the evidences of trenches and shell holes literally hurt. The futility and stupidity of war and so much destruction appals me.

At Verdun we assembled in procession to carrying banners just near the Victory Memorial—a very imposing one. We marched from there to the Soldiers' Memorial—a stone wall from which the shadowy figures of five soldiers of France emerge. There, we stood in silence for two minutes. Then two of the delegates, preceded by a girl in the dress of Alsace-Lorraine, laid some lovely flowers at the foot of the Memorial. More silence, and then we found the motor coaches which conveyed us to Donaumont. Again we drove through a beautiful and peaceful agricultural countryside to Donaumont, where we were faced with more than a million little white crosses in a beautifully cared for garden on our right, and on our left on the terraced ground of a hill overlooking the whole district. There, we met a great number of people who had gathered that day 'for remembrance'.

On our return to Verdun there was a meeting arranged by a local Committee of women. The hall was packed with men and women, and the enthusiasm and feeling displayed on all sides was intense. Members from different countries spoke. There was much indignation afterwards because each foreign delegate was required to show her passport before speaking. This was felt to be an infringement on 'La Liberte', of which the French are so proud. The meeting concluded without any untoward happening, but I felt the atmosphere electric.<sup>88</sup>

Miss Jamieson also attended an unspecified meeting to pay homage to a French social worker, Agnes Domay, killed during a bombardment of a Spanish town.<sup>89</sup> The meeting left her feeling emotional as she joined others paying homage. Writing home, Jamieson describes Domay as 'a well-to-do woman who had accomplished much for her own people in France and who was visiting Spain to see what she could do to help the women and children there.' Jamieson described the scene that lay before her - the photograph of the dead woman, 'draped with Spanish colours and placed in front of the platform'.<sup>90</sup> A third conference attended by Miss Jamieson was organised by the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). Founded in 1929, the ACWW grew from the International Council of Women as the natural meeting place for rural women from across the globe.

After visited family and friends in England and Scotland, Miss Jamieson returned home in September 1939 to a warm welcome. Soon after, Misses Jamieson, and Baster,

attended an afternoon tea hosted by the CFKA. The local newspaper reported on their respective talks: Jamieson 'gave an interesting talk on her visits to kindergarten and nursery schools in England and Scotland whilst Miss Baster spoke on 'her experiences during her visits to infant schools.<sup>91</sup> Over the coming months Miss Jamieson was to address groups on early education but also related how the conferences attended had made a profound impression upon her, particularly concerning issues around peace.<sup>92</sup> Following a quick visit to Dunedin to speak at a NCW meeting, Jamieson returned to Christchurch to deal with last-minute tasks before bidding farewell to the city that had been her home of nearly thirty-two years. That done, she moved to live closer to her old friend, Agnes McIntosh, in Tuhikaramea near Hamilton.

### **Seeking peace in a time of war**

During the interwar years, the ICW movement worked unceasingly for peace, and in reports to members stressed womens' unique role by nature of their sex in the peace movement. However, in 1939 the country was engaged in a world war again. In April 1940, Miss Mildred Trent, now Dominion President, presented the case:

We women hate war and we know that economically, ethically, and spiritually it is wrong. Nevertheless when confronted with the present circumstances we are ready and willing to do our bit to support our Empire in its struggle for the freedom of the nations, and we cannot help but feel proud of belonging to a nation like ours. We cannot do very much at present but the practical everyday things that come our way, but we could and should begin to think of peace and adjustments that must be made when the war ends, and I think that we should join with other women in asking that at the peace conference after the war there should be women representatives as well as men.<sup>93</sup>

Such calls for peace were to grow as the war progressed. In Hamilton the two friends continued their community involvement including leadership roles in a range of organisations. Mrs McIntosh served as president of the Hamilton branch of the Labour Party. Miss Jamieson was frequently invited to speak on a range of topics although restrictions on travel during the war curtailed attendance at meetings and conferences. Many plans held by national and local groups were postponed or scaled down for the duration.

In February 1939, Mrs McIntosh was made a Justice of the Peace, one of just fifteen women appointed out of 110 appointees.<sup>94</sup> In 1940, both McIntosh and Jamieson were honoured at the Dominion Conference of the NCW: Agnes McIntosh was elected to the position of Dominion President and Isabella Jamieson as the new Dominion Secretary.<sup>95</sup> Their appointments were met with enthusiasm across the branches. McIntosh's hometown branch of the NCW in Hamilton expressed...

... delight and acclamation, and several members paid a tribute to the splendid work of Mrs McIntosh and Miss Jamieson, and of the honour which their election to the presidency and secretaryship of the largest women's organisation in New Zealand and the world had conferred upon the branch in particular, and the women of Hamilton in general.<sup>96</sup>

Similar comments were made by members attending the Dominion Conference held in Christchurch in April 1941, noting that they ‘will remember her [McIntosh] as one of the most enthusiastic delegates, with a thorough understanding of the council’s activities.’<sup>97</sup> McIntosh expressed thanks for the messages of congratulations and good wishes received from branches and asked members ‘for their co-operation in maintaining the standard of efficiency in all NCW affairs on the material side, while keeping in mind the more spiritual aims of love and friendliness.’<sup>98</sup> Historian, Dorothy Page claimed that the respective roles of McIntosh and Jamieson as President and Secretary were to guide ‘the NCW through the darkest days of the war until 1944’.<sup>99</sup> In her role, McIntosh appealed to women involved in work on the ‘home front’, encouraging them to think about peace aims and ideals and reconstruction as they go around about their work:

Keep the goal in sight yourselves and before all people, so that the stumbles and knocks do not dismay. Keep confidence and self-confidence high. Deprecate talk of waiting for a lead. It is those who show initiative that win, and where can initiative be better shown than in, for instance, Home Guard. Why, Home Guardsmen should find their job a thrilling, youth-giving adventure if we all take it as such.<sup>100</sup>

One desired appointment proved elusive. In 1941, Mrs McIntosh stood for election as the parents’ representative on the Hamilton High School Board. Her bid, arguing for a woman’s voice on the Board, was soundly defeated. The three available places were won by three of the four other candidates—all males.<sup>101</sup> In June 1943, Miss Jamieson also stood for election on the Board, this time against nine other candidates, including five men and two women. Jamieson’s bid failed dismally, gaining just 57 votes, 68 votes less than the next candidate and 211 less than the top contender, again a male. While gendered norms might account for her lack of popularity amongst voters, some historical accounts suggest that hints of radicalism and socialism worked against Miss Jamieson.<sup>102</sup>

As NCW President Mrs McIntosh supported a range of causes associated with the war. She ‘organised regular collections from members to help the children of Spain, Eastern Europe and China, [and] urged the New Zealand government to accept more refugees and arranged hospitality for troops from the local camps’.<sup>103</sup> More chilling was news of the Japanese air raid on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941. Mrs McIntosh’s immediate response was to send a letter ‘to the members of the NCW and to the 135,000 women who they represent as delegates’, calling for calm and a united response:

I write today, having given time for recovery from the shocks of the past week, in order that we might feel the unitedness of thought and feeling amongst us. ... But there is one thing I think we ought to undertake and it is possible to every one of us. It is to do our part to weld the war effort into a strong oneness, by growth and spreading of the realisation of the fact that we citizens of New Zealand are, and must be, one corporate body. We must recognise authority, and that the supreme authority is the Government, elected and confirmed in power recently by the whole House. Then we must reorganise and co-operate with those placed in authority over our activities in all directions.<sup>104</sup>

## **Opportunities for women**

During the war years Mrs McIntosh was concerned too with the return of women to civilian life. Massey Agricultural College's course in Home Science offers an exemplar of the measures taken. The return of women who had served in the war effort - both as soldiers and volunteers, at home and overseas - raised the controversial question as to what was next for women accustomed to the challenges and benefits of paid employment. While some women might yearn for a return to past roles others were reluctant to return to a life without paid employment but for whom there would be a shortage of positions as men returned from the war. There were also questions about roles for women during the war. One response, hotly discussed on both sides, was the call on April 15, 1940, by Hamilton's Mayor, Mr H. D. Caro, for the establishment of a women's land army similar to that operating in Britain. In a letter to the Editor printed on 25 March, 1940, Mrs McIntosh added her voice to argue from a farmer's point of view that the,

need was not simply for labour but for efficient and continuous service. One inefficient employee may ruin in a month a dozen cows' worth ... and do many pounds worth of damage to machines worth £120 or £200.<sup>105</sup>

Mrs McIntosh supported schemes that could provide employment and support for women to take the place of farmers' wives and daughters in farm homes, arguing that 'many of these wives and young women would be the happiest and most efficient replacement for husbands and farm hands who have enlisted. That is worth considering.'<sup>106</sup> While agreeing that land women must be trained as farmers, Mrs McIntosh called for the government to organise and fund the cost of training and employing them. She also advised that employment 'would have to be for the duration of the war or some other reasonably long period. Women attracted to the scheme must realise this.'<sup>107</sup> In 1943, Professor Geoffrey Peren, Principal of Massey Agricultural College, seeking advice on the matter, approached Mrs McIntosh in her dual roles as President of the WDFP and of the NCW. Mrs McIntosh was strongly opposed to the suggestion from several quarters that large numbers of women demobilised from the services should be directed into domestic service as work. Instead, she advocated home science courses for girls and women and for home science to be offered as a university subject at Massey College. Peren replied in agreement due, in part, to his interest in attracting more women as students.<sup>108</sup> A 'home science' course at Massey College was proposed, similar to one run at Massey College prior to the war. A committee was established to develop what became a domestic science course. The Women's Division retained their interest with two local members elected to the committee.<sup>109</sup>

## **The women's rally**

In Auckland in July 1941, Mrs Hedda Dyson, Editor of the *New Zealand Women's Weekly* and convener of the women's executive for a government reconstruction committee, held a meeting of representatives of women's organisations, urging them to take their part in a forthcoming event:

We firmly believe that in the reconstruction which must take in place after this war, women should contribute a factor hitherto ignored. ... They, the mothers of the race have greater intuition and a deeper awareness of the needs of the future. Men as a sex

have always lived for to-day alone; women have a deeper insight which must be developed. In our world today, too much stress is laid on the temporal and material, and consequently there is no interpretation of life, no hope of purpose for the future.<sup>110</sup>

A rally of women was to be held and women were invited to submit suggestions for the broad principles of reconstruction to be incorporated in the speeches at the rally. These included matters such as:

The need for human sympathy, opportunity for youth, congenial work for every man, and pride in work (for in this mechanical age pride in one's work was often overlooked), health and suitable recreation were under discussion.<sup>111</sup>

Some women expressed the determination of their sex to prevent the world being plunged into war again.<sup>112</sup> Five women were identified as speakers, including Mrs Dyson herself and Mrs McIntosh as President of the NCW. The date set was July 20, 1941, and the venue, the Auckland Town Hall. Mrs McIntosh urged the need for unity and cooperation amongst women:

No matter how necessary it may be that we should be able to claim military victory, that victory will bring us nothing more than opportunity to make for ourselves and the rest of the world some particular kind of life. After 1918 we threw away opportunity to develop the kind of life that brings peace to the people. This time we know, plans must be made well ahead.... There must be complete co-operation amongst women. Groups must get together.<sup>113</sup>

In October 1941, the Rehabilitation Act led to the establishment in 1942 of the Hamilton Rehabilitation Committee (HRC). In 1942, a women's advisory sub-committee of the HRC was established 'to assist in the placement of demobilised and discharged ex-servicewomen.'<sup>114</sup> The sub-committee was to investigate issues and make recommendations to the Director of Rehabilitation.<sup>115</sup> Mrs McIntosh, a member of the HRC was appointed as chair and in September 1944, became the chair of the women's advisory sub-committee of the National Rehabilitation Council established to assist in the placement of demobilised and discharged ex-service women.

### **Travels to the United Nations**

In 1946, Mrs McIntosh was invited to represent New Zealand women at the second meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) in New York. She was the sole woman of four representatives led by Sir Carl Berendsen, head of the Prime Minister's Department. McIntosh's travel card issued in Auckland on 11 October, 1946, reveals new found physical details. At 5 foot 10 inches in height, she was tall, with grey hair, dark complexion and brown eyes. Her occupation is given as a married woman; her third class travel was paid for by the New Zealand Government.<sup>116</sup>

The establishment of the UN in 1945 'brought 51 countries committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations amongst nations and promoting social progress, better living standards and human rights'<sup>117</sup> For Mrs McIntosh, the conference provided an unique opportunity to contribute to discussions on the political rights of women and what action women could take to increase such rights. In her speech she

emphasised a different but equal status for men and women, arguing that equality of status meant full citizenship to women as well as men:

Good citizens were a national asset, and New Zealand's experience showed that all objections to the public equality of men and women were without foundation since public equality in New Zealand has resulted in no ill effect on persons, homelife, or the State.<sup>118</sup>

Mrs McIntosh warmly supported the resolution calling on all states to accord women the same political rights as men and hoped that 'women would not be forced, in country after country, to fight the same long and bitter battle to secure equal rights.'<sup>119</sup> She also participated in a sub-committee established an International Emergency Children's Fund, known today as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).<sup>120</sup> The original mandate, to provide emergency food and health care to children and mothers in countries that had been devastated by war was extended to meet the long-term needs of women and children in developing countries everywhere. UNICEF remains in operation today. Berendsen's report made mention of McIntosh's contribution, stating

Mrs McIntosh was of the upmost assistance on many committees, and she not only played a useful part on all social and humanitarian questions, particularly relating to women and children, but earned for herself the respect and affection of the whole Assembly as a most worthy representation of New Zealand womanhood.<sup>121</sup>

The New Zealand delegates returned home on Christmas Eve, 1946. The NCW branch in Hamilton recorded their strong approval of McIntosh's work, stating: "In 1946, the branch was proud to have one of its members, Mrs D. McIntosh, chosen as a delegate to represent NZ at the General Assembly of the United Nations at New York."<sup>122</sup> Mrs McIntosh's immediate comment was that, 'There was plenty of hard work for the delegates from the time the conference opened in October until it ended this month [December].'<sup>123</sup> Mrs McIntosh had established a presence in an international forum of world leaders, an unlikely opportunity for a Scottish infant teacher who emigrated to New Zealand.

Agnes Fitzgerald Rutherford McIntosh died in Hamilton in 1952, aged 72, having forged a new life in New Zealand built around community service and activism over forty-six productive years. For Isabella Jamieson, this must have been a sad end to their long-held and valued friendship—just memories survived including their journey to New Zealand for a life that yielded many opportunities for both women.

### **Kindergarten work in Hamilton**

In 1954, Miss Jamieson became acquainted with journalist Joyce Ellen Neill, author of the unpublished manuscript cited earlier. Neill provides a biographical account of Jamieson's life and work and with a lens of friendship writes about meeting Jamieson as the guest speaker at a women's club in Hamilton:

She was attempting to open our eyes to the injustices which were becoming unacceptable; to take our thoughts from the inconsequential house-keeping worries of our comfortable homes and make us see that hundreds of women in our community needed our help to shatter, or to swing aside the bias of women in the professions. I



doubt if she was surprised at the puzzled incomprehension when she mentioned ‘job opportunity, equal pay, women in the police force, and women on juries.’<sup>124</sup>

Neill provides a rare personal description:

Miss Jamieson’s appearance had not prepared us for her advanced thinking. She was always well dressed and although of medium height her trim attire and dignified reserve caused some women to be in awe of her until they came to know her. When short hair was the vogue she wore her long hair in a head plait which emphasised her fine complexion.<sup>125</sup>

Amidst the postwar expansion of kindergartens into towns and suburbs across New Zealand, Miss Jamieson became involved in their establishment in Hamilton. In 1945 she was elected president of the re-established Hamilton Kindergarten Association (HKA), a position held until 1962. Despite the ‘controlled expansion’ policy of government due to the scarcity of teachers and resources Jamieson successfully oversaw the establishment of seven kindergarten committees and purpose-built kindergarten buildings for each. Fundraising was a constant. In 1951, an ambitious project to stage a Floral Carpet fair involving a year’s work, successfully raised an amount sufficient to put the building fund on a sound financial basis.

Miss Jamieson was also an Executive member of the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union (NZFKU) between 1945 and 1954. These were pivotal years during which the NZFKU brokered a new partnership with the Department of Education. Jamieson became the Union’s representative on an advisory committee to implement the ‘Kindergarten on the Air’ programme. The aim was to provide opportunities for children in rural areas to listen to a programme that would give them some of the experiences enjoyed by children attending kindergarten. Jamieson held this position for a decade, over which time the committee was able to establish an on-air programme for all children but, in particular, for rural children.<sup>126</sup>



Isabella Jamieson  
(second L) awarded  
an MBE for services  
to education.  
Auckland Museum,  
PH-CNEG-S454

In 1959, Jamieson was made an MBE (Member of the British Empire) for services to education. It was an honour she shared with the delighted HKA, which declared it to be “the

greatest honour which we have received.”<sup>127</sup> The Association showed their appreciation of her service, naming a kindergarten in her honour. Present at its opening that year, Miss Jamieson is said to have been ‘as clearly excited as the children – “her pride was intense”’.<sup>128</sup>

In 1961, Miss Jamieson returned to Christchurch for the NZFKU conference. The following year, the HKA honoured Miss Jamieson, now in her early eighties, and invited her to cut the CFKA’s 50th Jubilee cake alongside the current President and past Union President, Mrs Connie Johnson. In October 1963, she received a letter from Mrs Helen Downer, President of the NZFKU, stating she was to be awarded Life Membership of the NZFKU. The Union only began awarding Life Memberships in 1963 to ‘persons who had rendered outstanding services to the national association’.<sup>129</sup> In reply Miss Jamieson expressed her very great surprise upon reading that she was to be so honoured:

This is an honour that I appreciate very highly. I am sure all those so honoured will feel as I do. I hope someday to avail myself of the privileges it offers. I am very proud indeed to know that my interest in the Kg [sic] movement in N.Z. can be maintained in this way. With many thanks & very good wishes for the continued success of the work of the Union.<sup>130</sup>

For Isabella Macandrew Jamieson, this recognition was timely. Nine months later, her life ended on June 6, 1964, aged 82.

Jamieson’s contribution to kindergarten, staff and children was remembered by the HKA with fondness and respect, that has continued to today. A past Hamilton kindergarten teacher, Leonie Shaw, recalled a day when, having received positive feedback for her teaching from Miss Moira Gallagher (see chapter two), she received an unexpected but welcome visit from a now elderly Miss Jamieson: “She had walked all the way [from her home] to the kindergarten to see what I was doing. She was a marvellous woman.”<sup>131</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jenny Coleman (2020) *From suffrage to a seat in the house*, Dunedin: Otago University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Census for the years 1891 and 1901, <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>.

<sup>3</sup> Pedigree Chart for William Watson Jamieson: North Isles Family History. <https://www.infroShetland/Shetland>.

<sup>4</sup> ‘A kindergarten for Christchurch’ *Press* 9 September 1911.

<sup>5</sup> Moray House School of Education Archives and Teacher Training Archives, Edinburgh University.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Ruma’ Passenger List departing 30 July 1908, Liverpool to Australia.

<sup>7</sup> Gerald Fitzgerald (2016) *The life of William Sanderson Fitzgerald*, Dunedin: Author.

<sup>8</sup> Joyce. E. Neill, ‘Isabella McAndrew Jamieson, feminist, educationist and organiser’ in MS-Papers-9990, ATL.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Education Board’ *Press* 11 February 1909.

<sup>12</sup> ‘New Brighton School’ *Sun* 20 May 1914.

<sup>13</sup> Beryl Hughes (1989) *Flags and Building Blocks, Formality and Fun: One hundred years of free kindergarten in New Zealand*, Wellington: NZFKU, p.19.

<sup>14</sup> Noeline Alcorn (1999) *To the Fullest Extent of his Powers: C. E. Beeby’s life in education*, Wellington: Victoria University Press.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Death of Mrs Inkpen’ *Sun* 23 October 1914.

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- <sup>16</sup> Margaret Lovell-Smith (1996) 'Taylor, Elizabeth Best 1868-1941' *DNZB*  
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3t9taylor-elizabeth-best>
- <sup>17</sup> 'National Council of Women – Christchurch Branch' *Press* 6 March 1936.
- <sup>18</sup> A. R. Grigg (1993) 'Taylor Thomas Edward 1862-1911' *DNZB*  
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2t16taylor-thomas-edward>
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Herbert Roth (1993) 'Hogben, George 1853-1920' *DNZB*  
<https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2h44/Hogben-george>
- <sup>21</sup> 'Crèche Kindergarten Association' *Lyttelton Times* 25 February 1914.
- <sup>22</sup> Agnes Inkpen (1916) 'A word to parents by a teacher' *Theosophy in New Zealand* September, p. 170-172.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> Helen May (2013 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) *The discovery of early childhood*, Wellington: NZCER Press
- <sup>25</sup> 'The value of Montessori methods' *Evening Star* 1 September 1913.
- <sup>26</sup> A. J. Morton 'The work of education' *Press* 27 February 1913.
- <sup>27</sup> Joce Nuttall, 1989 'Early childhood care and education in Christchurch 1877-1914', unpublished paper, Christchurch: Department of Education, Canterbury University.
- <sup>28</sup> *AJHR*, 1911, E.1, p. xiv.
- <sup>29</sup> 'Personal' *Lyttelton Times* 30 March 1911.
- <sup>30</sup> 'Women Teachers' *Press* 28 April 1911.
- <sup>31</sup> 'Education Board' *Star* 17 May 1911.
- <sup>32</sup> Sarah E. W. Penny (1977) 'What it was like to be a woman in my day at Teachers College,' *Centennial Publication Christchurch Teachers College*, p. 66.
- <sup>33</sup> *AJHR*, 1912, E.2, p. xvii.
- <sup>34</sup> 'Education Appointment' *Ashburton Guardian* 12 July 1919.
- <sup>35</sup> 'Women Folk' *Press* 26 June 1929.
- <sup>36</sup> C. E. Beeby (1992) *The Biography of an idea*, Wellington; NZCER, p.41. Dr Beeby was appointed as Assistant director of education in 1938 and in 1940 became Director of education.
- <sup>37</sup> Helen May (1992) 'Learning through play: Women, progressivism and early childhood education 1920-1950' (eds.) S. Middleton & A. Jones, *Women and education in Aotearoa 2*, Auckland University Press – Bridget Williams Books, pp. 83-101.
- <sup>38</sup> Canterbury Education Board Report, 1922, p.1 4, cited in Alcorn, 1999, p. 30.
- <sup>39</sup> Neill, 1976, p. 4.
- <sup>40</sup> David Mitchell (2018) *The Ecology of Inclusive education: Strategies to tackle the crisis in educating diverse learners*, London: Routledge Press.
- <sup>41</sup> 'Kindergarten Association' *Press* 11 September 1920.
- <sup>42</sup> 'Women and Education' (ed.) Corallyn Newman (c1979) *Canterbury women since 1893* Pegasus, Regional Women's Decade Committee (Christchurch, N.Z.)
- <sup>43</sup> 'National Council of Women' *Press* 6 May 1924.
- <sup>44</sup> 'The Retard Child', *Press* 25 September 1930.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> 'National Council of Women' *Star* 14 September 1917.
- <sup>47</sup> 'Woman's Corner' *Press* 12 June 1917.
- <sup>48</sup> 'Local and General' *Press* 27 September 1917.
- <sup>49</sup> 'For Women' *Lyttelton Times* 18 October 1919.
- <sup>50</sup> 'Presentation to Miss Inkpen' *Sun* (Christchurch), 10 December 1919.
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>53</sup> Isabella and Agnes lived initially at 86 Armagh Road, and later at 84 Canon Street.
- <sup>54</sup> 'Weddings' *Star* 20 December 1919. The newlywed couple moved to Nelson and later to Waikato where they settled.
- <sup>55</sup> 'National Council' *Evening Post* 21 November 1940.
- <sup>56</sup> See 'Reform Party Women's Division' *NZ Herald* 24 October, 1931.

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- <sup>57</sup> 'Organisation of women' *Waikato Times* 25 March 1940.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>59</sup> Middleton & May, 1997.
- <sup>60</sup> 'Holly Lea' *Press* 11 October 1930.
- <sup>61</sup> 'Canterbury M.Ps.' *Press* 10 May 1928.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> 'Employment for Girls' *Press* 28 April 1934.
- <sup>65</sup> 'Current Notes' *Press* 13 April 1937.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>67</sup> 'Coronation Medals' *Press* 14 May 1937.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>70</sup> Middleton & May, 1997.
- <sup>71</sup> May 1992
- <sup>72</sup> 'The Froebel Centenary' *Press* 24 September 1937.
- <sup>73</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>74</sup> 'Current Notes' *Press* 23 January 1937.
- <sup>75</sup> 'Heathcote Notes' *Star* 28 July 1917.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>77</sup> 'Morning tea party' *Press* 7 March 1938.
- <sup>78</sup> 'Women's Teachers Association' *Press* 5 March 1938.
- <sup>79</sup> <http://www.elsielocketrust.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/About-Woman-Today.pdf>
- <sup>80</sup> I. M. Jamieson (1939) 'Peace Days' *Woman Today* February, pp. 14-15, 21.
- <sup>81</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 14.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15, 24.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 14.
- <sup>86</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>87</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.
- <sup>88</sup> Excerpts from a Report, Miss Jamieson sent to Miss Trent, NCW, *Press* 23 December 1938.
- <sup>89</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>90</sup> 'Current Notes' *Press* 23 December 1938.
- <sup>91</sup> 'Welcome Home' *Press* 4 October 1939.
- <sup>92</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>93</sup> 'Dominion Conference opens' *Press* 24 April 1940.
- <sup>94</sup> 'New Justices' *Auckland Star* 3 February 1939.
- <sup>95</sup> 'New Dominion Officers' *Press* 17 November 1940.
- <sup>96</sup> 'Hamilton Branch National Council of Women' *Waikato Times* 11 November 1940.
- <sup>97</sup> 'Making Peace' *Auckland Star* 25 March 1941.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>99</sup> Dorothy Page (1966) *The National Council of Women: A Centennial History*, Auckland University Press/Bridget Williams Books with the NCW, pp. 90-91.
- <sup>100</sup> 'Call to Women' *Bay of Plenty Times* 16 March 1942.
- <sup>101</sup> 'School Board Elections' *NZ Herald* 30 May 1941.
- <sup>102</sup> For example, see Neill 1974.
- <sup>103</sup> Page, 1996, p. 90-91.
- <sup>104</sup> 'President's Letter' *Waikato Times* 17 December 1941.
- <sup>105</sup> Letter from Mrs Agnes F R McIntosh to the *Waikato Times* 25 March 1940.
- <sup>106</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>107</sup> Ibid.

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- <sup>108</sup> Michael Belgrave (2016) *From Empire's Servant to Global Citizen: A history of Massey University*, Auckland: Massey University Press.
- <sup>109</sup> Letter from Mrs. A.B. Smith, Dominion Secretary, Women Division of the New Zealand Union to The Register, Massey Agricultural College, Palmerston North, 14 October 1953, Massey University Archives, Palmerston North.
- <sup>110</sup> 'Women's Rally' *Auckland Star* 11 July 1941.
- <sup>111</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>113</sup> 'Post-war Problems' *Auckland Star* 21 July 1941.
- <sup>114</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>115</sup> 'Servicewomen's Interests' *NZ Herald* 25 September 1944.
- <sup>116</sup> 'California, Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882–1959 for Agnes Fitzgerald Rutherford McIntosh' Ancestry.com.au.
- <sup>117</sup> History of the UN, United Nations Seventieth Anniversary.  
<https://www.un.org/un70/en/content/history/index.html>
- <sup>118</sup> The United Nations of the New Zealand Delegation on the Second Part of the First Regular Session of the General Assembly Held at New York 23 October–15 December 1946. Papers Past Parliamentary Papers, *AJHR* 1947: Session 1.
- <sup>119</sup> 'Post-war Problems' *Auckland Star* 21 July 1941.
- <sup>120</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>121</sup> 'The United Nations of the New Zealand Delegation' *AJHR* 1947: Session 1.
- <sup>122</sup> Hamilton Branch history and report by Food and Production Committee. NCW Records MS-Papers-1371-454, ATL.
- <sup>123</sup> 'UNO Delegates return' *Northern Advocate*, 26 December 1946.
- <sup>124</sup> Neill, undated.
- <sup>125</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>126</sup> See 'Broadcasts to schools – The preschool programme, 1950-1974' in *Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975*, Wellington: NZFKU pp. 106–107.
- <sup>127</sup> 'Kindergartens in New Zealand 1889-1975' p. 42.
- <sup>128</sup> Lyn Williams 'Dead tell tales' *Waikato Times*, 20 September, 2019.  
<https://www-pressreader.com >new-zealand>Waikato-times>
- <sup>129</sup> May & Bethell, 2017, p. 294.
- <sup>130</sup> Letter from Miss Jamieson to Mrs. Downer, 13 October 1963, NCW Records, MS-Papers 1371-45 ATL.
- <sup>131</sup> Leonie Shaw, cited in Middleton & May 1997, p. 132.

## Summary

### A pivotal generation of women teachers

Push and pull actions contributed to the individual decisions of Agnes Inkpen, Isabella Jamieson and Isabel Little to leave their lives in Scotland in the early 1900s and travel half way around the world. Historian Jock Phillips suggests that the long and often dangerous journeys experienced by immigrants over the last 200 years either ‘tell of people escaping a difficult past, or lured by promises of a better future.’<sup>1</sup> For our three lady teachers both actions came into play, but it is the latter that was most significant. They brought with them Scottish beliefs and interests in education for children, broader ideals of education opportunities for women as well as qualifications and/or understanding of Froebelian approaches to early education. The three teachers were a pivotal generation whose lives spanned the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. They benefited from the expansion in public school systems in the nineteenth century that created possibilities for teaching careers, albeit gendered, enabling young women to gain higher education, professional standing and financial independence. Each of our women trod these pathways into the twentieth century.

Immigration from the Britain boomed in the six years before WW1, reaching a peak of 12,000 net migration in 1913. The high cost of a passage to New Zealand had been a constraint and the resumption in 1904 of government assistance caused the number of migrants to rise. A combination of planned recruitment drives and family networks spread awareness of the opportunities to be found in the new world. The population growth alongside the expanding reach of a national education system created teacher shortages in New Zealand. Recruiting agents in Scotland were tasked with securing immigrants with teaching qualifications and experience; some of whom were offered roles with early career advancement in an education market less crowded than in Edinburgh. Such opportunities in a faraway land must have appealed to the Misses Little, Inkpen and Jamieson, undoubtedly encouraged too by family connections.

Having arrived, our intrepid travellers - Inkpen and Jamieson in 1908 and Little in 1912 - settled into life as New Zealanders yet retained their Scottish identity. Each stayed to make New Zealand their long-term home. In the years that followed they:

- Found ways to enrich their personal lives and support the needs and aspirations of women and children in their respective communities both locally and nationally.
- Implemented the practices of new education ‘modern methods’ of teaching across various sites of education: in primary schools, teacher training colleges and other education services.
- Did not wait for education changes to be decreed, but were at the forefront of trial and error demonstration of what might be possible and mentored others in their wake. Miss Little burnt her desks while Miss Jamieson set up classes for children with special needs.
- Carefully balanced being bold and sometimes subversive with caution, preferring strategic influence as the better approach.

- Served on various management committees, executives and councils in an expanding range of education organisations and women's groups. All three women could speak in public.
- Recognised the complexity of the gendered nature of their new homeland viewing it as a challenge and an opportunity to work within its constraints and to seek redress.
- Valued their status as single independent women with a career and in the case of Mrs McIntosh, she demonstrated that married women could share the world stage with men.

The three teachers of this pivotal generation are exemplars of the intrepid 'new women' who sought a life in New Zealand that expanded their ability to engage in a society with less boundaries, traditions and rules. Likewise, their capacity to be active across a network of organisations peopled by women reformists is amply demonstrated: by Isabel Little in Wellington and both Isabella Jamieson and Agnes (Inkpen) McIntosh in Christchurch and later in Hamilton. Their efforts were recognised locally, nationally and internationally. On the international podium, Isabella Jamieson represented New Zealand at three conferences and Agnes McIntosh represented New Zealand women at the 1946 United Nations' conference to name a sample. In contrast, Isabel Little was less visible but a committed 'foot soldier' focusing her energies on local concerns, but nevertheless demonstrating a presence and sometimes a voice in national forums. Collectively, their endeavours in the classroom, the committee and on the podium, assisted in forging educational, social and political reforms across the mid-century decades. Each had a part to play.

Our book was written to recover and make visible their work. There are still many gaps but when the myriad of pieces are assembled together, their mainly forgotten lives and achievements can be reasserted into the public annals of early education history, the history of women's organisations and histories of single women migrants to New Zealand. And when the lost and loose parts across the lives of three women are reassembled, as this book as done, a bigger picture emerges revealing the interconnected strands that forged changes in classroom practice, changes in the systems of early education and the gradual breaking down of barriers contraining opportunities for girls and women, single and married. Furthermore, our book is illustrative of the diversity and scale of involvement of everyday women - in this case three infant teachers - in social and political change. Reclaiming the role of ordinary women in historical writing traditions is a tool for countering persistent gender inequality in mainstream representations of history.

Overall, the separate and shared experiences of Misses Little, Jamieson and Inkpen, suggest that they would not have achieved so much and so broadly in Scotland if they had remained there. Theirs was a most successful migration, that enriched each woman individually but also benefitted the many children they taught, teachers they mentored, trained, and influenced, organisations they joined, worked for and spoke at; each of which played a part in nudging beliefs, systems and institutions towards change.

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<sup>1</sup> Jock Phillips, 'History of immigration', Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/history-of-immigration/print> (accessed 21 September 2021)

## Abbreviations

ACWW	Associated Country Women of the World
AJHR	<i>Appendices to Journal of the House of Representatives</i>
ANZ	Archives NZ Wellington
ATL	Alexander Turnbull Library
CEB	Canterbury Education Board
DNZB	<i>Dictionary of New Zealand Biography – Te Ara</i>
CFKA	Crèche and Free Kindergarten Association
HC	Hocken Collections, University of Otago
HKA	Hamilton Kindergarten Association
HRC	Hamilton Rehabilitation Committee
ICW	International Council of Women
IFS	International Froebel Society
NCW	National Council of Women
NEF	New Educational Fellowship
NFU	National Froebel Union
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
NZEI	New Zealand Educational Institute - Te Rui Roa
NZC	New Zealand Company
NZFKU	New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WDFP	Women’s Division of Federated Farmers
WEB	Wellington Education Board
WFKA	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association
WTA	Women’s Teachers Association
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two
YWCA	Young Women’s Christian Association