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NATURE'S TRUSTEE: PÉRRINE MONCRIEFF
AND
NATURE CONSERVATION IN NEW ZEALAND
1920-1950

Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History at Massey University

JENNIFER ROBIN HODGE
1999
ABSTRACT

This study addresses the question of Pérrine Moncrieff’s significance within the movement for nature conservation in New Zealand between 1920 and 1950. Although it is an examination of her beliefs and ideas about the natural world and activities towards indigenous wild fauna and flora, it also shows how her contemporaries viewed nature and acted towards it. Thus it places Moncrieff into a conservationist setting in which there were many, often conflicting, viewpoints.

Moncrieff’s vitalist, holistic world-view, and her science and aesthetics as the most important elements of her conservation, are charted historically against what was then, and remains, the orthodox, scientific, materialist world-view. Within this contextualisation, her participation in the ornithological discourse is examined first as birds were her entry to the natural world. The study then investigates the ways in which she achieved her successes of nature reserves, the opposition she encountered, and the assistance she obtained. It looks at the ways in which she sought to promote a conservation perspective amongst New Zealanders, and at reasons for her failure. Her position within the land degradation debates is analysed. Lastly the question of her sex on her work is examined; the extent of her agency in the face of gendered expectations. Arguments were achieved by the close examination of her extant correspondence and published writings, and by the interpretation of her beliefs, ideas and activities within the body of existing historical scholarship.

Threading through all chapters is the question of why she "disappeared" from the historical record of conservation, given the contemporary status she achieved for her work. The analysis suggests that the answer is not simply the conventional "because she was a woman"; that other factors operated, including the assumption by today’s Green movement, that it has no history.
For my grandmother, Honorah Heerdegen

who was the first to show me the fascination of history
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<tr>
<td>AP&amp;G Act</td>
<td>1921-22 Animals Protection and Game Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush and Bird</td>
<td>Nelson Bush and Bird Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOC</td>
<td>Department of Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Department of Internal Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest and</td>
<td>Bird Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONZ</td>
<td>Museum of New Zealand Archives, Wellington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>National Archives, Wellington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAS</td>
<td>Nelson Acclimatization/Acclimatisation Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>Nelson Institute and Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS</td>
<td>Nelson Philosophical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZI</td>
<td>New Zealand Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSNZ</td>
<td>Ornithological Society of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAOU</td>
<td>Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSNZ</td>
<td>Royal Society of New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSPB</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSPCA</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPFE</td>
<td>Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTO</td>
<td>British Trust for Ornithology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTU</td>
<td>Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington</td>
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AJHR          | Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives |
DNZB          | Dictionary of New Zealand Biography |
JSPFE         | Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the Empire |
NEM           | Nelson Evening Mail, now Nelson Mail |
NZIS&T        | New Zealand Journal of Science and Technology |
1. Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Papers, MS Papers 0444, Folders 192-197, Pérrine Moncrieff, WTU.
1a. Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society Papers, MS Papers 4723, Folders 1-4.
2. Pérrine Moncrieff’s letters to various correspondents, of which I hold copies; my taped or written interviews and correspondence with her friends and colleagues.
3. Falla Papers, MS Papers 2366, Folder 67, Pérrine Moncrieff, WTU.
4. Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union Papers, MS 11437, Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Australia.
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Pérrine Moncrieff and pets, including Miss Micawber, her macaw parrot, 1930s.

Alexander Turnbull Library
National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa

Reference Number: P - AC 5527-01