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COMBATING ISOLATION:
THE WOMEN OF THE MANGAPURUA
1917 -1942.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in History at Massey University.

Jocelyn M. Carver
1998
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ABSTRACT

In 1915 the Discharged Soldiers' Bill was introduced into Parliament in recognition that many returning servicemen would be looking for land. The Mangapurua was one of the areas offered to servicemen. It was an isolated valley, covered in virgin bush, on the Wanganui River. The first of the men arrived in 1917 and by 1920 the women were entering the Valley; wives, mothers and sisters. Some of these women would live here for the next twenty years until the Valley was closed and they were forced to leave their homes and farms. The conditions that most of the women faced on arrival were primitive. The housing was in many cases sub-standard and they had few facilities. To exacerbate their problems was the financial situation of the period which meant that there little money available for anything but essentials. The focus of this thesis is the ways the women combated their isolation, taking into consideration their backgrounds, their standards and values, their workloads and the homes they developed.
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