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Identifying with Empire:

The N. Z. School Journal

from 1907 to 1940

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Stuart R. Miller

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Abstract

Some researchers have seen the conferring of Dominion status upon New Zealand in 1907 as a definitive moment in the move toward a truly national identification independent of Britain. Others point to the significance of the bloodletting on the battlefields of Gallipoli or the 1930s Depression as being key moments in the emergence of a uniquely New Zealand identity. Some more recent scholars have challenged that view, claiming that the period in question saw a tightening of ties to Britain rather than a loosening. As an official publication distributed to all children of primary school age in New Zealand, *The School Journal* was instrumental in fostering in its readers a sense of place and belonging. The key focus of this study is to identify the official view as to where that place was and to whom New Zealand-born children owed loyalty. The study falls into two main parts. The first looks at the way in which the *Journal* was used as a unifying text by fostering an allegiance to the Royal Family and to notions of racial superiority. The second part explores some of the ways the *Journal* attempted to account for the often problematic presence of Maori within the larger narrative of triumphal settlement. The conclusion is that the *Journal* was consistent in its attempts to align the loyalties of New Zealand's children with the British Empire. It was the love of Mother Country that was promoted first by the *Journal*. The children were taught to be proud of New Zealand and New Zealanders but only insofar as they were small parts of the larger nation—Britain.

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