

“Now the war is over, we have something else to worry us”:

New Zealand Children’s Responses to Crises, 1914-1918

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The title of this thesis is taken from a letter written by nine-year-old 'Aster' in late 1918 – 'Aster (Hakatamea)', 'Dot's Little Folk' page, *Otago Witness*, 18 December 1918, p.63.

Abstract

World War One has long been identified as a key moment in early twentieth-century history. This conflict, however, was not the only dramatic event that occurred during the mid-to-late 1910s. A deadly influenza virus swept across the world between 1918 and 1919, and this global health crisis proved particularly devastating for those countries who had already suffered through more than four years of warfare.

Children were ever-present on New Zealand's home front, facing both the First World War and then the influenza pandemic in 1918. Yet, despite their significant presence within this environment, little is known about children's experiences during this tumultuous period in New Zealand's past. This thesis aims to deepen understandings of children's priorities and concerns between 1914 and 1918 through an investigation of youth reactions to World War One and the 1918 flu. A wide range of sources have been utilised in order to achieve insight into the lives of these historical figures. These include letters written by children during the mid-to-late 1910s, school magazines and religious publications directed at youth, and recollections of children's experiences from this period as captured through oral histories.

Ultimately, it is asserted that New Zealand youth engaged with these events to the extent that they impacted children's worlds. Children's concerns and priorities, while often differing from those held by adults during the same period, were far from universal. Emotional and geographical proximity and age all played a significant role in mediating and varying children's exposure and responses to crises between 1914 and 1918.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>AGGSM</i>	<i>Auckland Girls' Grammar School Magazine</i>
<i>BoD</i>	<i>The Break of Day: The Children's Missionary Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand</i>
<i>BW</i>	<i>Blue and White: The Magazine of St. Patrick's College, Wellington</i>
<i>CCC</i>	<i>Columba College Chronicle</i>
<i>DHSC</i>	<i>Diocesan High School Chronicle</i>
<i>DLF</i>	'Dot's Little Folk'
<i>EP</i>	<i>Evening Post</i>
<i>GCR</i>	<i>The Girls' College Reporter: Wellington Girls' College</i>
<i>GEOHP</i>	Glen Eden Oral History Project
<i>HC</i>	Hocken Collections, University of Otago, Dunedin
<i>JHCY</i>	<i>The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth</i>
<i>JTDA</i>	JT Diamond Archive, Waitakere Central Library, Henderson
<i>NZJH</i>	<i>New Zealand Journal of History</i>
<i>OA</i>	Oral Archive
<i>OHSM</i>	<i>The Otago High School Magazine</i>
<i>OW</i>	<i>Otago Witness</i>
<i>Timaruvian</i>	<i>The Timaruvian: Magazine of the Timaru Boys' High School</i>
<i>WA</i>	Wairarapa Archives, Masterton
<i>Waitakian</i>	<i>The Waitakian: The Magazine of the Waitaki Boys' High School</i>
<i>WDT</i>	<i>Wairarapa Daily Times</i>

Introduction

What with the war, the epidemic, and the weather, times are altogether troublesome. It is terrible to hear of the number of homes bereaved by this epidemic. We say, "Oh, it is worse than the war," but the fact is, Dot, that the epidemic ravaged our own little country and the war did not. Of course, we felt the war, but indirectly [as] it was not in our midst like the epidemic. Had we been in France we very likely would say, "Oh, the epidemic is nothing compared with the war." – 'Christabel' to the 'Dot's Little Folk' page, Otago Witness, 22 January 1919¹

The mid-to-late 1910s constituted a particularly intense period in New Zealand's history. New Zealand was heavily engaged in the First World War between 1914 and 1918 and, just as hostilities ended, was immediately embroiled in yet another dramatic global event. A deadly H1N1 influenza virus arrived in late October 1918 and it swept across the country in less than two months. After enduring more than four years of warfare and losing a significant proportion of its male population, New Zealand was then forced to face the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic.

Despite their temporal proximity, New Zealanders did not necessarily react to these traumatic events in a similar manner. 'Christabel' was a 15-year-old correspondent who wrote to the 'Dot's Little Folk' page published in the *Otago Witness*, and her letter dated 22 January 1919 demonstrates that some youth from this period responded to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic differently. 'Christabel' noted, after all, that while both events were "troublesome", the flu had posed an immediate threat to those living within New Zealand while the main theatres of combat had been safely located far away during the war. This letter clearly indicates that some youth developed their own understandings of contemporaneous events, and that they responded to World War I and the 1918 flu accordingly.

Sources left behind by children such as 'Christabel' invite investigation into young New Zealanders' experiences of what is assumed to be a universally tumultuous time in the early twentieth century. How did youth conceptualise the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic? Did these understandings differ

¹ 'Christabel', 'Dot's Little Folk' (DLF) page, *Otago Witness* (OW), 22 January 1919, p.64.

from those articulated by adults? How did children feel about and respond to these events? Did youth react differently to one another and, if so, what factors influenced youth behaviour during this period? This study focuses on the reactions of New Zealand children aged up to 20 years between 1914 and 1918 to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic.

Historiography

Children have been considered a significant topic of historiographical inquiry since the 1962 publication of Phillipe Ariès' book *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*.² Rather than being incidental or peripheral to his investigation, Ariès saw youth as historical subjects that needed to be studied in their own right. Academics responded to *Centuries of Childhood* quickly and in great numbers, particularly during the 1970s and 1980s.³ This ensuing burst of historiography focussed on past conceptualisations of childhood as numerous academics deployed psychohistorical theories in an attempt to identify how historical youth had been treated.⁴ Despite their use of varied lenses, these historians can largely be split into two camps: "those who find tears and those who find smiles in the past."⁵ This focus on notions of childhood, however, constituted only one of several strands of academic inquiry examining children in past societies, and it largely ceased by the end of the 1980s due to growing recognition that one could find evidence of both empathy and neglect towards youth throughout history.

² Phillipe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Knopf, 1962); N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes, 'Standing on Common Ground: Reflections on the History of Children and Childhood', in Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner (eds.), *Children in Historical and Comparative Perspective: An International Handbook and Research Guide* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), p.3; Colin Heywood, 'Centuries of Childhood: An Anniversary – and an Epitaph?', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth (JHCY)*, Vol. 3, no. 3, Fall 2010, p.346.

³ Heywood, pp.343-365.

⁴ See the following for more details about psychohistorical interpretations of childhood: Heywood; Jan Kociumbas, 'Childhood History as Ideology', *Labour History*, no. 47, November 1984, pp.2-5; Judith Keene, 'Excavating the sand pit in search of the history of childhood', *Bulletin: Australian Historical Association*, Vol. 47, 1986, pp.9-11, 14-17; Bruce Bellingham, 'The History of Childhood Since the "Invention of Childhood": Some Issues in the Eighties', *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 13, no. 3, 1988, pp.347-358; Peter Petschauer, 'The Childrearing Modes in Flux: An Historian's Reflections', *Journal of Psychohistory*, Vol. 17, no. 1, 1989, pp.1-34; Hiner and Hawes, 'Standing on Common Ground', pp.1-9.

⁵ Petschauer, 'Childrearing Modes in Flux', p.3.

Youth have also long been present in works produced by other historiographical areas, such as in labour histories, welfare histories, and histories of education. Drawing on these pre-existing discourses, some historians chose to engage with Ariès' arguments from an institutional rather than a psychohistorical or emotional perspective.⁶ According to these academics, policies implemented by institutions and powerful social groups shaped childhood experience, rather than parental emotion. In 1984, for example, Jan Kociumbas asserted that "childhood history cannot be child-centered, concentrating on identification of 'emotional patterns' as actual practice, but rather must be focused on the adults who created and endorsed these patterns."⁷ This strand of children's history overwhelmingly resulted in works examining the development and policies of child-oriented institutions such as schools and welfare systems, and how adults chose to socialise youth within these environments. Quite a lot of research has been conducted, for instance, on children's literature and story papers and how these strove to teach youth culturally-appropriate norms, ideologies, and behaviour.⁸ There was growing recognition from the late 1980s, however, that this 'top-down' focus can misrepresent the lived experiences of actual children. In 1988, sociologist Leena Alanen asserted that it is important to recognise that socialisation processes are not automatically internalised. People have the capacity to resist or challenge societal expectations.⁹

Colin Heywood has argued persuasively that a new paradigm emerged in children's history during the 1990s as academics increasingly insisted that children were active in shaping both their own lives and those of people around them.¹⁰ In order to understand children in the past, historians have to examine youth themselves – their thoughts, actions, and experiences. Yet, despite this recognition, academic work focusing on children's experiences has not been integrated within

⁶ Bellingham; Keene; Heywood.

⁷ Kociumbas, p.14.

⁸ See the following for examples: Kimberley Reynolds, *Girls only?: gender and popular children's fiction in Britain, 1880-1910* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1990); M. Daphne Kutzer, *Empire's Children: empire and imperialism in classic British children's books* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000); Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain: A cultural history, 1855-1940* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

⁹ Leena Alanen, 'Rethinking Childhood', *Acta Sociologica*, Vol. 31, no. 1, 1988, pp.53-67.

¹⁰ Heywood, p.359.

mainstream historiography. Calls for child-focussed histories continue to permeate the field today. Within the first issue of the recently established *The Journal for the History of Childhood and Youth*, Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner reassert the importance of examining the “contexts within which children live.”¹¹ This includes researching the public policies and institutions that targeted children, the frameworks adults used to understand youth, and the socialisation forces and processes children faced. After all, children’s experiences cannot be fully comprehended without understanding the forces that shaped their worlds. However, Hawes and Hiner simultaneously stress that it is crucial that histories about children remain child-focussed, asserting that “the main issue for historians of children and youth should be to resist any historiographical trend or fashion that turns away from children or by implication denies them historical agency.”¹²

Assertions of child agency significantly challenge pre-existing academic conceptualisations of youth behaviour in historical contexts. The notion that youth are historical agents despite their acting “from positions of relative powerlessness, marginality, and invisibility” invites investigation into, and a critical analysis of, children’s responses to key events in the past.¹³ If youth, like other groups such as women and indigenous peoples, have the capacity to act in accordance with their own internal motivations, their adherence to, or deviation from, societal standards is particularly significant. This thesis seeks to illuminate children’s experiences in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand, situating their behaviour within their lived environments and juxtaposing youth responses against adult expectations.

Academic analysis concerning people’s experiences in the mid-to-late 1910s has been heavily coloured by perceptions regarding the significance of the First World War. This conflict has loomed heavily in the consciousness of national and world historians examining the early twentieth century; the Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine library in Paris alone holds more

¹¹ Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, ‘Hidden in Plain View: The History of Children (and Childhood) in the Twenty-First Century’, *JHCY*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp.45-6.

¹² Hawes and Hiner, ‘Hidden in Plain View’, p.46.

¹³ Mary Jo Maynes, ‘Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood’, *JHCY*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Winter 2008, p.116.

50,000 titles devoted to this event.¹⁴ Multiple historians clearly believe that the First World War constituted a key event in the lives of its contemporaries, and academic work on the years between 1914 and 1918 has strongly reflected this perception. New Zealand historians John Crawford and Ian McGibbon, for instance, asserted in their book that “[t]he Great War was undoubtedly the most traumatic event in New Zealand’s history”, while John Horne’s edited collection released in 1997 explored state mobilisation and the totality of war in European societies during the conflict.¹⁵ This emphasis on the importance of the First World War in peoples’ lives, however, has been paralleled by an increasing recognition that there was no universal experience of the conflict.

Historians became particularly preoccupied in the 1990s with examining how the First World War affected social groups and individuals differently. Recent works have differentiated civilian and combatant reactions to the conflict, and the home front, like the battlefield, has now become a legitimate topic of academic inquiry. Jay Winter and Antoine Prost have accurately observed that “[n]ow the spotlight is on survivors, writers, artists, victims, the wounded, crippled, mutilated veterans, as well as their families, their widows and their orphans.”¹⁶ Yet, although historians have examined how gender, class, and nationality impacted individuals’ responses to the conflict, age has rarely been taken into consideration. Despite their focus on civilians in the Great War, Patrick Fridenson’s, Desmond Morton’s, and Robert Rutherford’s examinations of various home fronts during the conflict almost entirely neglect to discuss children, despite their very real presence in this environment.¹⁷ When children do appear in these more general works – such as in

¹⁴ Jay Winter and Antoine Prost, *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.1.

¹⁵ John Crawford and Ian McGibbon, ‘Introduction’, in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds.), *New Zealand’s Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War* (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007), p.16; John Horne (ed.), *State, society and mobilization in Europe during the First World War* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Winter and Prost, p.205.

¹⁷ Patrick Fridenson (ed.), *The French Home Front, 1914-1918* (Providence, Rhode Island: Berg, 1992); Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); Robert Rutherford, *Hometown Horizons: Local Response to Canada’s Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005).

Tammy M. Proctor's *Civilians in a World at War* –¹⁸ their experiences are usually synthesised with those of other non-combatants rather than discussed in their own right.

Some academics have indirectly looked at war-time children through their examination of youth-related institutions and ideologies between 1914 and 1918. Schools were significantly affected by the Great War: the curriculum was changed to include war-lessons, children were involved in war-effort activities in the classroom, staff left teaching for military service, and schools could sometimes find themselves on the front line, as was the case in the Somme.¹⁹ Children were both the targets and topics of war-time propaganda in countries across the world. The themes of “[p]atriotism, heroism, and sacrifice” were not only expounded to children in the classroom, but had also infiltrated children’s literature, toys, and games before the war had even begun.²⁰ Children found themselves the focus of much attention during the conflict – they were not only seen as the answer to the demands of war, but also as the ultimate justification for it. Pronatalism became a popular ideology in war-time France, Britain, and Germany as future children were

¹⁸ Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York; London: New York University Press, 2010).

¹⁹ Chapters on teachers, children and schooling appear in the following works: John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2001), pp.138-148; David Bilton, *The Home Front in the Great War: Aspects of the Conflict 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2003), pp.153-162; Jean-Jacques Becker, *The Great War and the French People*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1985), pp.150-160; Andrew Spaul, ‘The Response of Australian Schools to the Two World Wars’, in Judith Smart and Tony Wood (eds.), *An Anzac Muster: War and Society in Australia and New Zealand, 1914-18 and 1939-45* (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University, 1992), pp.130-142; Stefan Goebel, ‘Schools’, in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War, Volume 2: A Cultural History* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp.188-234; Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, ‘Children and the primary schools of France, 1914-1918’, in Horne (ed.), *State, society and mobilization*, pp.39-52; Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, ‘French Children as Target for Propaganda’, in Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Cooper, 1996), pp.767-779. See also: Deborah Hull, ‘The Old Lie’: Teaching Children about War, 1914-1939’, *Melbourne Historical Journal*, Vol. 20, 1990, pp.88-110.

²⁰ David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.55; Sonja Müller, ‘Toys, Games and Juvenile Literature in Germany and Britain During the First World War. A Comparison’, in Heather Jones, Jennifer O’Brien and Christoph Schmidt-Supprian (eds.), *Untold War: New Perspectives in First World War* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008), pp.233-257; Andrew Donson, *Youth in the Fatherless Land: War Pedagogy, Nationalism, and Authority in Germany, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp.91-107.

increasingly identified as future soldiers and existing children became seen as innocents needing protection from the enemy in the case of invasion.²¹

Although most international literature published on youth during the war focussed on school responses to the conflict and child-directed rhetoric, some works provide glimpses of children's own reactions to World War One. Annie Campbell argued persuasively that youth involvement in the war-effort was "a clear expression of one's patriotism" considering that such work was unpaid and often required the expenditure of much time and energy.²² This assertion seems to be validated by the fact that many children were engaged in war-effort activities outside the classroom. David Bilton's research demonstrated that Boy Scouts, for example, were heavily involved in patrol and defence exercises conducted on the British home front.²³ However, there are also indications within the literature that not all children reacted enthusiastically to the conflict. Juvenile delinquency significantly increased in Italy, Germany, Britain, the United States, and Poland.²⁴ Many children also faced severe psychological stress as a result of the war; some youth had to endure extreme hunger due to food shortages, emotional devastation with the death of relatives, and cope with the possibility that they themselves may die as a result of enemy bombardments.²⁵ Some academics have even speculated

²¹ Marie-Monique Huss, 'Pronatalism and the popular ideology of the child in wartime France: the evidence of the picture postcard', in Richard Wall and Jay Winter (eds.), *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.329-367; Richard A. Soloway, 'Eugenics and pronatalism in wartime Britain', in Wall and Winter, pp.369-388; Cornelia Osborne, 'Pregnancy is the woman's active service.' Pronatalism in Germany during the First World War', in Wall and Winter (eds.), pp.389-416; Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War 1914-1918*, trans. Helen McPhail (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.109; Susan R. Grazyel, "'The Souls of Soldiers': Civilians under Fire in First World War France', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 76, no. 3, September 2006, pp.588-622.

²² Annie Campbell, "...thousands of tiny fingers moving': The beginning of the Junior Red Cross movement in New South Wales, 1914-1925', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 90, no. 2, December 2004, p.188.

²³ Bilton, pp.185-194.

²⁴ Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.123; Ian F. W. Beckett, *The Great War, 1914-1918* (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2001), pp.338-9; Jan Molenda, 'War, Children and Youth: The Impact of the First World War upon Changes in the Position of Children in the Peasant Family and Community', *Acta Poloniae historica*, Vol. 79, 1999, pp.175-9.

²⁵ Catherine Rollet, 'The Home and family life', in Winter and Robert (eds.), pp.345-8; Mona Siegel, "'History Is the Opposite of Forgetting": The Limits of Memory and the Lessons of History in Interwar France', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 74, no. 4, December 2002, pp.782-3; Reinhard J. Sieder,

that children were entirely indifferent to the war and its associated propaganda.²⁶ Unfortunately, when historians choose to discuss children's emotions and feelings about the war, they tend to only do so in passing.

Andrew Donson's *Youth in the Fatherless Land* and Rosalind Kennedy's 'The Children's War: British Experiences of the Great War' are crucial exceptions to this general trend. Although Donson recognised the constraints that adults and war-time society placed upon German children between 1914 and 1918, he convincingly argued that children exhibited agency during this period. While German youth did participate in voluntary patriotic labour, they also took advantage of "dwindling controls over sex, crime, and play."²⁷ Kennedy similarly explored the capacity for child agency during the conflict and ultimately concluded that British "children tried to make sense of the war around them, combining what they learnt about the war from adults with what they came to understand about it for themselves."²⁸ Throughout their investigations, Donson and Kennedy also demonstrated that there was significant variation in children's reactions to the conflict, particularly in regards to parental absence due to combatant activities.²⁹ These works significantly contribute to existing understandings concerning home front experiences within the German and British contexts.

New Zealand historians have also produced a plethora of texts analysing differing experiences of the First World War between 1914 and 1918. Examinations of New Zealand's home front society clearly demonstrate that non-combatants were significantly affected by the war. In addition to the vast material sacrifice many made through their participation in the war-effort, those on the home front also endured considerable emotional stress.³⁰ Families and wider communities

'Behind the lines: working-class family life in wartime Vienna', in Wall and Winter (eds.), pp.120-5, 131.

²⁶ Audoin-Rouzeau, 'French Children as Target for Propaganda', p.777.

²⁷ Donson, pp.122-3, 154.

²⁸ Rosalind Kennedy, 'The Children's War: British children's experience of the Great War', Ph.D. thesis (Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2006), p.262.

²⁹ Donson, p.139; Kennedy, 'The Children's War', pp.88-98.

³⁰ Erik Olssen, 'Waging War: The Home Front 1914-1918', in Judith Binney, Judith Bassett and Erik Olssen (eds.), *The People and the Land: An Illustrated History of New Zealand 1820-1920: Te Tangata me Te Whenua* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin, 1990), pp.299-317.

were continually grief-stricken as large numbers of men who went to serve in Europe also died there.³¹ Mourning became a common experience, with Scott Worthy convincingly arguing that “New Zealanders appropriated Anzac Days as an opportunity to mourn the sons they had lost.”³² Emotional ties endured despite the considerable geographic distance between families at home and their loved ones overseas. The war itself also evoked strong emotions. Work by Megan Hutching, Gwen Parsons, and Graham Hucker has revealed that not all New Zealanders were enthusiastic about the Great War.³³ Concern, anxiety, and outright opposition to the conflict were expressed by several individuals and groups such as the Canterbury Women’s Institute.³⁴ This research, however, has predominantly emphasised adults’ responses to the conflict between 1914 and 1918; Parsons, for example, examined war-related discourses as espoused by elite and working-class adults.

Like their international counterparts, New Zealand historians have not entirely neglected the examination of children during World War One. Deborah Challinor, Jeanine Graham, Rosemary Goodyear, and Melanie Ensor have all written on young New Zealanders during the conflict yet there is still significant room for further exploration of this topic. Challinor’s thesis and Graham’s article on youth in the Great War were preoccupied with how agencies such as schools integrated children into war-effort activities rather than with their emotions concerning such involvement.³⁵ Challinor and Graham pointed towards a variety of youth experiences during the conflict but both historians focussed on achieving broader research goals that did not include the identification and deconstruction of possible

³¹ Kathryn Hunter, “‘Sleep on dear Ernie, your battles are o’er’”: A Glimpse of a Mourning Community, Invercargill, New Zealand, 1914-1925’, *War in History*, Vol. 14, no. 1, 2007, pp.36-62.

³² Scott Worthy, ‘A Debt of Honour: New Zealanders’ First Anzac Days’, *New Zealand Journal of History (NZJH)*, Vol. 36, no. 2, 2002, p.186.

³³ Megan Hutching, ‘The Moloch of War: New Zealand Women Who Opposed the War’, in Crawford and McGibbon (eds.), pp.85-95; Gwen Parsons, ‘Debating the War: The Discourses of War in the Christchurch Community’, in Crawford and McGibbon (eds.), pp.550-568; Graham Hucker, “‘The Great Wave of Enthusiasm’”: New Zealand Reactions to the First World War in August 1914 – A Reassessment’, *NZJH*, Vol. 43, no. 1, April 2009, pp.59-75.

³⁴ Hutching, pp.92-3.

³⁵ Deborah Challinor, ‘Children and War: A Study of the Impact of the First World War on New Zealand Children’, MA thesis (University of Waikato, 1993); Jeanine Graham, ‘Young New Zealanders and the Great War: exploring the impact and legacy of the First World War, 1914-2014’, *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 44, no. 4, August 2008, pp.429-444.

reasons for these differences. By contrast, Goodyear and Ensor extensively explored children's emotions during the war in their works but these examinations were both of limited scope: Goodyear's analysis was restricted to the Otago region, while Ensor's dissertation focussed only on the experiences of children who had close relations at the Front.³⁶

New Zealand's heavy engagement in international hostilities between 1914 and 1918 undoubtedly affected children to some extent. Considering the range of experiences possible during the conflict, however, it seems unlikely that there was one universal youth response to the conflict or that the First World War constituted the entirety of children's lives during this period. Indeed, despite the emphasis historians place on the conflict, the war was not the only tragic event encountered by countries across the globe within this timeframe.

The 1918-1919 influenza pandemic resulted in more than 50 million deaths worldwide yet there is a relative dearth of literature concerning this event. Howard Phillips and David Killingray noted legitimately in 2003 that the 1918 flu is "paradoxically, the best documented but least known pandemic" in world history.³⁷ Detailed analysis of the pandemic only began in the 1970s, and region-based histories, though written for places as diverse as the Gold Coast in Africa and Japan, still remain reasonably few and far between.³⁸ Most works sketch out the main

³⁶ Rosemary Goodyear, 'Black Boots and Pinafores: Childhood in Otago, 1900-1920', MA thesis (University of Otago, 1992), pp.283-304; Melanie Ensor, 'A Long Absence: New Zealand's Children and their families during the Great War', BA Honours Dissertation (Victoria University of Wellington, 2010).

³⁷ Howard Phillips and David Killingray, 'Introduction', in Howard Phillips and David Killingray (eds.), *The Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19: New Perspectives* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), p.3.

³⁸ Richard Collier, *The Plague of the Spanish Lady: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919* (London; Basingstoke: Macmillan London Limited, 1974); Alfred W. Crosby, *America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976; Cambridge; New York; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Margaret W. Andrews, 'Epidemic and Public Health: Influenza in Vancouver, 1918-1919', *BC Studies*, no. 34, Summer 1977, pp.21-44; Janice P. Dickin McGinnis, 'The Impact of Epidemic Influenza: Canada, 1918-1919', *Historical Papers/Communications historiques*, Vol. 12, no. 1, 1977, pp.120-140; Richard Melzer, 'A Dark and Terrible Moment: The Spanish Flu Epidemic of 1918 in New Mexico', *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. 57, no.3, July 1982, pp.213-236; K. David Patterson, 'The Influenza Epidemic of 1918-19 in the Gold Coast', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 24, no. 4, 1983, pp.485-502; I. D. Mills, 'The 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic – The Indian Experience', *Indian Economic Social History Review*, Vol. 23, no.1, 1986, pp.1-40; Colin Brown, 'The Influenza Pandemic of 1918 in Indonesia', in Norman G. Owen (ed.), *Death and Disease in Southeast Asia: Explorations in Social Medical and Demographic History* (Singapore; Melbourne: Oxford University Press; Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), pp.235-256; Geoffrey W. Rice, 'Australia and

contours of the pandemic as occurred in the nation under examination, and are dominated by discussions concerning patterns of infection, government reactions, and death statistics. Although undoubtedly valuable, this top-down focus has unfortunately resulted in the marginalisation of individuals' personal experiences of the flu.

There has been some movement towards writing socio-cultural histories of the flu overseas. Mark Honigsbaum, Eileen Pettigrew, John M. Barry, and Lynette Iezzoni's works examining the 1918 flu in Britain, Canada, and America all contained numerous survivors' accounts of the pandemic that included the memories of several people who were children in the 1910s.³⁹ Esyllt Jones also drew on sources that cast light on children's flu-time experiences in her book on the 1918 epidemic in Winnipeg, Canada.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, although children's stories were included within these works, they were used as examples of communities in crisis rather than constituting a subject of analysis in their own right. I have not yet found any examples of historiography produced overseas that specifically analyses children's reactions to the pandemic.

Regional and ethnic-centred analyses also constitute the majority of New Zealand literature examining the 1918 flu. Linda Bryder, for example, investigated Auckland's response to the flu, while D. I. Pool examined 'The Effects of the 1918 Pandemic of Influenza on the Maori Population of New Zealand'.⁴¹ Geoffrey Rice

New Zealand in the 1918-19 Influenza Pandemic', in H. Attwood, R. Gillespie and M. Lewis (eds.), *New Perspectives on the History of Medicine: First National Conference of The Australian Society of the History of Medicine 1989* (Melbourne: University of Melbourne and the Australian Society of the History of Medicine, 1990), p.67-74; H. Phillips, *'Black October': the Impact of the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1918 on South Africa* (Pretoria: The Government Printer, 1990); Fred R. van Hartesveldt (ed.), *The 1918-1919 Pandemic of Influenza: The Urban Impact in the Western World* (Lewiston, NY; Queenstown, Ontario; Lampeter, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992); Phillips and Killingray (eds.).

³⁹ Mark Honigsbaum, *Enza* (Basingstoke; New York: Macmillan, 2009), pp.86, 102-3; Eileen Pettigrew, *The Silent Enemy: Canada and the Deadly Flu of 1918* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983), pp.17-8, 31, 35-6, 48; John M. Barry, *The Great Influenza: the epic story of the deadliest plague in history* (New York: Viking, 2004), p.393; Lynette Iezzoni, *Influenza 1918: The Worst Epidemic in American History* (New York: Harpercollins Trade Sales Dept., 1999), pp.53, 70, 85, 159, 163-4.

⁴⁰ Esyllt W. Jones, *Influenza 1918: Disease, Death, and Struggle in Winnipeg* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

⁴¹ Linda Bryder, 'The 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Auckland', MA thesis (University of Auckland, 1980); D. I. Pool, 'The Effects of the 1918 Pandemic', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 47, no. 3, May-June 1973, pp.273-281.

collated much of this research into what stands as the definitive general history of the flu in New Zealand – *Black November: The 1918 influenza pandemic in New Zealand*.⁴² These works provide glimpses of children’s lives during the 1918 flu pandemic; Gillian Bulling included information on the closure of schools and the number of local children orphaned and killed as a result of the flu in *Nightcaps* within her post-graduate diploma research essay.⁴³ Rice’s book more closely examined youth in 1918 New Zealand, incorporating oral histories of children who lived through the pandemic to cast greater light on people’s experiences more generally during this event.⁴⁴

The key exception to this trend is Rosemary Goodyear’s brief discussion concentrating specifically on children’s experiences in flu-stricken Otago within her MA thesis. Drawing on a series of oral histories, Goodyear pointed to a number of different responses some youth had to the pandemic. She ultimately concluded that “[t]he experience of the flu was uneven. For many it was immediate agony when a family member died, while for others it was more distant.”⁴⁵ Unfortunately, the broad scope of Goodyear’s project gave her little space for a detailed analysis of the possible factors that caused these flu-time differences. She did, however, make the intriguing suggestion that children in Otago responded more strongly to the 1918 influenza pandemic than to the First World War because the flu posed a “direct threat” to those living within New Zealand.⁴⁶

This thesis aims to deepen understandings of children’s priorities and concerns in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand through an investigation of youth reactions to two key worldwide events. The temporal proximity between the cessation of hostilities and the arrival of the 1918 flu pandemic in New Zealand not only challenges assumptions that people’s experiences between 1914 and 1918 were defined by one event, but also provides an ideal opportunity for comparative

⁴² Geoffrey W. Rice with assistance from Linda Bryder, *Black November: The 1918 influenza pandemic in New Zealand*, 2d ed. (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2005).

⁴³ Gillian Bulling, ‘Preventable deaths?: the 1918 influenza pandemic in *Nightcaps*’, Post-Graduate Diploma Research Essay (University of Otago, 1991), pp.44, 49, 55-7.

⁴⁴ Rice, *Black November*, pp.7, 69, 78, 86, 100, 118, 130, 194, 224, 229, 234, 247, 252, 257-8.

⁴⁵ Goodyear, p.310.

⁴⁶ Goodyear, p.312.

analysis. As Goodyear's preliminary study suggests, any divergences or commonalities between children's responses to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic could cast greater light on the factors that shaped youth behaviour in this era. Lenses drawing on notions of geographical, relational, and age-related proximity are heavily utilised in this thesis in order to cast light on the variety of experiences children could have in war- and flu-time New Zealand.

Children under 20 years of age between 1914 and 1918 constitute an extremely diverse cohort. As the average family consisted of three to four offspring during this period, they could be the oldest, youngest, middle, one of many, or only child within their household.⁴⁷ These households were then scattered across the country; slightly more than 50 percent of New Zealand's population lived in urban areas in 1911 whilst the rest were based rurally.⁴⁸ Education levels also varied greatly among youth as fewer than 30 percent of pupils went on to secondary education.⁴⁹ Such differences led to significant divergence within children's living situations; while some children continued to attend school late into their adolescence, many others were involved in paid employment and lived away from home. Some youth were married and had even started families of their own before they turned 20 years old. Despite these differences, however, people up to 20 years of age in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand were legally and culturally considered to be 'children'. Men had to be at least 20 years old, for example, to be eligible for military service and, from 1917, 19-year-old adolescent boys still needed to obtain parental permission if they wished to enlist underage. Similarly, correspondents for the popular 'Dot's Little Folk' children's page were deemed to be "Old Writers", and thus adults, once they had reached the end of their adolescence. The terms 'children' and 'youth' have thus been used synonymously in this thesis.

⁴⁷ Ian Pool, Arunachalam Dharmalingam and Janet Sceats, *The New Zealand Family From 1840: A Demographic History* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2007), p.79.

⁴⁸ Miles Fairburn, 'The Rural Myth and the New Urban Frontier: An Approach to New Zealand Social History, 1870-1940', *NZJH*, Vol. 9, no. 1, April 1975, p.8.

⁴⁹ Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack and E. P. Malone, 'Introduction: The Great War and New Zealand Memory', in Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack and E. P. Malone (eds.), *The Great Adventure: New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1988), p.8.

Sources

Due to the difficulty of capturing children's voices from the past, this thesis draws on numerous types of evidence in order to achieve insight into the lives of New Zealand youth between 1914 and 1918. I have accessed 52 oral histories conducted with persons who were less than 20 years of age during the mid-to-late 1910s. These life history interviews were largely recorded in the 1980s and 1990s, and were collected from four repositories located across the North Island – the Kilbirnie Library in Wellington, the Wairarapa Archives in Masterton, and the Waitakere and Takapuna Libraries located in Auckland. These oral histories are necessarily reinterpretations of children's actual experiences, having been impacted by memory loss and by revisionary processes resulting from the extraordinary amount of 'public' memory-making surrounding these events.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, these recollections are still incredibly useful as they are first-hand accounts of youth from the mid-to-late 1910s, containing evidence of children's thoughts, emotions, and deeds. These oral histories are also particularly important as they provide glimpses into the lives of Māori children. Regrettably, the vast majority of written sources available from this period focus on the experiences of Pākehā/New Zealand European youth.

Children's letters comprise another key source for this investigation. The 'Dot's Little Folk' (DLF) page was published in the weekly *Otago Witness* newspaper from 1886 until 1932 when it was transferred to the *Otago Daily Times*.⁵¹ This page was targeted at children, inviting youth aged up to 20 years to write letters to editor 'Dot' that she would then publish. Reflecting the local distribution patterns of the *Otago Witness*, children who responded to this request were largely Pākehā youth living in the Southland and Otago regions of New Zealand. Youth adopted nom de plumes, formed local DLF clubs, and would exchange letters amongst themselves in addition to writing to Dot.

This dissertation draws on more than 2,500 DLF letters to examine New Zealand children's reactions to the First World War and the 1918 influenza

⁵⁰ Alistair Thomson, *ANZAC Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne; New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp.8-11.

⁵¹ Keith Scott, *Dear Dot, I must tell you: A Personal history of Young New Zealanders* (Auckland: Activity Press, 2011), pp.29, 536.

pandemic. These two events differed greatly in their chronological length. I analysed one DLF page per month printed between August 1914 and October 1918, and every DLF page published between November 13 and December 25 1918, to take this difference into consideration. I was also aware that children's views concerning the war and the flu may have developed or changed over the course of these events. In order to attain a more holistic image of children's thoughts across this period, I identified and drew on letters written by a core sub-group of 65 correspondents who wrote to Dot three or more times between 1914 and 1918, and whose age could be identified [See Appendix 1].

As is the case with all historical sources, the DLF page was subject to various influences and constraints. Children's letters do not necessarily reflect their trains of thought. Due to the nature of letter-writing, youth could start composing their correspondence to Dot, leave their work to perform other activities, and return later to finish their epistles. 'Kawarau' from Parnell in Auckland, for instance, interrupted her discussion of the war to tell Dot that "I am writing this letter in stages, as I am in a shop, and have to stop to serve the customers."⁵² This feature of letter writing is significant as it provides an alternative explanation for seemingly disjointed letters. In her thesis, Challinor drew upon an example of a DLF writer who mentioned that their brothers had been killed at war before informing Dot that they had a pet kitten. She utilised this as an example of children's inability "to express their sentiments about it [the First World War], if indeed they really had any, in an appropriate manner."⁵³ Although this may have indeed been the case for 'Starlight' from Waimataitai, it is dangerous to generalise this assertion. Youth who start discussing the war then suddenly jump to enumerating their animals, for example, may have been distracted by external stimuli and events rather than demonstrating a personal disengagement from the conflict. Additionally it is important to recognise that children may well have expanded on certain topics, or linked them with conjoining sentences, and that this information had simply been excluded from publication.

⁵² 'Kawarau (Parnell, Auckland)', DLF page, *OW*, 24 May 1916, p.68.

⁵³ Challinor, p.29.

Editorial processes significantly shaped the DLF page between 1914 and 1918. The editorship of this page was taken over by Ethel Fraser just before the outbreak of war in 1913.⁵⁴ Fraser explicitly informed DLF authors of several ‘guidelines’ to take into consideration when writing to her page. Letters were to be written in ink by the correspondent themselves or would be omitted from publication. Perhaps most importantly, children were told that their letters had to be short and consist of no more than 450 words or Dot would “ruthlessly use the blue pencil and cut down a letter.”⁵⁵ This guideline became increasingly restrictive throughout the war, ostensibly due to paper shortages.⁵⁶ From the beginning of 1918, Dot told her correspondents that their letters could be no more than 350 words long.⁵⁷ These guidelines most likely resulted in the exclusion of some children’s thoughts, actions and feelings from the historical record. Some children may have been discouraged from writing at length on a topic that they felt strongly about because they thought their content would be edited, and other youth may have not have become DLF correspondents at all due to a lack of confidence in their handwriting.

Dot also edited children’s letters based on their subject matter. Some content from children’s letters was omitted from publication due to regulations that applied to all newspaper columns during this period. In her 25 September 1918 column, Dot explained that she excluded part of ‘Mountaineer’s letter describing a soldier’s account of his voyage to Europe because of war-time regulations.⁵⁸ There are, however, numerous instances where Dot edited children’s letters for more idiosyncratic reasons. Dot informed ‘Pollyanna’ of Mosgiel in late 1918, for example, that “[w]e make it a rule to exclude all subjects connected with politics or religion, leaving the debating of such questions to maturer minds.”⁵⁹ Intriguingly, although she claims that this has been a ‘rule’ that had presumably existed for some time, Dot never overtly informed her correspondents of such a policy throughout the entire war period. Personal preference appears to have dictated whether or not

⁵⁴ Scott, p.413.

⁵⁵ ‘Dot’, DLF page, *OW*, 28 June 1916, p.67.

⁵⁶ ‘Dot’, DLF page, *OW*, 26 July 1916, 67; ‘Dot’, DLF page, *OW*, 30 August 1916, p.60.

⁵⁷ ‘Dot’, DLF page, *OW*, 30 January 1918, p.56.

⁵⁸ ‘Dot’ to ‘Mountaineer (Outram)’, DLF page, *OW*, 25 September 1918, p.63.

⁵⁹ ‘Dot’ to ‘Pollyanna (Mosgiel)’, DLF page, *OW*, 13 November 1918, p.57.

Dot published children's letters in their entirety; approved topics such as animals and descriptions of local districts, holiday trips, and key events therefore comprise a large amount of material contained within this source.

The prevalence of such themes within the DLF page clearly reflects children's interests as well as editorial preferences. After all, particular subjects not only dominate the column itself but also the letters of individual correspondents. Many youth wrote extensively about their families and schooling endeavours, providing Dot with regular updates about these topics. It is extremely unlikely that children would maintain sustained discussion about particular subjects if they had little interest in them, especially considering that writing to Dot appears to have largely been a voluntary and self-directed activity. Children's published letters in the DLF column cast invaluable light onto the thoughts, feelings, activities, and concerns of Southland and Otago youth.

This thesis also draws on several other pieces of written evidence in order to illuminate the wider contexts within which children lived their lives between 1914 and 1918. Personal correspondence written between soldiers serving overseas and their young relatives living in New Zealand constitute crucial sources of war-related information that children received in their homes. Letters and postcards sent from James Marshall Allan, Wilfred Collinson Smith, George Cockburn Salmond, Allen Brown, Arthur Brown, and Thomas Gilmore clearly illustrate that combatants sought to shape their young relatives' behaviour and understandings of the conflict during this period.

Children were also exposed to wider societal discourses and expectations in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand. I have looked at more than 160 magazine issues released by the Presbyterian Church and 14 schools located across the country to examine public war-talk that was directed at children between 1914 and 1918. Unfortunately, these sources do not cast light on any possible flu-related discourses articulated later in this period as many magazines suspended publication during the pandemic. These magazines include: *The Break of Day: The Children's Missionary Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*; *The Waitakian: The Magazine of the Waitaki Boys' High School*; the *Auckland Grammar School*

Chronicle; Blue and White: The Magazine of St. Patrick's College, Wellington; The Wellingtonian; The Otago High School Magazine; The Timaruvian: Magazine of the Timaru Boys' High School; the Diocesan High School Chronicle; The Girls' College Reporter: Wellington Girls' College; The Otago Girls' High School Magazine; St. Cuthbert's Chronicle: The Magazine of St. Cuthbert's Presbyterian School; the Auckland Girls' Grammar School Magazine; the Columba College Chronicle; The Palmerstonian; and The Magazine of the Napier Girls' High School. Several of these publications contain articles written by older youth, providing illuminating examples of how children responded to, and engaged with, wider discourses espoused within their school contexts. Largely speaking, however, most articles published in these written sources do not provide authorial information and lack titles. Footnotes referring to newspaper and magazine sources consequently exclude this information in order to provide consistency.

Chapter Outline

In this thesis I argue that New Zealand youth exerted agency in their responses to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic, only engaging with these events to the extent that they impacted children's worlds. Youth concerns and priorities, however, were far from universal and numerous factors mediated the extent to which children were affected by the conflict and the flu. Age was a key variable in determining how youth were exposed and responded to these traumatic episodes. Older children's experiences of the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic were especially sharp due to their proximity to those eligible for military service and their widespread participation within the paid workforce. This thesis also demonstrates that geographical and relational/emotional proximity were crucial factors that shaped New Zealand children's reactions to key contemporaneous events.

Chapter One examines the contexts within which youth lived their lives between 1914 and 1918, detailing the changing constraints and discourses children encountered during the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic. As was the case in combatant countries overseas, adults in New Zealand actively sought to shape children's responses to the conflict both at home and in the wider

community. This environment shifted dramatically with the arrival of the 1918 influenza pandemic as, rather than encouraging children to act in a certain manner, adults often enforced behavioural constraints upon youth in an attempt to protect them from the flu. This chapter provides the background for the following two chapters.

Chapter Two looks at younger children, aged up to 12 years, living in New Zealand during this period. This section outlines key spheres within younger children's lives as identified by youth themselves before examining how World War One and then the 1918 flu intersected with these spheres of interest. Chapter Three builds on the previous sections, focussing on the experiences of New Zealand adolescents between 1914 and 1918, and comparing them to those of their younger counterparts. This age division has been chosen as it reflects the clear differences amongst children's reactions, priorities, and concerns evident in the sources left behind by youth themselves.

Chapter 1: Contexts and Discourses, 1914-1918

This chapter examines the shifting contexts New Zealand youth lived in between 1914 and 1918. The “substantive majority” of society enthusiastically supported the First World War – at least at the beginning of hostilities – and children were swiftly integrated into New Zealand’s rapidly developed ‘home front’.¹ As recognised by J. M. Winter, public “[c]onsent was an essential element of mass warfare”, and boys and girls across the country were exposed to numerous discourses promoting New Zealand’s belligerent status.² Adults in schools, church groups and at home all provided children with war-related information, carefully constructing their depictions of the conflict for their young audiences. Teachers and older family members actively encouraged children to respond to the First World War in particular, yet slightly differing, ways.

This didactic environment changed significantly with the arrival of a deadly H1N1 virus in New Zealand during late 1918. The 1918 influenza pandemic posed an immediate threat to those living within the country, evoking the establishment of new regulations and restrictions throughout November and December. Institutions, including schools and churches, were shut down by government authorities in an attempt to contain the epidemic. Adults had little opportunity to create child-directed discourses explaining the flu and instead focussed on protecting youth from contracting the virus itself. New Zealand’s involvement in the First World War may have been far longer than its experience of the 1918 flu, yet it is clear that adults actively sought to shape children’s responses to both of these global events regardless of their temporal difference.

World War One

War-Talk in the Community

New Zealand’s state of war with the German Empire, announced on 5 August 1914, had far-reaching and significant consequences. The First World War

¹ Ian McGibbon, ‘The Shaping of New Zealand’s War-effort, August-October 1914’, in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds.), *New Zealand’s Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War* (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007), p.50.

² J. M. Winter, ‘Propaganda and the Mobilization of Consent’, in Hew Strachan (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of the First World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.216.

lasted more than four agonising years, drawing more than 100,000 men away from home to serve overseas. Those left on the home front endured considerable emotional stress as they faced the reality that their loved ones may not, and often did not, return. Winning the war understandably became a key priority for countless New Zealanders, and influential social groups sought to impress upon the wider public the importance of supporting this conflict. Like other belligerent countries such as France, New Zealand developed a war culture through which citizens “made sense of the war, and persuaded themselves to continue fighting it.”³ Children were consequently exposed to large amounts of war-talk throughout their communities between 1914 and 1918.

Schools provided children with multiple sources of information about the First World War. Pupils attended numerous lectures given by combat and war-effort authorities. On 21 June 1918, for instance, Brigadier Wouters visited Columba College (Dunedin) to inform students about his experiences in the Belgian Army during the early days of the conflict.⁴ These speeches were often transcribed and printed in school magazines, supplementing war-related discourses espoused in editorials published at the beginning of these documents. Discussions of the European War also infiltrated events such as Prize Days and, following military developments in 1915, schools established annual Anzac Day memorial services.⁵ Perhaps most significantly, information about the war was also integrated into academic curriculum. *The Girls’ College Reporter* (Wellington Girls’ College) asserted in 1915 that:

[i]t is to be hoped that there is not a single girl at ... [Wellington Girls’] College who cannot give a clear account of the cause of the great international war of 1914-15, and possibly ’16, and not only of its direct but of its underlying causes – all of those influences at work slowly destroying a

³ Leonard V. Smith, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *France and the Great War 1914-1918*, trans. Helen McPhail (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.xv.

⁴ *Columba College Chronicle (CCC)*, Vol. II, October 1916, p.32.

⁵ See the following for examples: *The Otago High School Magazine (OHSM)*, Vol. XXXI, no. 1, May 1915, pp.13-15; *OHSM*, Vol. XXXII, no. 1, April 1916, pp.20-22; *OHSM*, Vol. XXXIII, no. 1, April 1917, pp.17-18; *OHSM*, Vol. XXXIV, no. 1, April 1918, pp.16-18; *The Timaruvian: Magazine of the Timaru Boys’ High School (Timaruvian)*, Vol. X, no. 2, December 1915, pp.90-93; *Timaruvian*, Vol. XI, no. 1, December 1916, pp.40-44; *Timaruvian*, Vol. XII, no. 1, December 1917, pp.68-9; *Auckland Girls’ Grammar School Magazine (AGGSM)*, Vol. 7, no. 7, July 1916, pp.10-11; *AGGSM*, Vol. 8, no. 8, July 1917, pp.26-27; *The Girls’ College Reporter: Wellington Girls’ College (GCR)*, Vol. 42, no. 66, First Half-Year 1917, pp.10-11; *GCR*, Vol. 43, no. 68, First Half-Year 1918, p.8.

nation's sense of honour and humanity. Every teacher has done her best to make things clear, and has reason to believe that most girls can draw the Dardanelles with their eyes shut.⁶

Teachers and principals took advantage of the educational opportunities inherent in examining this geographically distant, historically situated and politically relevant event. These discussions, however, were clearly shaped by adult notions concerning acceptable content for their child-based audience.

Pupils were taught carefully selected pieces of information about the Great War at school. Children learned about the main combatant nations engaged in the conflict, yet the way these states were depicted depended entirely on their military allegiance. New Zealand's allies – Britain, Canada, Australia, France, Belgium, Russia, and later the United States – were always portrayed in a positive light. Archdeacon MacMurray advised his young audience at Diocesan School for Girls (Auckland) on 25 April 1916 to exalt the Australians, British, and French soldiers who fought alongside New Zealand at Gallipoli as “heroes.”⁷ By contrast, war-talk at school vilified Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, teachers explained the First World War by asserting that Germany started the conflict through its aggressive behaviour. Students at Mornington Public School in Dunedin were presented with a children's book informing them that “[t]he origins of this war, indeed, are to be found in the deliberate abandonment by Germany of ... the claims of moral feeling, decency, chivalry, and international right.”⁸

Children were also made aware of particular war personnel and battlefields. Images of key British and New Zealand political and military figures infiltrated classrooms across the country. War-time certificates issued by the George, Arthur, and Albany Street Schools in Dunedin were emblazoned with photographs of leading servicemen including H.M. King George V, Earl Kitchener, Admiral Sir John R. Jellicoe, and Field-Marshal Sir John French.⁹ Teachers and principals upheld these

⁶ *GCR*, Vol. 40, no. 62, First-Half Year 1915, p.7.

⁷ *Diocesan High School Chronicle (DHSC)*, no. 19, June 1916, p.29.

⁸ R. Hawcridge, *Souvenir of the Great War, 1914-1919* (Dunedin: The Executive of the Dunedin Peace Celebrations, 1919), p.3.

⁹ George Street Public School to John Caskie, Good Attendance Certificate, 17 December 1914, 'Gabriel, Lyn C., Mr; George Street School Jubilee Souvenir Attendance certificates', Misc-MS-1038/002, Hocken Collections (HC), University of Otago, Dunedin; Arthur Street School to Alexander Agnew, Good Attendance Certificate, December 1917, 'Agnew, Alex', 86-163, HC; Albany Street

individuals as role models, teaching children details about their patriotic activities. Pupils at Waitaki Boys' High School listened to a lecture dedicated to the military career of Lord Kitchener following his death in 1916.¹⁰ Students were also kept informed about key combat zones and military manoeuvres conducted by the Allied forces. The editors of *The Wellingtonian* quite rightly recognised in 1914 that “[a]ll schools in the British Empire [including Wellington College itself] are just now turning their eyes to the French and Belgian frontiers.”¹¹ New Zealand's own military activities garnered particular attention from school authorities. Educators across the country celebrated and commemorated the Gallipoli campaign as a key war-time event despite its disastrous outcome. Mr. Monkton informed Auckland Girls' Grammar students in 1916, for example, that the predominant purpose of that campaign was to “relieve the Russians by drawing off the Turks, who were making fairly successful attacks on the Russian frontier ... [and that in this] aim we were entirely successful.”¹²

Educators actively sought to present the war in a youth-friendly manner to children. It was impossible to hide from children the mass casualties and fatalities that occurred between 1914 and 1918, so efforts were made to portray this information as positively as possible. There was little discussion of the pain that mortally wounded soldiers faced; instead, death was often referred to in euphemistic terms – such as soldiers “going west” –¹³ and was depicted as a peaceful event. *Blue and White* (St. Patrick's College, Wellington) depicted the death of a soldier in 1917 as follows:

softly kind sleep came over him ... the tired eyes closed. They found him ... asleep ... dead ... with the smile lingering round his lips ... on the lonely hills. And after the night ... the dawn of a long vacation with a flood of heavenly song. He awakens in the streaming sunlight of God's home to the smile and the kiss of Christ's own Mother.¹⁴

School to Daphne Stokes, First-Class Attendance Certificate, 1914, 'Barkman, Don: Papers; Daphne Stokes certificates and programmes', MS-3456/002, HC.

¹⁰ *The Waitakian: The Magazine of the Waitaki Boys' High School (Waitakian)*, Vol. XI, no. 2, October 1916, p.163.

¹¹ *The Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXIII, no. 2, November 1914, p.5.

¹² *AGGSM*, Vol. 7, no. 7, July 1916, p.10.

¹³ *The Palmerstonian*, Vol. 4, no. 4, October 1918, p.52.

¹⁴ *Blue and White: The Magazine of St. Patrick's College, Wellington (BW)*, Vol. VIII, no. 2, Christmas 1917, p.86.

Schools sought to endow the deaths of New Zealand soldiers with a greater meaning. At Wellington College, men who had been killed at the Front were referred to as “heroes [who] gave their lives in the noblest of causes.”¹⁵ Students were encouraged not to despair when hearing about the huge loss of life resulting from the conflict but instead find comfort in the knowledge that those men died for a worthwhile cause.

School discourses incessantly justified New Zealand’s participation in the First World War. Like other influential social groups that sought to establish a unified war-culture, principals and teachers attempted to minimise anti-war sentiments.¹⁶ Schools thus presented children with a cogent yet distorted picture of world events similar to that articulated to adults during the same period. The war was conceptualised as a battle between the British and German Empires within which liberty and justice were at stake. British involvement in the war was necessary in order to bring lasting peace to Europe. Unlike their Germanic counterparts, Britons “stood not for military glory or aggrandisement, but for justice, freedom, and progress.”¹⁷ Educators constantly reiterated New Zealand’s dominion status throughout this narrative, asserting the existence of strong familial bonds between Britain and her Empire. The *Chronicle* proclaimed that “[w]e, in far away New Zealand, are joined to our Mother Country in a bond strengthened by the closest ties.”¹⁸ In effect, children were told that New Zealand was not only honour-bound to support her mother country, but was also morally obligated to stop the ‘barbarian’ Central Powers.

War-talk in schools also targeted youth behaviour. Discourses asserting the need for New Zealand to participate in the conflict were extended to the individual citizen. Teachers and principals argued that all New Zealanders, regardless of their age, were obligated to support the war-effort. Reverend R. S. Grey informed “the boys” at Otago High School in December 1914 that the conflict meant “[t]his Dominion would need them as it had never needed men before. The Empire would

¹⁵ *Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXV, no. 1, May 1916, p.8.

¹⁶ Gwen Parsons, ‘Debating the War: The Discourses of War in the Christchurch Community’, in Crawford and McGibbon (eds.), pp.550-1, 553.

¹⁷ *OHSM*, Vol. XXXI, no. 1, May, 1915, p.131.

¹⁸ *DHSC*, no. 16, December 1914, p.1.

need them as it had never needed men before.... And because the Empire needed them they must look outside the walls of their Schools.”¹⁹ Schools intentionally directed students’ attention towards fundraising ventures and home front activities. Pupils at Wellington Girls’ College, for instance, listened to a two-part lecture in 1915 titled “What we can do for our Soldiers” that was given by a representative from the National Service League.²⁰ Self-sacrifice was extolled as the ultimate war-time virtue, and educators applauded children who acted accordingly. Mr Firth, in his 1917 Headmaster’s Speech Day address at Wellington College, noted that “[s]ince the outbreak of the war the College had contributed £1600 to the patriotic funds . . . [and,] Of this money, the fact that had given him the most satisfaction was that [it was] provided through the self-sacrifice of the boys themselves.”²¹

Youth at school were encouraged to support the war-effort in ways considered suitable for their gender. Some notions regarding ‘sex-appropriate’ behaviour were suspended throughout the conflict, enabling some boys to carry out patriotic work such as knitting. Young Māori boys and girls alike, for example, knitted socks for the soldiers at Paroa Native School near Whakatane.²² These handicraft activities, however, garnered far more attention in girls’ schools than in boys’ colleges, and this partiality is clearly evident in the comparative number of comments devoted to such practices in single-sex school magazines.²³

Educators actively promoted domestically-oriented war-work to female students. These expectations led one pupil at Palmerston North High School to derisively comment that, for “the majority of New Zealand girls, the utmost [support for the war] constitutes a piece of knitting.”²⁴ Schools asserted that girls could best help the war-effort from a distance, firmly positioning women in the home during the conflict. Mr. Monckton explicitly informed students at Auckland Girls’ Grammar School that “[t]he part to be played by New Zealand girls is in the home; greater unselfishness and greater loyalty are the only things capable of

¹⁹ *OHSM*, Vol. XXXI, no. 1, May 1915, p.15.

²⁰ *GCR*, Vol. 41, no. 65, Second Half-Year 1916, p.10.

²¹ *Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXVI, no. 1, May 1917, p.11.

²² Jeanine Graham, ‘Young New Zealanders and the Great War: exploring the impact and legacy of the First World War, 1914-2014’, *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 44, no. 4, August 2008, pp.435-6.

²³ See the following for examples: *GCR*, Vol. 40, no. 62, First Half-Year 1915, p.10; *GCR*, Vol. 42, no. 66, First Half-Year 1917, p.11; *DHSC*, no. 17, April 1915, p.5.

²⁴ *Palmerstonian*, Vol. 4, no. 3, May, 1918, p.76.

making New Zealand homes worthy [of] the price that has been paid for them.”²⁵ Girls were restricted to fewer avenues through which they could demonstrate their support for the war than their male counterparts. As Diocesan students were told, although “many of us would dearly love to go away with our fathers and brothers to fight for our King and our Country ... [we cannot] because we are only girls.”²⁶

On the other hand, boys at school became the targets of multiple war-related expectations. Male students were encouraged to fundraise and make goods for troops serving overseas, but they were also expected to join the military themselves. Although the minimum legal age for entry into New Zealand’s overseas armed forces was 20, older boys were increasingly viewed as future combatants throughout the First World War.²⁷ The cadet movement between 1914 and 1918 exemplified this shift in societal expectations. Cadet groups had existed in New Zealand since the 1860s, and by 1914 it was compulsory for boys aged 14 to 18 years and over to receive 64 hours of drill and rifle-shooting training per year.²⁸ The cadet movement had undoubtedly been founded upon militaristic ideologies but cadet activities became even further oriented towards the goal of warfare during the conflict. Cadets at Wellington College exchanged physical drill practices for bayonet fighting, and performed their “duty as guard on the wharves ... in a soldierly spirit” for all expeditionary force departures from the capital between 1914 and mid-1915.²⁹ Cadet groups at secondary schools were more highly supervised than those established outside educational contexts, and thus schoolboys were particularly exposed to discourses and situations that linked their training to military service overseas. Palmerston North High School cadets, for

²⁵ *AGGSM*, Vol. 8, no. 8, July 1917, p.27.

²⁶ *DHSC*, no. 19, June 1916, p.1.

²⁷ ‘An Act to make Further Provision for the Raising and Maintenance of Expeditionary Forces during the Present War’, *New Zealand Statutes 1916*, No. 8, Section 2. From 1917, however, the New Zealand Government allowed 19-year-old men to enlist with parental consent. See the following for more detail: Paul Baker, *King and Country Call: New Zealanders, Conscription and the Great War* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1988), p.145.

²⁸ Ian McGibbon, ‘Cadets’ in Ian McGibbon (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to New Zealand Military History* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.76.

²⁹ *Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXIV, no. 2, December 1915, p.6; *Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXIV, no. 1, May 1915, p.25.

example, were given lectures in 1918 on conditions at the Front that discussed the use of gas masks and bombs in battle.³⁰

War-talk at boys' schools explicitly advocated military service. Wilfred Fitchett's address to Wellington High School in 1915 was directed "to the older boys particularly, [and] he reminded them that some of them might before long be in the firing line."³¹ Within this presentation, Fitchett advised his audience as to how they could prepare for combat while still at school:

[f]ive things were generally considered to be the qualifications for a good soldier: (1.) Marksmanship – and here pointed to his arm he said "I really won this badge at school, and I was a good shot when I went to camp." (2.) A cast-iron constitution – "and that can be got by playing football and cricket." (3.) A cast-iron stomach – "for one has to live on bully-beef and biscuits." (4.) Ability to handle a pick and shovel – "which is largely a matter of muscle." (5.) Cheerful submission to discipline. "How hard that was could only be realized by the man who had not been to college and had not learnt how to do it."³²

Ex-students serving at the Front were idolised by teachers and principals during the conflict. Rev. B. J. Gondringer, editor for the St Patrick's College magazine, sought to enshrine within war-time issues of *Blue and White* "the record of boys who had been one with us in aim ... and who with frank, eager eyes lifted to the world, with brain well stored, with heart true set to right, went forth to do battle for us."³³ Gondringer intensified this focus in 1917 when he "debarred" ex-students uninvolved in military activities from even being mentioned in the Old Boys pages.³⁴

Similar approaches were taken by other editors of school magazines to encourage future combatant activity amongst schoolboys across New Zealand. Editors of *The Timaruvian*, for example, did not entirely exclude non-military old boys from their magazine yet made their preference for combatant ex-students clear through a hierarchical ordering of past pupils' news and the detail afforded to this information. Head-Prefect R. J. Shackleton made "no apology for this. At the present time when Masters and Old Boys are helping their utmost in this

³⁰ *Palmerstonian*, Vol. 4, no. 4, October, 1918, p.31.

³¹ *Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXIV, no. 2, December 1915, p.9.

³² *Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXIV, no. 2, December 1915, pp.10-11.

³³ *BW*, Vol. VII, no. 2, December 1915, p.6.

³⁴ *BW*, Vol. VIII, no. 2, Christmas 1917, p.55.

stupendous struggle, we feel that the records of their doings are of most vital importance to us.”³⁵

Children were also exposed to war-talk through their religious activities. More than 90 percent of New Zealanders identified themselves as Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Catholic in the 1916 census, and many of these actively participated in church life during the mid-to-late 1910s.³⁶ The war became an important topic of discussion within all of these denominational organisations. Indeed, some youth first received knowledge of the First World War in their church services. Doreen Jamieson, 12 years old at the outbreak of conflict, recalled decades later that:

I can remember the announcement from the pulpit that Sunday night at church. Reverend L. M. Isitt, politician from Wellington at the time, was the guest speaker and he made this very oh it's hard to describe, just the way he announced that Britain had declared war on Germany, and most probably it would be the greatest war, the worst war in history, just the way he pronounced it, there was such a hush that went over the whole church. I'll never forget that.³⁷

Church leaders preached about the war throughout the conflict and, like school authorities, they presented their audiences with constructed interpretations of this event. There were some divergences in the war-related discourses espoused by the different denominations including, for example, Protestant criticism concerning a perceived lack of Catholic involvement in the conflict.³⁸ Most denominations, however, drew on similar frameworks when presenting the war to their congregations. These included sanctifying the Allies' cause, notions of duty, and the sacrifice made by soldiers on the battlefield.³⁹ Youth constantly heard their religious leaders proclaiming strong support for New Zealand's participation in the conflict throughout their church services between 1914 and 1918.

War-talk also infiltrated religious youth organisations. Protestant Churches in New Zealand established widely-attended Bible classes and Sunday schools for

³⁵ *Timaruvian*, Vol. XI, no. 1, December 1916, p.11.

³⁶ Allan Davidson, 'New Zealand Churches and Death in the First World War', in Crawford and McGibbon (eds.), p.448.

³⁷ Doreen Jamieson, interview with Myra Ballantyne, 7 August 1985, Oral Archive (OA) 714, Wairarapa Archives (WA), Masterton.

³⁸ Peter Lineham, 'First World War Religion', in Crawford and McGibbon (eds.), pp.487-488.

³⁹ Davidson, pp.449-457.

children, and teachers within these groups constantly reiterated religious interpretations of the conflict to their youth-based audience. *The Break of Day* was a key educational resource for Presbyterian children during the conflict, and war-time issues of this magazine explicitly sanctified the Allies' engagement in German hostilities. Editor James Aitken asserted that Britain entered the war for an honourable reason – to fulfil promises made to Belgium. He published an article explaining that Britain:

was bound by the most sacred treaty to maintain the independence of Belgium.... The cause of Belgium, in such an hour, was the cause of God. And in entering the war and seeking to defend Belgium, we believe our nation has been serving the cause and doing the will of God.⁴⁰

Aitken stressed the importance of trusting both in God and in the knowledge that the conflict constituted a just and righteous war. He entreated his readership to pray and “ask God to grant victory to our side; for we believe that we are in the right, and that Germany and Austria have done very wrong.”⁴¹ Mirroring wider discursive shifts identified by historian Allan Davidson, however, this crusading rhetoric quickly gave way to language emphasising the importance of sacrifice.⁴²

Sunday school teachers drew heavily on Christian discourses when discussing war fatalities with children. The darker side of warfare became readily apparent following the Gallipoli campaign and religious leaders sought to comfort the many New Zealanders bereaved and distressed by the conflict. Aitken publicly addressed the letters he received from grieving youth on several occasions during the war. In July 1915, Aitken advised “I know that the war has brought anxiety and sorrow to many of your homes ... take it [grief] to God and speak to Him about it. The text for us just now is that one I have put on the cover: ‘Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.’”⁴³ Schools and Sunday schools both sought to reassure children that these mass casualties were meaningful, worthwhile, and significant. Church leaders, however, often overlaid these discourses with religious language and ideologies. *The Break of Day* overtly sanctified the mass casualties

⁴⁰ *The Break of Day: The Children's Missionary Magazine of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand (BoD)*, Vol. VII, no. 2, March 1915, p.12.

⁴¹ *BoD*, Vol. VI, no. 8, September 1914, p.2.

⁴² Davidson, p.453

⁴³ *BoD*, Vol. VII, no. 6, July 1915, pp.1-2.

New Zealand incurred through its participation in the First World War. In an editorial directed at older readers, Aitken wrote “[h]onour and gratitude be to the soldiers who have died.... So long as we live we shall go softly in the recollection of the price by which our liberties were secured. God grant us grace to be more worthy of the blood which has been shed for us.”⁴⁴

Christian beliefs about demonstrating love and goodwill towards one another also permeated Sunday school war-talk. Despite emphasising Germany’s wrong-doings, *The Break of Day* resisted demonising the Central Powers. Aitken instead encouraged young Presbyterians to differentiate between the actions undertaken by the German state and German people themselves. In March 1916, he informed his readers that “I should like to think that while we condemned all the barbarism and all the treachery of which the Germans have been guilty, we still tried not to hate the Germans themselves.”⁴⁵ Aitken promoted feelings of empathy rather than hatred amongst his readership, inviting youth to pray for their German counterparts. After all, “they read the same Bible, and loved the same Jesus, and prayed to the same God, and sang lots of the same hymns as you.”⁴⁶ *The Break of Day* constantly asserted the ultimate importance of peace and harmony between nations throughout the conflict. While arguing that the war was an important and necessary event, Aitken informed his audience that “we shall look forward to being good friends with our cousins again when it is all over.”⁴⁷

War-talk in Bible classes stressed the importance of supporting others during the conflict. Aitken encouraged Presbyterian children to engage in war-effort activities between 1914 and 1918. In December 1914, *The Break of Day* asked its readership:

how can our Christmas be quite happy when we know that so many poor children in Europe are suffering terrible things through the war[?] ... We cannot but feel sad for them. I hope you have all done something to help them. I know a great many of you have. Didn’t you give them the money you collected on Guy Fawkes night? Aren’t you gathering pennies for them in day school?⁴⁸

⁴⁴ *BoD*, Vol. VIII, no. 7, August 1916, p.3.

⁴⁵ *BoD*, Vol. VIII, no. 2, March 1916, p.2.

⁴⁶ *BoD*, Vol. VI, no. 8, September 1914, p.2.

⁴⁷ *BoD*, Vol. VI, no. 8, September 1914, p.2.

⁴⁸ *BoD*, Vol. VI, no. 11, December 1914, p.3.

Although schools also promoted war-effort activities to children, there were key differences in the reasons given by these institutions for engaging in such behaviour. War-talk in Sunday schools reflected Christian beliefs concerning the importance of volunteer work and aid. *The Break of Day* had endorsed youth helping others long before the war had begun, publishing information about children's good deeds in its annual "Busy Bee" issue. Sunday school teachers encouraged war-effort activities primarily because they helped people in need – such as starving Belgians or frostbitten soldiers – rather than because they could help the Allies win the war.

Newspapers were another key source of war-related information for youth as revealed in their own letters to children's columns. Reports and reflections on the First World War dominated newspapers published across New Zealand between 1914 and 1918. Schoolgirl 'Silvery Waves' recognised in November 1914 that "the papers are full of war news."⁴⁹ The public demand for war-news was such that 'Beatrice' ruefully noted in mid-1915 that "[w]e get our mail only once a week now, and it does seem such a long time from one Saturday till another now the war is on."⁵⁰ Although most articles were written for an adult audience, a great many youth read news reports along with their older relations and friends. Children and adults alike checked the papers as regularly as possible to trace troop movements and military developments throughout the conflict. 'Moss Rose', for example, commented in January 1916 that "I see by the papers that the troops have left Gallipoli."⁵¹ Pages that could cast any light on the fate of loved ones serving overseas were read closely, particularly those containing casualty and fatality lists.

War-talk published in mainstream newspapers, however, was far from impartial. As demonstrated through Gwen Parson's investigation of war-time Christchurch, elite control over the public sphere resulted in the publication of particular conflict-related information.⁵² Depictions of the conflict were heavily shaped by pro-war discourses, and New Zealand editors continually reprinted propagandistic articles obtained from British, Australian, and American newspapers.

⁴⁹ 'Silvery Waves (Mokoreta)', 'Dot's Little Folk' (DLF) page, *Otago Witness (OW)*, 25 November 1914, p.75.

⁵⁰ 'Beatrice (Lynwood Station)', DLF, *OW*, 21 July 1915, p.77.

⁵¹ 'Moss Rose (Shingly Creek)', DLF, *OW*, 25 January 1916, p.76.

⁵² Parson, p.553.

Anti-war discourses were further marginalised from these documents after December 1916 with the establishment of war-time censorship in New Zealand.⁵³ Mainstream newspaper editors actively sought to encourage widespread support for the conflict and public engagement in New Zealand's war effort. These pro-war messages largely mirrored the child-friendly discourses youth were subjected to in their schools and Bible classes. War-talk effectively permeated the public sphere of children's lives between 1914 and 1918.

War-Talk in the Home

Children were also exposed to war-talk within their homes. Adults often discussed the First World War with their younger relations, seeking to inform and clarify children's understandings of this event. Private Wilfred Collinson Smith, for example, insisted in 1917 that his wife "[t]ry and make them [their four children] understand what brutes the Germans are, and how they have killed women and little children."⁵⁴ Conversations about the war were particularly common in households directly affected by the conflict. The First World War profoundly impacted numerous families across the country as fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, and sons left New Zealand to fight overseas. Older siblings and parents understandably tried to explain these absences to children, creating their own war-related discourses in order to do so. Letters sent from serving combatants to their younger relatives in New Zealand are key examples of war-talk directed towards children in their home contexts.

Children faced war-related behavioural expectations from older family members as well as from community leaders during the conflict. Soldiers produced vast quantities of correspondence to try to stay involved in the lives of their loved ones, and these documents often commented on youth activities at home. Brothers and fathers constantly encouraged their young relatives to help their mothers in their absence, and applauded such behaviour when they heard that it had been conducted. Sapper James Marshall Allan informed his 12-year-old brother Matthew

⁵³ *Wairarapa Daily Times (WDT)*, 8 December 1916, p.4.

⁵⁴ Wilfred Collinson Smith to Ethel Smith, 11 July 1917, in Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack and E. P. Malone (eds.), *The Great Adventure: New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1988), p.218.

that he “was quite pleased with what Mum told me in her last letter about you helping her.”⁵⁵ Intriguingly, soldier-relatives often integrated conflict-related rhetoric into these behavioural requests. Private George Cockburn Salmond entreated ten-year-old brother Alex to “[b]e a good lad & look after mum. Dont [sic] forget to always be obedient. The best soldiers have to obey.”⁵⁶ While educational institutions stressed the importance of supporting the conflict in the public sphere, relatives serving overseas encouraged ‘war-effort’ behaviour at home. Private Wilfred Collinson Smith told his children in a letter dated 25 May 1917 that he wanted them “to always eat your crusts and not to take too much butter and jam, because the poor little children are nearly starving in England.”⁵⁷

Correspondence sent from soldiers overseas largely supported the war-talk that children heard in the wider community. Many combatants demonstrated a genuine belief in the necessity of the Great War that they wished to convey to their younger kin. Soldier-relatives stressed the war’s importance throughout their letters. Despite emphasising the conflict’s serious nature, however, soldiers skimmed over the brutal violence inherent in warfare. Salmond told Alex that “I would like you to think of it seriously & not talk lightly about it as so many boys do. Its [sic] a serious yes a very terrible war almost beyond our comprehension.”⁵⁸ Like school and Bible class teachers, combatant-relatives presented the conflict in a child-friendly manner to their young audience. In September 1915, Allan informed his brother Matthew that “[d]uring the last month there have been some nice little smack ups here [in the Dardanelles].” Rather than depicting the Gallipoli campaign as a devastating event, Allan made analogies between war and sporting activities: “[w]e are still trying to teach the Turks that it would be better for them to give in.”⁵⁹

These selective portrayals of the conflict were based on differing motives than those that shaped war-talk in the wider community. Serving soldiers appear to have depicted the war in a child-friendly manner in order to protect their young

⁵⁵ James Allan to Matthew Allan, 3 November 1915, in Flora Allan and Christine Sheard (eds.), *Our decent soldiers: One family’s story* (Manapouri, New Zealand: Christine Sheard, 2005), p.81.

⁵⁶ George Cockburn Salmond to Alex Salmond, 14 September 1917, ‘Salmond Family’, 92-001 Folder 2, HC.

⁵⁷ Wilfred Smith to Noni, Jim and Wyn Smith, 25 May 1917, in Phillips et al., p.214.

⁵⁸ George Salmond to Alex Salmond, 14 September 1917.

⁵⁹ James Allan to Matthew Allan, 4 September 1915, in Allan and Sheard (eds.), p.68.

relatives' innocence rather than to minimise youth dissent concerning the conflict. Combatants tended to gloss over their darker experiences within letters intended for children. Smith, for instance, informed his children in 1917 that "Daddy is very tired of soldier life and wishes that he was home with you all again and once I do get home it will take a lot to persuade me to go to another war." No further details regarding the war's possible psychological and physical effects on Smith, however, were divulged to his "dearest Noni, Jim and Wyn."⁶⁰ Such omissions are striking when compared to the wealth of information Smith provided to his wife Ethel in a letter written only four days earlier: "[o]n Monday morning I was that bad that I had to leave parade and go over and see the doctor, who ordered me into the hospital as my temperature was 100.2. I had rather a bad time of it ... and on Thursday I was allowed out of the hospital."⁶¹

Soldier-relations largely focused on positive events and interactions when writing to children about their daily lives. 'Nurse Molly' recorded in late 1917 that "I have a brother in France, he has been there for some time now. I had a letter from him last week, and he seems to be having a good time. He writes such jolly letters, and never seems to mind all the hardships they have to go through."⁶² Reassuring depictions of the soldiering experience appear to have been common amongst letters sent to younger, as opposed to older, family members; Rosalind Kennedy noted that an "enduring image of the First World War [in the British context] is the optimistic way in which many soldiers described their circumstances to those at home."⁶³ This focus on non-violent and enjoyable activities often continued after soldiers had returned from the front. 'Grant' recounted a discussion she had with her uncle about his war-time experiences in a letter written during late 1918, noting that "[h]e could keep us laughing with the stories he had to tell of what they did when they were salvaging. One would be told off to talk to madame while the others had a look in the henroosts for eggs."⁶⁴ 'Grant' makes no mention of the

⁶⁰ Wilfred Smith to Noni, Jim and Wyn Smith, 25 May 1917, in Phillips et al., p.214.

⁶¹ Wilfred Smith to Ethel Smith, 21 May 1917, in Phillips et al., p.211.

⁶² 'Nurse Molly (Orawia)', DLF, *OW*, 26 September 1917, p.56.

⁶³ Rosalind Kennedy, 'The Children's War: British children's experience of the Great War', Ph.D. thesis (Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2006), p.231.

⁶⁴ 'Grant (Pukerau)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

food shortages and difficult conditions that most likely led to her uncle's exploits. Understandably, such information was probably omitted from her uncle's narrative.

Some soldiers even decided to exclude all mention of their combat activities from their war-time correspondence with children, focussing instead on their adventures overseas. Allen and Arthur Brown sent multiple postcards to their nieces and nephews while on active service in Europe, almost all of which detailed the tourist sites the Browns had seen. Only occasionally did either Brown refer to the war and they always did so in an oblique manner. In July 1917, for instance, Arthur told Ralph Hardie that "I'm at Folkestone waiting to cross to France. Have had a very good time & dont [sic] like going back any better this time. I went through the Tower [of London] yesterday. It is very interesting."⁶⁵ Essentially, it appears that numerous combatants wanted the war to impact the lives of their offspring and siblings as little as possible. After all, protecting their families from the conflict was a key reason many men joined up in the first place; in mid-1917 Smith informed his wife that he was "fighting in the trenches for them [his children]."⁶⁶

The overwhelming majority of New Zealanders lived thousands of miles away from the main theatres of war. Yet, despite this distance, New Zealand children's worlds were permeated with war-talk between 1914 and 1918. Youth were taught carefully constructed interpretations of the conflict by their schools, churches, and mainstream newspapers that sought to minimise dissent and encourage widespread support for the war. School teachers and Sunday school leaders intentionally shaped these messages in a child-friendly manner, and also provided boys with supplementary militaristic discourses. Boys and girls were continually informed by adults in their wider communities that they were expected to engage in war-effort activities considered appropriate for their gender.

Youth were simultaneously exposed to war-talk in their homes during the conflict. Letters from serving combatants also brushed over the harsher realities of

⁶⁵ Arthur Brown to Ralph Hardie, 17 July 1917, 'Brown, Arthur: Papers relating particularly to World War I: Postcards from Brown particularly to Ralph and Jessie Hardie', MS-1972/004, HC.

⁶⁶ Wilfred Smith to Ethel Smith, 11 July 1917, in Phillips et al., p.218.

warfare and conveyed strong behavioural expectations to their young readership. These child-directed discourses, however, were clearly influenced by differing motivations and sets of priorities. While community leaders were preoccupied with integrating children into home front activities, family members were more concerned with preserving 'life as usual' for their young loved ones. Despite these discrepancies, adults in both the public and private spheres of children's lives sought to influence youth understandings of, and reactions to, the Great War. These attempts to control children's experiences of traumatic global events did not end with the cessation of hostilities in late 1918. Unfortunately, after more than four years at war, New Zealand immediately became enveloped by a world-wide public health crisis.

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic

During the late 1910s, countries across the globe were affected by a highly contagious disease later identified as an H1N1 influenza strain.⁶⁷ This virus circumnavigated the world in less than a year and manifested itself in a number of waves that occurred throughout 1918 and 1919.⁶⁸ Some regions encountered two outbreaks of influenza while others suffered three, and these waves reached different places at different times. Japan, for example, was affected by three waves, the first of which occurred in April-May 1918, the second between August and November 1918, and the third throughout January to March 1919. By contrast, Australia's exposure was delayed until 1919 because of effective quarantine measures, but then suffered a two-wave epidemic pattern within the majority of its states.⁶⁹ Despite these variations, the 1918 influenza virus impacted infected nations in a similar manner. The first and the third wave of the pandemic tended to be relatively mild while the second wave generally resulted in extremely high

⁶⁷ David M. Morens and Anthony S. Fauci, 'The 1918 Influenza Pandemic: Insights for the 21st Century', *The Journal of Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 195, no. 1, April 2007, p.1018.

⁶⁸ Niall P. A. S. Johnson and Juergen Mueller, 'Updating the Accounts: Global Mortality of the 1918-1920 "Spanish" Influenza Pandemic', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, Vol. 76, no. 1, 2002, p.107.

⁶⁹ Geoffrey W. Rice with assistance from Linda Bryder, *Black November: The 1918 influenza pandemic in New Zealand*, 2d ed. (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2005), p.263.

fatalities.⁷⁰ The 1918-19 influenza pandemic ultimately took more than 50 million lives in less than two years.⁷¹

New Zealand experienced two waves of the 1918 H1N1 influenza pandemic, the first of which occurred during September that year.⁷² As was the case overseas, the next wave of this flu strain proved to be far more dangerous than its predecessor, and it was this later outbreak that contemporaries saw as constituting the 'Great Flu'. New Zealand's second wave started in Auckland during late October and was most probably triggered by influenza viruses brought in upon troopships returning from the northern hemisphere.⁷³ This new variant travelled rapidly, striking Christchurch, Wellington, and Dunedin only a week after its emergence in Auckland, and epidemic mortality was general across the entire country by 18 November.⁷⁴ While authorities needed to maintain public support to facilitate New Zealand's participation in the First World War, there was no such need to promote interventionist measures during the epidemic. Government representatives, health authorities, and members of the public all attempted to mitigate the huge threat this epidemic posed through whatever means necessary.

Influenza in the Community

National and regional authorities sought to control wider community experiences during the 1918 influenza pandemic. On 6 November 1918, the New Zealand Government issued a Gazette Extraordinary declaring influenza to be a notifiable infectious disease under section 12 of the 1908 Public Health Act. This proclamation granted District Health Officers in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin the right to exercise any or all of their special powers set out in section 18 of the aforementioned Act "for the purpose of more effectively checking or preventing the spread of influenza."⁷⁵ From this point onwards, the national Government was heavily involved in trying to minimise the impact of this event.

⁷⁰ Esyllt W. Jones, *Influenza 1918: Disease, Death, and Struggle in Winnipeg* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp.13-14.

⁷¹ Johnson and Mueller, p.115.

⁷² Rice, *Black November*, p.54.

⁷³ Rice, *Black November*, p.199.

⁷⁴ Rice, *Black November*, pp.191-2.

⁷⁵ *Evening Post (EP)*, 6 November 1918, p.8.

Local health officials and elected officials across New Zealand simultaneously sought to manage regional outbreaks of this epidemic. National and regional reactions to the pandemic regularly overlapped, and some were never implemented due to power struggles between various authorities.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, a great many interventionist decisions were successfully enacted, causing significant disruption to children's lives. These measures largely focussed on supplementing the medical facilities available in flu-stricken communities, and on shaping the behaviour of people living within these environments.

Community-based treatment facilities feature heavily in the memories of those who were children during the flu. The Health Department in Auckland set up their first atomised zinc sulphate sprayer for public use on 4 November and, that same day, the Minister of Health Hon. G. W. Russell instructed all Chief Health Officers to make similar facilities available throughout their jurisdictions.⁷⁷ Despite its mixed medical reputation at the time, the Government heralded 'sulphate of zinc' as an effective preventative against the 1918 flu. Public inhalation chambers and sprayers multiplied across the country during November and December 1918, and were available in both large cities and small towns. Wellington had four chambers functioning by 9 November, and even the market town of Temuka in South Canterbury had one chamber operational by 15 November.⁷⁸ All members of the public, regardless of their age, were allowed to use these facilities. Twelve-year-old Jessie Cockroft was one of many children who visited the local inhalation chamber in Masterton. Years later she remembered that, during the pandemic, "all us kids, I suppose the adults too, went down to the town hall and we were put into a room and there was some horrible stuff that was kind of sprayed into the room ... and we'd stay there a few minutes and then come out."⁷⁹

Emergency health programmes and temporary hospitals were established during the 1918 influenza pandemic, changing the face of children's suburbs and towns. The second deadly wave of the H1N1 virus quickly overwhelmed medical

⁷⁶ See examples of contention between the Minister of Health and Auckland officials in: Rice, *Black November*, pp.85-88.

⁷⁷ *EP*, 4 November 1918, p.8.

⁷⁸ Rice, *Black November*, pp.92, 145.

⁷⁹ Jessie Cockroft, interview with Jan McLaren, 1 May 1983, OA 251, WA.

services throughout the country and local authorities took extraordinary measures to try to help as many sick people as possible. Local authorities established temporary hospitals to cope with an increased demand for public healthcare during the pandemic. The Royal Hotel on Oxford Terrace in Christchurch, Southland Girls' High School in Invercargill, and Eketahuna Technical School in the Wairarapa region constitute only a few examples of the many buildings converted into auxiliary hospitals throughout New Zealand.⁸⁰ Numerous adults and youth received urgent and much needed medical care at these facilities, some of which were established specifically for flu-stricken youth. Myers Kindergarten in Auckland, for example, served as a temporary children's hospital during the pandemic, caring for at least 102 youths by 22 November.⁸¹

Interventionist measures also targeted children's activities in the public sphere. Elected officials throughout New Zealand actively discouraged people from congregating outside their homes during the pandemic due to the perception that such restrictions could help mitigate mass contagion. The Blenheim borough council, for example, requested that parents "not allow their children to gather in the town."⁸² Māori youth and adults were particularly affected by these crowd-related regulations. On 7 November, the Minister of Health prohibited the tangi, a funeral ritual central to Māori culture, ostensibly because such events were characterised by the mass gathering of mourners invited from near and far. Pākehā mourners, however, were not subject to similar restrictions on long distance travel during this same period.⁸³

Restrictions on young New Zealanders' movements and activities intensified with the closure of key public institutions for various intervals in November and December. The Acting-Chief Health Officer in Auckland ordered the closure of "all places of entertainment, public halls, billiard rooms, and shooting galleries" on 6

⁸⁰ Gillian Bulling, 'Preventable deaths?: the 1918 influenza pandemic in Nightcaps', Post-Graduate Diploma Research Essay (University of Otago, 1991), p.24; Rice, *Black November*, pp.123-4; 'Group outside the Emergency Hospital in the Eketahuna Technical School during the influenza epidemic', Photograph – 1918, 02-385/62, WA.

⁸¹ Linda Bryder, 'The 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Auckland', MA Thesis (University of Auckland, 1980), pp.82-3.

⁸² *Marlborough Express*, 15 November 1918, p.5.

⁸³ Rice, *Black November*, p.176.

November 1918.⁸⁴ The Auckland Education Board followed Dr. Frengley's lead the following day, choosing to close all schools under its jurisdiction.⁸⁵ Parliament implemented these closures across the country on 11 November, invoking section 18 of the 1908 Public Health Act.⁸⁶ While theatres and other such institutions gradually reopened throughout December, schools remained closed until the following year. Youth involvement in religious activities was also curtailed in some regions during the pandemic. Frengley requested that all churches in the Auckland region only hold short morning services from 6 November, and the Chief Health Officer of the Canterbury region placed similar limits upon public church services held in his jurisdiction.⁸⁷ The *Grey River Argus* reported on 5 December 1918 that Dr. Chesson had removed restrictions on churches and services throughout Canterbury only the previous day.⁸⁸

Flu-time regulations constrained children's ability to obtain information about unfolding contemporaneous events. The temporary closure of many public institutions and gathering places not only restricted people's activities within their wider communities but also their interactions with one another. While adults working in schools and churches had been key sources of war-related information for children throughout the conflict, interventionist measures meant that these same teachers and religious leaders could not perform a similar role during the pandemic. As a result, youth were forced to rely on the only remaining channel of mass communication – newspapers – to keep informed about the influenza pandemic. 'Mother's Lassie', for instance, noted in December 1918 that "I have read a great number of sad cases in the papers, and some places are worse off than others. Tiromoana has been very lucky so far, only four persons have had it, my mother being one of them; but they are all better now."⁸⁹

Flu-time newspapers, however, were themselves subject to governmental intervention measures. The Minister of Health tried to avoid public panic by prohibiting the publication of official death statistics in newspapers during the

⁸⁴ *EP*, 8 November 1918, p.5.

⁸⁵ Rice, *Black November*, p.75.

⁸⁶ Rice, *Black November*, p.95.

⁸⁷ Rice, *Black November*, p.75.

⁸⁸ *Grey River Argus*, 5 December 1918, p.3.

⁸⁹ 'Mother's Lassie (Tiromoana)', *DLF, OW*, 18 December 1918, p.63.

pandemic. The *Ashburton Guardian* commented on this restriction in early December, noting that “when the epidemic broke out, the District Registers were forbidden to give out the usual statistics, in case the publication of figures might cause alarm.”⁹⁰ This omission would have been particularly striking to younger and older readers, especially considering the prolific publication of official casualty lists during the preceding years. In place of these statistics, subscribers were provided with large quantities of Government-approved advice about preventative and curative treatments. Numerous editors, for example, warned their local readerships that Dr Makgill, the Health Department’s senior public health expert, considered the inhalation of formalin a dangerous practice.⁹¹ Readers were instead encouraged to use public zinc-sulphate inhalation facilities and, if they fell victim to the virus, to “take the precautions advised by the Health Department, taking to their beds on the first sign of the disease, and remaining in bed under medical advice.”⁹²

Newspapers were used by authorities at all levels in an attempt to encourage ‘appropriate’ flu-time behaviour amongst children and adults alike. Regional representatives and groups actively promoted flu-effort activities throughout their local papers, issuing numerous appeals for volunteers during the pandemic. The Public Health Committee in Hawera, for instance, published a notice in the *Hawera and Normanby Star* pleading that “[t]hey are urgently in need of more helpers, and earnestly ask anyone in a position to do so, to register at the Dardanelles [in Regent Street] and work will be allotted to them.”⁹³ Although these appeals largely targeted men and women, older children and youth groups were also encouraged to help the flu-effort. On 15 November, the *Evening Post* advertised that:

[t]he officers directing the Boy Scout messengers want more volunteers, particularly for Newtown, Hataitai, Kilbirnie, and Lyall Bay centres. In the absence of scoutmasters, many of whom are laid up, scouts should volunteer direct to the committees, or parade at 9 o’clock each morning outside the Y.M.C.A., Willis street [sic]. Committees without scouts are asked to organise local boys for the work.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ *Ashburton Guardian*, 4 December 1918, p.4.

⁹¹ *EP*, 18 November 1918, p.6; *WDT*, 19 November 1918, p.5; *Wanganui Chronicle*, 21 November 1918, p.6.

⁹² *EP*, 8 November 1918, p.5.

⁹³ *Hawera and Normanby Star*, 22 November 1918, p.4.

⁹⁴ *EP*, 15 November 1918, p.6.

Appeals and advice issued by authorities ultimately constituted the vast majority of flu-related information children received from outside their homes during the pandemic.

Influenza at Home

Children's experiences of the 1918 influenza pandemic were also influenced by choices made by adults living within their home contexts. Children's understandings of the epidemic were often shaped by family members' participation in flu-relief work. Doreen Jamieson was 16 years old at the time of the flu, and one of her defining memories of this event was her mother helping local flu-victims. She recalled that "different people, families round 'bout went down with it [influenza] you know and she [her mother] used to go round with soup."⁹⁵ Parents' and older relatives' flu-effort activities would have likely been discussed with other members in their household, providing some youth with first-hand accounts about how the pandemic affected their local communities. Some adults even involved their offspring and younger siblings in their flu-relief work, actively encouraging them to help those in need. Iris Clarke was 12 years old when the second H1N1 influenza variant struck New Zealand, later remembering that "[w]e'd [her entire family] had it [the first influenza strain] in September ... so of course in November none of us got it. So we could use our car and do the shopping for those that, that had it. So we, we looked after everyone in the district."⁹⁶ It is important to note that not all households involved children in relief work, most likely because some adults feared exposing their young relatives to the flu virus.

Children were subjected to a number of flu-prevention treatments at home in addition to those provided in the wider community. Households across the country developed their own private inhalation facilities. Dorothy Savage was a seven-year-old living on the Te Ore Ore marae in late 1918, and she later recalled that her Nanny Rose burnt blue gum leaves using a kerosene tin: "going day and night was the fumes from it and that was her cure for the flu, she had it going all

⁹⁵ Jamieson, interview.

⁹⁶ Iris Fanny Clarke, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 29 July 1991, OA 50, WA.

the time.”⁹⁷ Formalin and sulphur fumes were also commonly inhaled as a precautionary measure. Marvis Wotton, six years old at the time of the pandemic, recalled in her life history that “Dad used to take us to burn sulphur on a shovel on embers on the shovel and walk it through the house every night through every room and we all used to have to get into one room, shut the door, and breathe this up for so long.”⁹⁸ These inhalation treatments were regularly used in conjunction with a wide variety of other remedies including wearing a camphor bag around ones’ neck, gargling homemade concoctions, and praying.⁹⁹

Many adults intentionally tried to shield their children from the threat posed by the 1918 influenza pandemic. Samuel Allely went to great lengths to protect his young family, including eight-year-old daughter Ruth, from the flu. Ruth Allely later recalled that:

my father, he used to always come home from work and remove every stitch outside and change into clean clothing and have a wash before he came in for fear of germs. And my mother and the children didn’t leave the house to go anywhere [during the pandemic] ... if you went out you could catch germs from anywhere.¹⁰⁰

Families often insisted children remain inside and at home in late 1918 in an attempt to prevent them from catching influenza. These quarantine measures were most likely inspired by contemporaneous understandings of the flu – that this virus posed the greatest threat to the oldest and youngest sectors of the population. Unfortunately, the 1918 influenza pandemic significantly diverged from this pattern; it was adults aged between 20 and 45 years who proved to be particularly vulnerable to this H1N1 strain as it evoked an often deadly overreaction from immune systems of healthy and robust individuals.¹⁰¹ Nonetheless, despite their limited efficacy, such quarantine measures clearly demonstrate that adults sought to protect children in their care from the pandemic.

⁹⁷ Dorothy Te Uru Manuka Savage, interview with Judith Fyfe, 31 January 1983, OA 628, WA.

⁹⁸ Marvis Wootton and Arthur Jones, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 16 July 1991, OA 147, WA.

⁹⁹ Mary Utting, ‘Mary Utting’ in Colleen Christie (ed.), *Back Then: oral history interviews from the Birkenhead Public Library collection, Volume Two* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Birkenhead City Council, 1988); ‘Erica (Ahuriri Flat)’, DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56; Rice, *Black November*, p.165.

¹⁰⁰ Ruth Allely, interview with Raewynn Robertson, 20 February 1991, WHO-1027, transcription by Marian Kenny, 2005, p.23, Oral History Collection, JT Diamond Archive (JTDA), Waitakere Central Library, Henderson.

¹⁰¹ Rice, *Black November*, pp.18, 23-4.

Conclusion

New Zealand was transformed into a home front society in late 1918 and remained so for more than four years. War-talk permeated public and private spheres throughout the country, and many of these discourses were crafted specifically for the nation's youngest citizens. Between 1914 and 1918, adults in schools, churches, the media, and at home all presented youth with significant amounts of conflict-related information and associated behavioural expectations. Through these messages, teachers and older family members attempted to transcend the physical distance between youth in New Zealand and the key locales of fighting overseas. While these discourses were far from uniform, they all sought to shape children's responses to the war.

With somewhat more urgency, adults continued attempts to shape children's reactions during the 1918 influenza pandemic. Unlike the preceding conflict, the second wave of the H1N1 virus directly threatened the lives of those living in New Zealand. Local and national authorities tried to mitigate the danger this epidemic posed to communities across the country, and these interventionist measures significantly altered the wider contexts within which children lived their lives. Youth faced explicit constraints on, rather than suggestions regarding, their public behaviour in November and December that year. Adults at home were similarly less preoccupied with encouraging particular youth responses to the pandemic, and instead simply enforced measures believed to protect them. As the next two chapters reveal, however, New Zealand children did not necessarily respond to either the First World War or the 1918 flu in the manner expected and sometimes demanded of them in this period.

Chapter 2: Younger Children

As discussed in Chapter One, children were the targets of war- and flu-related expectations both inside and outside the home. Children's relative naiveté, however, did not translate into passive acceptance of adult-articulated ideologies and instructions. Youth were aware of these societal expectations, and children's thoughts and behaviour were undoubtedly guided by adults during this period. Nonetheless, New Zealand children demonstrated agency through their responses to key events between 1914 and 1918; youth only interacted with the war and the flu to the extent that these crises intersected with their own spheres of interest.

The Great War and the 'Great Flu' both significantly impacted New Zealand, but these events differed greatly in their geographical proximity. For many children up to 12 years of age, life mostly went on as usual during the conflict. Unless it took the life of a relative, the war left key spheres in their lives largely undisturbed. This state of affairs shifted with the arrival of the 1918 influenza pandemic in New Zealand. The flu, unlike the war, posed an immediate threat to those living at home, and its brutal consequences occurred in children's own communities rather than at a lengthy distance overseas. As a result, younger children tended to engage more strongly with the flu pandemic than they had with the preceding conflict.

Younger Children and their Interests, 1914-1918

Younger New Zealand children led full and multifaceted lives throughout the mid-to-late 1910s. Writings and memories left behind by these youth clearly demonstrate that they were thoroughly engaged with the people, events, activities and institutions that comprised their worlds. 'Dot' received thousands of letters from her correspondents reflecting on their lives throughout the war and flu period. Dot's insistence that children write their letters themselves did mean that those involved in the 'Dot's Little Folk' (DLF) page were usually at least six or seven years old, but this editorial restriction did not discourage younger writers. Thirty-four of the 65 correspondents identified as having had at least three letters published in the DLF page between August 1914 and late 1918 were under 12 years of age when

they started writing to Dot. Intriguingly, these younger correspondents appear to have had more local concerns and preoccupations than their older counterparts.

Children up to 12 years of age wrote extensively about themselves, their interests, and their favoured activities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger correspondents to Dot's page regularly discussed their writing and reading practices. Seven-year-old 'Mother's Youngest' informed DLF members that she read their letters in the *Otago Witness* every Thursday.¹ Younger children also enjoyed less academic pursuits such as various sporting activities. 'Lady Enid', who turned 11 years old in 1915, wrote "[m]y sister and I have a pair of skates each, and we have great fun in the hall, which is quite close to our house."² 'Dulcie', on the other hand, preferred swimming and she spent every day at the beach paddling whilst on holiday in early 1918.³ Favoured activities obviously differed amongst young children yet it appears that most had a common interest in animals. Details concerning pets, their names, and their adventures permeated children's letters. Nine-year-old 'Charity', for instance, wrote proudly in May 1915 that she had two rabbits.⁴ Unfortunately, two months later, 'Charity' had to update readers of the DLF page with sad news. She ruefully noted that "[t]he cats killed one of my pet rabbits, and the other one is very lonely without its mate."⁵

Younger children wrote at length about the people and contexts that shaped their immediate worlds. Homes and families had a particularly significant impact upon children's lives. While some older youth lived at their workplaces or boarded at secondary school, younger children mostly lived at home during this period. As a result, young New Zealanders paid a great deal of attention to domestic matters and regularly deemed them to be newsworthy. 'A Soldier's Niece II' reported in mid-1917 that her family currently had plenty of milk despite milk usually being scarce during wintertime.⁶ Familial relationships were also extremely important to younger correspondents, emerging as major topics of conversation.

¹ 'Mother's Youngest (Tycho)', 'Dot's Little Folk' (DLF) page, *Otago Witness (OW)*, 28 March 1917, p.57.

² 'Lady Enid (Wairio)', DLF, *OW*, 28 April 1915, p.75.

³ 'Dulcie (Makaretu)', DLF, *OW*, 27 February 1918, p.75.

⁴ 'Charity (Levels)', DLF, *OW*, 26 May 1915, p.75.

⁵ 'Charity (Levels)', DLF, *OW*, 21 July 1915, p.77.

⁶ 'A Soldier's Niece II (Naseby)', DLF, *OW*, 25 July 1917, p.56.

'The Link of Love' informed Dot in August 1916 that she had "lived with grandmother and grandfather ever since I was a baby, so grandad [sic] calls me his girl."⁷ Children recorded their relatives' health, absences from home due to holidays or work activities, and key events in their lives such as birthdays. Family members merited particular discussion when their activities directly affected young children. Nine-year-old 'Crimson Rambler' complained in late 1918 that "[m]y brother is four years old, and he is very naughty. When I started to write he came along and put his hand all over my writing, so I had to start all over again."⁸ Sibling interactions have a strong presence in younger children's accounts of their lives at home. This is particularly understandable considering that the average family consisted of three to four children during this period.⁹

School was another significant sphere in children's lives between 1914 and 1918. The 1877 Education Act entitled all New Zealanders to free primary school education and, from 1901, school attendance was compulsory for children between five and 14 years of age.¹⁰ Younger children's regular comments on school within their letters reflect the long period of time they spent in this environment. Some youth, such as eight-year-old 'Lord Glenconner', greatly enjoyed attending school.¹¹ 'Lady Enid' even wrote that she was looking forward to school reopening at the beginning of 1915.¹² Not all children shared these sentiments though. Eleven-year-old 'Pear Blossom' mournfully reflected in February 1918 that "[i]t did not seem very nice to have to go to school after the holidays."¹³ Although feelings about attending school may have varied, most young children who wrote to Dot agreed that educational achievements were important. Children usually included their standard at school as a key descriptor of themselves in their introductory DLF letters, and youth regularly updated this information as they progressed to higher levels within the education system. Younger children would also boast about their

⁷ 'Link of Love (Slope Point)', DLF, *OW*, 26 April 1916, p.71.

⁸ 'Crimson Rambler (Waipahi)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.56.

⁹ Ian Pool, Arunachalam Dharmalingam and Janet Sceats, *The New Zealand Family From 1840: A Demographic History* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2007), p.79.

¹⁰ Colin McGeorge, 'Childhood's Sole Serious Business: The Long Haul to Full School Attendance', *New Zealand Journal of History (NZJH)*, Vol. 40, no. 1, April 2006, pp.25, 27, 31-2.

¹¹ 'Lord Glenconner', DLF, *OW*, 31 July 1918, p.63

¹² 'Lady Enid (Wairio)', DLF, *OW*, 27 January 1915, p.71.

¹³ 'Pear Blossom (Roxburgh)', DLF, *OW*, 27 February 1918, p.56.

academic successes to other members of the DLF. Eight-year-old 'Tulip' proudly wrote in 1914 that she had come first in her class exam and attained three prizes.¹⁴ 'Daddy's Pet', who was the same age in 1918, made similar comments in her own letters: "[w]e had our examination before the holidays, and I got second top for Standard I. My dady [sic] was glad, and gave me some money to go to the pictures."¹⁵

Younger children were actively involved in local institutions and their associated activities. Children were eager participants in events geared towards their wider communities, such as school concerts. 'Tulip' detailed her contribution to, and hopes for, such an event in a letter she sent to Dot in July 1918:

[o]ur school concert is to be held on August 23, and we are busy practising our songs and other items just now. I am in four items so far as I know – a national song, in which I am the head of Wales; the wand drill; the housemaids' dance; and a dialogue, in which I am a nurse. I hope our concert is a success and that the weather is cleared up by that time, so that there will be a big crowd.¹⁶

Church and religious societies provided similarly valued social and recreational opportunities. Eleven-year-old 'The Poor Little Rich Girl' gleefully informed Dot that she had won a prize at an annual Sunday school picnic, and 'Daddy's Pet' was equally enthusiastic about an upcoming Christian Endeavour Society picnic in early 1918.¹⁷ Sunday school enrolment numbers ranged from 65.9% and 69.3% of all New Zealand children aged five to 14 years between 1896 and 1911, and it is unlikely that these numbers varied significantly throughout the 1910s.¹⁸ Eight-year-old 'Billy Oakland' was one of many who attended during the war. In September 1917, for example, 'Billy Oakland' noted that "I was at Sunday school yesterday, but was not present the previous Sunday, because it was too wet, but was sorry, as there was a teacher that day from a big Sunday school in Dunedin."¹⁹

¹⁴ 'Tulip (Riversdale)', DLF, *OW*, 30 December 1914, p.71.

¹⁵ 'Daddy's Pet (Dunedin)', DLF, *OW*, 26 June 1918, p.65.

¹⁶ 'Tulip (Riversdale)', DLF, *OW*, 31 July 1918, p.65.

¹⁷ 'The Poor Little Rich Girl (Greymouth)', DLF, *OW*, 27 February 1918, p.57; 'Daddy's Pet (Dunedin)', DLF, *OW*, 27 March 1918, p.64.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Troughton, 'Religion, Churches and Childhood in New Zealand, c.1900-1940', *NZJH*, Vol. 40, no. 1, April 2006, p.40.

¹⁹ 'Billy Oakland (Hedgehope)', DLF, *OW*, 26 September 1917, p.56.

Despite the dramatic nature of the war and the influenza pandemic, younger children continued to be preoccupied with their personal interests, homes, schools, churches, and local community events. Indeed, some younger children did not mention the war and others did not refer to the flu at all in any of their DLF letters composed during those events.²⁰ Younger children appear to have only responded to the First World War and the 1918 Influenza Pandemic when they directly impacted children's own lives and spheres of interest. For some youth, life largely carried on as normal despite the very real pressures New Zealand faced during the mid-to-late 1910s.

World War One

Responses to the Conflict

Younger children engaged with the First World War to varying extents and through several different contexts between 1914 and 1918. Schools were a particularly significant environment for youth interaction with the war. As Chapter One demonstrated, teachers and principals actively strove to connect students with the conflict, and activities related to the war-effort were regularly inserted into school curricula. Creating handicraft items for serving combatants became particularly common in educational institutions. Nine-year-old 'Chiddy' noted in her letter to Dot that "[e]very Tuesday afternoon we have sewing and knitting at school. At school I am knitting an eye bandage and a pair of braces."²¹ Younger children were also involved in school-driven war activities outside the classroom. Vivian Robertson, born in 1911, recalled singing with her school choir at a farewell for soldiers departing from a nearby military camp.²² Schools constantly promoted war-related causes, encouraging children to raise money for the war-effort. Ten-year-olds from Wellington Girls' College sold "[f]erns, flowers, knitting bags, contrivances to hold the knitting needles together, and even rabbits" for wounded soldiers, and

²⁰ Writers that did not mention the war include 'Dulcie', 'Mountain Lily', 'The Link of Love', 'Tulip' and 'Woodbine'. Writers that did not mention the flu include 'Lord Glenconner', 'Mountain Daisy II' and 'Crimson Rambler II'. See Appendix 1 for further detail.

²¹ 'Chiddy (Tycho)', DLF, *OW*, 25 August 1915, p.75.

²² Vivian Caroline Robertson, interview with Margaret Feringa, 23 August 1984, Oral Archive (OA) 320, Wairarapa Archives (WA), Masterton.

'A Poor Little Rich Girl' raised £3.3.4 with the rest of her class to contribute towards a Copper Trail fundraising contest between Hokitika and Greymouth.²³

Young children interacted with the war through community events. More than 100,000 men left New Zealand to fight overseas between 1914 and 1918 and children attended endless send-offs for departing soldiers and celebrations for returning combatants during this period.²⁴ Iris Clarke was eight years old at the outbreak of war, later recalling "[w]hen the boys went away they always had special send offs. There were always special send offs, always. Sometimes there would be three or four going off at the same time."²⁵ Ivan Kelly similarly retained strong memories of the numerous dances held for returning soldiers.²⁶ Children also attended war-effort fundraisers held throughout the conflict. Nine-year-old 'Highlander', for instance, recounted that "[w]e had a patriotic concert up here on the 3rd of this month. Rouse and my brother took part in it ... and they danced and sang nursery rhymes. They were not the same rhymes the children used to learn, but about the war."²⁷

Young children often enjoyed their involvement in war-related activities and events. 'Hope', for example, informed Dot in 1917 that "[w]e knit and sew at our school for the soldiers, and I like knitting very much."²⁸ Children, however, may have expressed enthusiasm about these activities for reasons other than a desire to help the war-effort. Robertson possibly enjoyed singing to departing soldiers merely because she liked getting dressed up. She did, after all, recall that "I loved it [performing with her school choir] because I got a new, very beautiful ... pinafore to wear and ... [had] seven bows in my hair."²⁹ It is important to recognise that, although young children contributed heavily to the war-effort, these activities were

²³ *The Girls' College Reporter: Wellington Girls' College (GCR)*, Vol. 40, no. 63, Second Half-Year 1915, p.18; 'A Poor Little Rich Girl (Greymouth)' and 'Gloria's Mate (Greymouth)', DLF, *OW*, 28 August 1918, p.56.

²⁴ John Crawford and Ian McGibbon, 'Introduction' in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds.), *New Zealand's Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War* (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007), p.16.

²⁵ Iris Fanny Clarke, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 29 July 1991, OA 50, WA.

²⁶ Ivan (Barney) Kelly, 'Ivan (Barney) Kelly' in Colleen Christie (ed.), *Back Then: oral history interviews from the Birkenhead Public Library collection, Volume One* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Birkenhead City Council, 1988), p.129.

²⁷ 'Highlander (Mornington)', DLF, *OW*, 25 August 1915, p.75.

²⁸ 'Hope (Tuapeka West)', DLF, *OW*, 28 March 1917, p.56.

²⁹ Robertson, interview.

largely initiated and orchestrated by adults. Fundraisers, handicraft production, farewell dances, and patriotic concerts were all integrated into key spheres of children's lives. Children had little choice over their involvement in war-effort activities at school due to compulsory attendance legislation. Similarly, youth had long been involved in local events within the community, and the focus of many of these simply turned towards the conflict between 1914 and 1918.

The war's intrusion into younger children's lives evoked a wide variety of responses. Many youth had more mixed feelings about the conflict, and this was especially the case when the war impinged on children's lives in a negative manner. Irene Ball was eight years old when the Great War started and she recalled that, for the following four years, "there was no thought to anything else except for helping the war effort."³⁰ She participated in war-effort activities at school and even knitted items for soldiers in her spare time, demonstrating some degree of personal engagement with the conflict. Unfortunately, New Zealand's overwhelming focus on the war resulted in economic constraints on the home front that often negatively affected children. Ball was a high-achieving student and, decades later, she could still remember the deep disappointment she felt when she did not receive a prize for becoming dux at primary school.³¹ Thelma Haywood, ten years of age in 1914, also felt cheated by the war in some sense after experiencing a similar set of circumstances. She distinctly recalled that "when my turn came, [it was during] World War One, and there wasn't the money about for the school committees ... to buy things, so I missed my dux medal, I had to go without one."³² Wider societal expectations concerning self-sacrifice similarly constrained youth outside the classroom. Ball remembered war-time New Zealand as "very Spartan ... you didn't spend a penny on sweets. The poor old lady in the shop at the corner couldn't have done very well because we had a Belgian box and that we all put our pennies in."³³

Younger children's mixed feelings about the conflict did not manifest themselves in explicit critique of the First World War. Oral history archives do

³⁰ Irene Ball, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 22 April 1991, OA 8, WA.

³¹ Ball, interview.

³² Thelma Ehine Haywood, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 24 April 1991, OA 120, WA.

³³ Ball, interview.

contain examples of persons, under the age of 12 during the war, who later condemned government decisions regarding the conflict. Frederick Morgan was 11 years old at the start of the Gallipoli campaign, and he later asserted that it “was just a huge military blunder, really, and Churchill was at the bottom of it.”³⁴ These judgements, however, appear to have been made retrospectively. Contemporary sources show that younger children constantly asserted that the war was terrible and sad, but its management and necessity remained above question. Eleven-year-old ‘Puss in Boots’ reflected on the war in a letter sent to Dot in September 1915 but this commentary did not extend to criticism. ‘Puss in Boots’ merely noted that “[t]he war still continues to be very bad, and there are such a lot of men killed that we know.”³⁵ Young children may have resented the personal ramifications the war had upon their lives but they did not outwardly challenge adult discourses concerning the importance of the conflict.

Although younger children did not explicitly criticise the war, it is clear that there were significant differences in youth acceptance of some war-related discourses. The fact that young children used the words ‘sad’ and ‘terrible’ to describe the conflict indicates that some did not wholeheartedly accept the ‘glorious sacrifice’ rhetoric espoused by adults. Variance in younger children’s perceptions of the war is also evident through youth responses to wider anti-Germanic discourses. As demonstrated in Chapter One, younger New Zealanders were often told that Germans were evil and malevolent. Younger children observed German-New Zealanders facing public harassment and often even internment as the government and adult members of society sought to contain any local German threat. Alice O’Callahan was nine years of age when war was declared, and she retained strong childhood memories of a local German man called Mr Benjamin in the Birkenhead region. O’Callahan recalled that “during the First World War he was so terrified of being interned, which he probably would have been, that he built himself a little shack down at Sharks Bay.” Intriguingly, O’Callahan’s account of Mr Benjamin challenged anti-German discourses prevalent in war-time New Zealand.

³⁴ Frederick Arthur Morgan, interview with Myra Ballantyne, 23 September and 7 October 1985, OA 400, WA.

³⁵ ‘Puss in Boots (Alton)’, DLF, *OW*, 29 September 1915, p.77.

She insisted that “he was such a dear old thing ... he wouldn’t have harmed a soul.”³⁶ This rejection of anti-German sentiment was not unique to O’Callahan but was also demonstrated by a number of youth during this period.³⁷ It appears that children only engaged with, or drew upon, adult war-related discourses when youth deemed them to be applicable and thus some children may have seen war-time prejudices and information as irrelevant to their everyday lives.

Numerous youth, however, saw war-related discourses as deeply pertinent. Muriel Bliss was one of many children under the age of 12 who believed anti-German discourses, and she was understandably frightened by them. Nine years old when the conflict began, Bliss recalled that “[w]e felt we were a long way away during the First World War but I tell you every night I’d say my prayers and I said ‘Please God, don’t let the Germans come.’”³⁸ These fears and emotions could also manifest themselves in children’s own behaviour towards people with suspected German heritage. Children’s xenophobic behaviour appears to have been predominantly limited to verbal bullying but there are instances of extreme youth responses to anti-German discourses.³⁹ Jack Bull, for example, decided to bring the battlefield to his backyard. He recounted:

probably one of the first instances in Greytown [where his family had just relocated], 1914, as children hear things, you know the terrible Germans and what they’ve done, you know. Just beside us was a market gardener ... and he was a German. And I thought well, we’ve got a German next door, we must do something about that and at the age of four I took dad’s double barreled shot gun and I was going to remove him, you know, and I had trouble in getting through the fence with the shot gun and that’s where mum caught me.⁴⁰

It is extremely unlikely that Bull’s parents explicitly or implicitly encouraged their son’s assassination attempt. Nonetheless, xenophobic conversations amongst adults were crucial in generating this situation. Bliss and Bull clearly integrated war-related discourses into their lives between 1914 and 1918, and this incorporation is

³⁶ Alice O’Callahan, ‘Alice O’Callahan’ in Colleen Christie (ed.), *Back then: oral history interviews from the Birkenhead Public Library collection, Volume Four* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Birkenhead Public Library, 1991), p.49.

³⁷ Jeanine Graham, ‘Young New Zealanders and the Great War: Exploring the impact and legacy of the First World War, 1914-2014’, *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 44, no. 4, August 2008, pp.440-441.

³⁸ Muriel Bliss, ‘Muriel Bliss and Eileen Smith’ in Christie (ed.), *Volume Four*, p.22.

³⁹ Graham, p.440.

⁴⁰ Burnett Hereward Love (Jack) Bull, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 29 May 1991, OA 31, WA.

possibly due to the fact that these children were themselves more integrated into the conflict than some of their peers. After all, both Bliss and Bull had strong familial links to the conflict; both of their fathers volunteered to serve overseas and performed significant military roles on the home front after their applications were declined.⁴¹

A Matter of Proximity?

Younger children's reactions to the First World War were largely determined by their proximity to the conflict. War-related discourses infiltrated children's schools, churches, and wider communities between 1914 and 1918, and youth were actively involved in the many war-effort schemes that proliferated within these environments. Although some youth may have enjoyed their participation in home front activities, children often resented the personal ramifications the conflict had on their lives. Understandably, children's emotions concerning the war tended to intensify when the conflict continually interfered with their concerns and priorities. The Great War affected some children's lives more significantly than others and these youth responded accordingly. This was particularly the case for children up to the age of 12 who had family members eligible for, or involved in, military service.

Young children were well aware that the conflict resulted in the mass departure of men from across New Zealand. 'Forget-Me-Not' was an 11-year-old from Tuapeka Mouth who recorded in June 1915 that "[t]here are a number of men from around here away to the war, and there are a few more who intend to do [sic]."⁴² Yet, despite this recognition, youth largely did not engage with this exodus unless it personally affected them. Marion Williams was seven years old when the conflict ended and, although she remembered the long casualty lists in newspapers, she recalled "I didn't so much miss the men who went away."⁴³ By contrast, younger children who had relatives serving overseas or called up for military service often demonstrated strong feelings about their relations' actual or potential

⁴¹ Bull, interview; Bliss, interview, p.19.

⁴² 'Forget-Me-Not (Tuapeka Mouth)', DLF, *OW*, 30 June 1915, p.77.

⁴³ Marion Algie Williams and Donald Ernest Williams, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 7 August 1991, OA 678, WA.

absence. These emotional reactions sometimes deviated from those demanded by wider societal discourses. There are several instances in the historical record of young children publicly expressing relief when their relatives evaded overseas service. Eleven-year-old 'Toby Rock', for example, gleefully informed Dot in May 1918 that "Dad was called up in the ballot, but he did not pass, and I was glad because I don't know what we would do without him."⁴⁴

Children with soldier-relatives were particularly affected by the First World War. New Zealand's armed forces comprised children's uncles, cousins, brothers, and sometimes even fathers. When war was declared, children with combatant-relations faced profound shifts in their home context. Ten-year-old 'Queen of Thorns', for instance, wrote in May 1918 that her uncle "is sailing for France. I also have two [other] uncles at the front; one was wounded, and the other was sick in hospital for seven months."⁴⁵ Children could face multiple absences and have to acclimatise to numerous changes in their lives during the conflict. Eleven-year-old 'Queenis' recorded in 1916 that one of her brothers had returned from Gallipoli but two others were currently training at Featherston and, early the following year, she noted that her two aforementioned brothers had left New Zealand for the war.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, youth often lost their combatant-relatives entirely to battlefronts overseas. Donald Thompson was only three years old in 1914 yet he still retained strong memories of his uncle leaving for war but never returning, having been killed at Gallipoli in 1915.⁴⁷

Soldier-relatives maintained a significant presence in younger children's lives despite their physical absence. Through letters from the front and conversations at home, youth were kept continually informed of their soldier-relatives' health, movement to and from the battlefield, and sometimes even their involvement in direct combat. This information was relayed extensively in children's own writings. 'Blush Rose' provided Dot with several updates concerning the enlistment and military service of her brothers during the war; in 1916, for example,

⁴⁴ 'Toby Rock (Wyndham)', DLF, *OW*, 29 May 1918, p.75.

⁴⁵ 'Queen of Thorns (Hakataramea)', DLF, *OW*, 29 May 1918, p.57.

⁴⁶ 'Queenis (Tuamata)', DLF, *OW*, 25 October 1916, p.59; 'Queenis', DLF, *OW*, 31 January 1917, p.58.

⁴⁷ Donald Alexander Thompson, interview with Myra Ballantyne, 19 June 1985, OA 326, WA; Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 'CWGC: Casualty Details – Cameron, Norman Donald', http://www.cwgc.org/search/casualty_details.aspx?casualty=720001, accessed 24 January 2012.

she wrote that “[o]ne of my brothers who is in Egypt said he had been in the trenches but had not done any fighting. Another of my brothers was on the sea when we last heard from him. Another one is at Featherston, in the hospital.”⁴⁸ Eight-year-old ‘Little Betty’ similarly recorded her family’s participation in the conflict, noting in July 1918 that she had two uncles who had been at the front since they departed with the Sixth Reinforcement and that one of them was currently in hospital.⁴⁹ Many youth and combatant family members maintained direct contact with each other. Children and their soldier-relations often exchanged letters, postcards, and sometimes small gifts. ‘A Poor Little Rich Girl’ wrote in March 1918 that “[m]y uncle at the war has sent my sister and me some lovely post-cards from France, and we are going to get them framed.”⁵⁰ ‘Saddler Tommy’ received a card from their brother in France the month before.⁵¹ Key locales of fighting may have been geographically far away from New Zealand, but the presence of family members in these locations granted children with soldier-relations emotional proximity to the conflict.

Relationships between youth and their loved ones in the military forces emotionally connected children to the battlefield, and this connection often evoked strong responses. Eileen Cragg, ten years old in 1914, distinctly remembered the distress she felt at receiving letters from her father who served as an officer overseas:

but most of his letters, all around the edges, they’d be chewed by rats, because the rats were in the trenches, you know running around. He’d say you know that’s what they were like and they’d eat the paper, you’d have to guard the paper ... the men had lice ... and when they’d come out of the trenches through [sic] in the bad weather, you could imagine what it was like – no facilities ... that was one thing that he told us about. A lot of information, things like that. The food was very poor because, well, it was a war, but we did get these letters with all these pages chewed, you know, makes you feel, oh it was terrible.⁵²

Some soldier-relations actively attempted to protect their young correspondents from the realities of warfare. Children, however, could not be entirely shielded

⁴⁸ ‘Blush Rose (Wakapatu)’, DLF, *OW*, 24 May 1916, p.67.

⁴⁹ ‘Little Betty (Kerrytown)’, DLF, *OW*, 31 July 1918, p.64.

⁵⁰ ‘A Poor Little Rich Girl (Greymouth)’, DLF, *OW*, 27 March 1918, p.64.

⁵¹ ‘Saddler Tommy (Milton)’, DLF, *OW*, 27 February 1918, p.56.

⁵² Eileen Cragg, interview with Myra Ballantyne, 23 July 1985, OA 711, WA.

from all of the conflict's darker consequences – the absence of soldier-relatives was undeniable, and sometimes all connection with these loved ones ended with their death on the battlefield. As a result, younger children with familial links to the First World War were usually more engaged with the conflict than their peers. They wrote more extensively and at greater length about the war than children without such military connections. Most children up to the age of 12 regularly wrote about their participation in war-effort activities but youth with soldier-relations were preoccupied with developments on the battlefield as well as on the home front. The activities and movements of New Zealand's armed forces were a key concern of youth with combatant-relations. The conflict had permeated these children's home contexts, capturing their attention accordingly.

Relational proximity to the conflict nevertheless did not guarantee continual youth engagement with the First World War. Links between youth and their relations were not always maintained once the latter had departed for the front; it is entirely likely that not all soldiers chose to correspond with their family members whilst overseas. Furthermore, younger children may not have been affected by their soldier-relations leaving for the Front in the first place. Families were often spread across New Zealand and sometimes children did not personally know their combatant-relatives. Freda Humphries, for instance, was ten years old when war broke out and her uncle died in the conflict. Despite remembering numerous details about his death, she demonstrated little emotional connection to this event as "I never ever saw him [before he left]."⁵³ Even children with immediate relations at the Front may not have been distressed by these family members' absences. Although married women during this period gave birth to an average of three to four children, numerous youth were born into families with six or more children.⁵⁴ In these cases, older brothers may have left home to pursue employment opportunities or to get married long before they went overseas.

Younger children could also become accustomed to their soldier-relations' absence. Ten-year-old 'Lady Pikiarero' noted in 1917 that "I have an uncle at the

⁵³ Freda Emily Humphries, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 9 July 1991, OA 123, WA.

⁵⁴ Pool et al., pp.79-80.

front, and when he *first* went away I *missed* him very much.”⁵⁵ The war lasted more than four years and, although youth were certainly aware their relations were serving overseas, younger children’s lives went on. Even though most children with combatant-relations wrote at length about their soldier-relatives’ involvement in the war, they simultaneously discussed their personal interests, homes, schools, churches, and local community events. Nonetheless, youth who had relational links to the Front were more likely to be deeply engaged with the conflict than children without such connections. This correlation is particularly evident in archival evidence concerning younger children’s responses to the end of the war in November 1918.

Cessation of Fighting

Most children up to 12 years of age celebrated the end of the First World War. Charles (Jim) Knight was only seven years old in late 1918 yet he retained strong memories of the celebrations following the conflict. Decades later he stated that “I can remember the great joy in Wellington that there was, I can just see the crowds linked together and more, it was just such a happy time for everybody.”⁵⁶ Children, alongside their older contemporaries, commemorated numerous events leading up to the total cessation of hostilities, including the capitulation of each of the Central Powers throughout October and early November. Ten-year-old ‘A Soldier’s Niece II’ recorded that there was great rejoicing amongst her local community when news was received of Turkey’s unconditional surrender.⁵⁷ Children were themselves active participants in these events. Nine-year-old ‘A Heart of Gold’ wrote in December 1918 that “[t]he day Germany gave in the school children had a procession round the town. Some of us got kerosene tins, and we made a loud noise with them. We also hoisted the school flag.”⁵⁸ Almost all correspondents to the DLF page, regardless of their age, commented on the war’s conclusion in their letters published at the end of 1918. A great many, including 11-

⁵⁵ ‘Lady Pikiarero (Tahatika)’, DLF, OW, 28 February 1917, p.58 [emphasis added].

⁵⁶ Charles (Jim) James Prendergast Knight, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 20 September 1991, OA 157, WA.

⁵⁷ ‘A Soldier’s Niece II (Naseby)’, DLF, OW, 13 November 1918, p.57.

⁵⁸ ‘A Heart of Gold (Middlemarch)’, DLF, OW, 11 December 1918, p.56.

year-olds 'Mountain Daisy II' and 'Toby Rock', explicitly articulated how glad they were that the war had ended.⁵⁹

It is difficult to determine exactly why younger children rejoiced when the war ended. There is little surviving evidence that elucidates children's reasons for celebrating the Armistice and, as demonstrated by Graham Hucker's research on war-time enthusiasm in New Zealand, disentangling and identifying the complex motives behind 'universal' crowd behaviour is far from simple.⁶⁰ Youth may have eagerly participated in end-of-war celebrations because they enjoyed exciting processions and having a day off school. Others might have been glad at the prospect of no more war-related activities or expectations. A number of younger children may have recognised on some level the grief and pain that the war had caused and were genuinely happy that this would now cease. Others still may have simply been mirroring the reactions of other youth and adults to the war finally being over.

Children's writings about the end of the conflict nonetheless reveal that some youth had a greater personal investment in the cessation of hostilities. Youth with serving relatives expressed immense relief that the war was over. Ten-year-old 'Henry VIII', for instance, noted that "this Christmas shall be a more joyful one than the last, as the war is now over."⁶¹ This assertion was most probably informed by the fact that Henry VIII had already lost one uncle in battle and still had two others involved in New Zealand's armed forces.⁶² Children with soldier-relatives often linked, albeit implicitly, the war's end with the homecoming of their combatant-kin. 'Mother's Youngest', nine years old at the end of the war, wrote in late 1918 that "I have two uncles at the war, and I hope they will soon come back. When we heard that peace was declared there was a great noise in town; the bells were ringing and the flags were flying."⁶³ Ten-year-old 'Golden Link', by contrast, never mentioned having any family members at the front and thus noted in late November that the

⁵⁹ 'Mountain Daisy II (Nokomai)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.56; 'Toby Rock (Wairekiki)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

⁶⁰ Graham Hucker, 'The Great Wave of Enthusiasm': New Zealand Reactions to the First World War in August 1914 – A Reassessment', *NZJH*, Vol. 42, no. 1, 2009, pp.59-75.

⁶¹ 'Henry VIII (Mandeville)', DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.63.

⁶² 'Henry VIII (Mandeville)', DLF, *OW*, 29 May 1918, p.57.

⁶³ 'Mother's Youngest (Tycho)', DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.57.

“boys”, rather than a close relation, would be home soon. For ‘Golden Link’, the return of New Zealand’s military combatants will be “nice” rather than personally momentous.⁶⁴

Children up to the age of 12 demonstrated a variety of reactions to the First World War between 1914 and 1918. Some youth gleefully participated in war-effort activities that proliferated within school, church, and wider community contexts. Others, such as Irene Ball and Thelma Haywood, were involved in these activities yet simultaneously resented the personal negative ramifications the war had on their lives. There is also evidence of several children challenging or ignoring various war-related discourses, including ‘Toby Rock’ who rejoiced in his father’s escape from conscription. On the other hand, more than a few youth wholeheartedly accepted some war-related discourses, inspiring rather extreme behaviour such as that undertaken by Jack Bull. Quite a number of young children also focussed their attention beyond the home front towards the battlefield, and this was particularly common for those with soldier-relatives. Eileen Cragg, for instance, felt extreme distress upon receiving letters from her father at the Front.

Ultimately, it appears that younger children’s responses to the First World War were largely determined by the extent to which the conflict affected and interfered with youth concerns and priorities. For some children in war-time New Zealand, life went on largely as normal as war-effort activities were integrated into spheres within their worlds without profoundly reshaping them. Although war-related discourses and expectations could be frustrating, they were not personally devastating. For others, however, the war resulted in profound shifts to their home environments and put loved ones in danger. Children with soldier-relations may have lived a safe distance away from the front but their relational proximity to this event made the war significant and meaningful. Unfortunately, the First World War was not the only crisis between 1914 and 1918 that had the capacity to disrupt children’s lives.

⁶⁴ ‘Golden Link’, DLF, OW, 27 November 1918, p.57.

1918 Influenza Pandemic

Recognition of a Changed Context

Children up to 12 years of age faced a significantly different context in the last few months of 1918. While the main locales of fighting had been safely far away, the 1918 influenza pandemic did not maintain its distance. There were also key demographic disparities between war- and flu-related fatalities. Many youth had been able to largely ignore the conflict during the war-years due to its limited presence in their lives. Such disengagement, however, was less feasible when applied to the pandemic, and children's responses to this event reflected the flu's close geographic proximity.

Younger children's writings echoed the chronological overlap between the First World War and the 1918 flu. Eleven-year-old 'Mountain Maid' wrote in early December that "[p]eace was declared on my birthday, so I should remember it. Isn't it lovely to think that no more boys will have to leave New Zealand or any other country to go to the war? ... This influenza is dreadful. It has caused many deaths."⁶⁵ Younger children's responses to the declaration of peace were not only shaped by their emotions concerning the conflict itself, but also by the dampening effect that the pandemic had during this period. Nine-year-old 'Aster' noted that same month that "[n]ow the war is over, we have something else to worry us. Up at Waikari, the people have taken the forms and desks out of the school and made it into a hospital, and the schoolhouse into a place for the nurses."⁶⁶ Largely speaking, however, younger children saw and responded to the conflict and flu as separate events.

As the epidemic grew in intensity, the flu became a key topic of discussion amongst youth. Like the First World War, the 1918 influenza pandemic had a significant impact upon local communities within New Zealand. 'Henry VIII' noted in December that "[o]n nearly all the farms around here the work is behind on account of the influenza; but this district is very lucky, as none have died from it yet."⁶⁷ Ivan Kelly, four years old during the pandemic, also had strong memories

⁶⁵ 'Mountain Maid (Glenorchy)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

⁶⁶ 'Aster (Hakataramea)', DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.63.

⁶⁷ 'Henry VIII (Mandeville)', DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.63.

about how the flu affected the region where he had grown up. He recalled that a “lot of people died in Birkenhead. The undertakers were that busy that the carriers were using their carts and wagons to take the corpses to the cemeteries. The Northcote Primary School, that was a temporary morgue.”⁶⁸ Youth observed and commented on how the flu affected key institutions within their worlds. Schools garnered particular attention, which is unsurprising considering their status as major public infrastructure and the large amount of time younger children spent within these environments. Children commented on the re-appropriation of school buildings for flu-relief efforts. ‘Toby Rock’ and eight-year-old ‘Silver King’ both noted the closures of their schools during the flu pandemic.⁶⁹ Youth also recorded the disruption the pandemic had upon their educational activities; 11-year-old ‘Grandmother’s Girl’ informed Dot in mid-December that “[w]e haven’t had our break-up, because we are having our holidays on account of the influenza.”⁷⁰

Many children aged up to 12 years in 1918 had prior experience with epidemics. New Zealand youth had faced outbreaks of influenza before encountering the 1918 H1N1 variant. Dot commented in her response to a child’s letter that “I think nearly everyone has had the influenza” in mid-1915, for instance.⁷¹ Local schools had likewise been closed due to concerns regarding contagious diseases prior to the pandemic. An outbreak of the measles during the war resulted in temporary school closures in areas such as Nightcaps and Waipiata.⁷² Youth, however, were aware that the 1918 flu pandemic differed from these earlier epidemics. Younger children remarked on the closure of all their local schools, rather than just some, throughout late 1918. DLF correspondents also recognised the severity of this flu strain. Eleven-year-old ‘A Poor Little Rich Girl’ noted that there had been over 50 deaths in Greymouth.⁷³ Mary Shaw was similarly aware of the deadly nature of the 1918 flu. A nine-year-old at the time of the pandemic, she later remembered that:

⁶⁸ Kelly, in Christie (ed.), *Volume One*, p.133.

⁶⁹ ‘Toby Rock (Wairekiki)’, DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.62; ‘Silver King (Middlemarch)’, DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.61.

⁷⁰ ‘Grandmother’s Girl (Waimumu)’, DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.57.

⁷¹ ‘Dot’ to ‘Jim (Invercargill)’, DLF, *OW*, 30 June 1915, p.77.

⁷² ‘Girlie (Nightcaps)’, DLF, *OW*, 21 July 1915, p.78; ‘Lylie (Waipiata)’, DLF, *OW*, 25 August 1915, p.75.

⁷³ ‘A Poor Little Rich Girl (Greymouth)’, DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.61.

[w]e used to get our mail at the shop and get our groceries, and there was a constable from Avondale who was on a horse and he had a whip. When we came up he used to say, "Get what you've got to get and go home!" And everybody had to take what they wanted quickly and he would crack the whip at the kids, and of course you would see that the trains were bringing the dead out and standing them on the platform till they were taken away in carts.⁷⁴

Despite adults' best efforts, some children were exposed to the mass fatalities that resulted from the flu pandemic.

Younger children actively tried to situate themselves within this changed context. Influenza 'statuses' became extremely common throughout the DLF page in November and December 1918. Ten-year-old 'Little Bush Maid', for example, informed Dot that "I hope you have not had the influenza. I am glad to say I have not had it."⁷⁵ Children's updates regarding their medical condition demonstrated youth awareness of the 1918 flu's extremely infectious nature, both throughout communities and within households. Eleven-year-old 'Sirius' noted that the virus was prevalent in Outram but had not "yet" affected any at home.⁷⁶ 'Jeannie Irwin' also recognised the possibility that the flu may infect persons who were in contact with, or in the presence of, afflicted individuals. She wrote "I have been in bed 11 days.... My brother hasn't had the influenza yet. There have been about 30 deaths at Nightcaps. The influenza is fairly bad here.... My sister is in bed with the influenza."⁷⁷ For many younger children, the flu was not merely an abstract force operating at a distance from their lives, but an event that permeated their immediate worlds.

An Immediate Threat

Young children were aware that a particularly virulent influenza virus was present in New Zealand during the last two months of 1918. Their intense focus on the flu was not only a result of its close geographic proximity but also because this proximity posed an immediate physical threat to themselves and their families. Colin Barnes, nine years old during the pandemic, developed strong memories of

⁷⁴ Mary Shaw, interview with Pauline Vera, 25 October 1983, WHO-1040-24, Glen Eden Oral History Project (GEOHP), JT Diamond Archive (JTDA), Waitakere Central Library, Henderson.

⁷⁵ 'Little Bush Maid (Dunedin)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

⁷⁶ 'Sirius (Outram)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.56.

⁷⁷ 'Jeannie Irwin (Nightcaps)', DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56 [emphasis added].

his parents being concerned about the family's propinquity to a flu-victim. He later recalled:

I remember me folk being remarked on the people next door that were living in the house next door, the lady there got the flu and she got up, well they reckon she got up out of bed too soon and she had a relapse and died and I know that caused quite a, uh, bit of consternation being so close.⁷⁸

Despite their age, many young children recognised that the flu was to be avoided if possible, and perhaps even feared. Donald Thompson was seven years old in 1918 and, decades later, he expressed clear memories of the emotions contemporaries associated with that event: “[s]ome members of our family had it quite badly but we, the family, didn’t lose any lives through it but some did. It had everyone fairly frightened at the time ... there again was a childhood experience that left a mark.”⁷⁹

Adult fears about contagion strongly shaped youth experiences of the 1918 flu. This seems to be especially the case for younger children who largely lived at home during the pandemic. As demonstrated in Chapter One, children were subject to numerous flu preventatives and treatments administered both at home and in wider community venues. Parents and caregivers also sought to protect youth from the pandemic through quarantine measures such as keeping children inside to prevent them from catching influenza. Adults occasionally went to great lengths to prevent their children from being infected. Eight-year-old Margaret Young and her brother were evacuated from their home in Lyall Bay after their father contracted the flu. She later recalled that “they sent me to some friends that lived up in Duncan Terrace and these friends took me and I was there you see, I wasn’t in the house. We all had to try to go out the house, I think my brother went to Grandmother’s or something because it was so infectious you see.”⁸⁰ Dorothy Savage was also taken away from her foster-grandparents’ home and placed in another whare on the Te Ore Ore marae in Masterton after both her caregivers caught the flu.⁸¹ Isolation at home rather than evacuation, however, appears to have been the more common experience for younger children during the pandemic

⁷⁸ Colin Barnes, interview with Myra Ballantyne, 4 December 1985, OA 379, WA.

⁷⁹ Thompson, interview.

⁸⁰ Margaret Young, interview with Hugo Manson, 30 September 1993, OHInt-0402-3, Kilbirnie-Lyall Bay Community Centre Oral History Project, Kilbirnie Library, Wellington.

⁸¹ Dorothy Te Uru Manuka Savage, interview with Judith Fyfe, 31 January 1983, OA 628, WA.

as it quickly became evident sending children away would not necessarily protect them from the virus.

Many younger children and their family members contracted the flu despite taking precautions and antidotes. James Osmond was nine years of age at the end of 1918. He retained strong memories of an inhaling plant installed locally in Foresters Hall but this treatment did not protect Osmond or his father. Osmond remembered that “Dad and me; every night our noses bled. The people that bled, they got it all right. It kind of built up a pressure during the day. Oh, the pillows and bedclothes! It would just ... out of your nose like that. Bleed and bleed.”⁸² Luckily for Osmond, his mother and sister evaded the virus and were able to nurse James and his father back to health. Morbidity rates amongst families varied and some households were more strongly affected by the flu than others. Several families appear to have been entirely unscathed by the pandemic; ‘Silver King’ made only one reference to the flu in his letters from this period, and that was in relation to school closures.⁸³ By contrast, 11-year-old ‘Victoria’s Flower’ informed Dot that her entire family had caught the flu.⁸⁴ The pandemic had a similar impact upon Mary Shaw’s home, recalling that “[w]e all had it more-or-less, I know my brother was very, very bad with it.”⁸⁵

The flu’s infiltration into younger children’s homes forced many youth to assume significant responsibility during the pandemic. Adults aged between 25 and 45 years were struck unusually hard by this virus and children up to the age of 12 sometimes found themselves in the position of having to look after flu-stricken parents and caregivers.⁸⁶ Marion Williams was one of these children. Both of her parents acquired the virus and their nearest neighbour was three miles away and had gone into quarantine. At first Marion’s mother was able to care for her father but, as Marion later recalled:

⁸² James Osmond, ‘James Osmond’ in Colleen Christie (ed.), *Back Then: oral history interviews from the Birkenhead Public Library collection, Volume Two* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Birkenhead City Council, 1988), p.21.

⁸³ ‘Silver King (Middlemarch)’, DLF, OW, 18 December 1918, p.61.

⁸⁴ ‘Victoria’s Flower (Gore)’, DLF, OW, 18 December 1918, p.62.

⁸⁵ Shaw, interview.

⁸⁶ Geoffrey W. Rice with assistance from Linda Bryder, *Black November: The 1918 influenza pandemic in New Zealand*, 2d ed. (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2005), pp.18-19.

she [her mother] finally got the flu, and she was terribly ill and ... I had to look after them, I must have been about 7 at that stage. Dad was out in the tent and mother was in bed inside and she was very, very, very ill and ... I knew it that they weren't to go black because, I don't know how I knew that I suppose somebody had told me, but I remember her being very, very, dark brown and ... she kept on drinking this painkiller and finally she started to get over it again.⁸⁷

This role reversal of children caring for adults was entirely unintended, and parents often tried to prevent it from occurring. Dorothy Savage, as detailed above, was taken away from her home and ill foster-relations during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the only other occupant in her new living quarters also caught the flu. She remembered “the old man and I, I stayed with him and then he got sick and I nursed him, I used to look after him there was only the two of us there. You know I cooked for him and I changed him and everything.”⁸⁸

For some youth, the 1918 influenza pandemic had permanent ramifications. ‘Toby Rock’ noted in mid-December that his Uncle Dick died from the flu.⁸⁹ A great many flu-victims developed pneumonia as a secondary complication, and this disease proved to be “the real killer in 1918.”⁹⁰ Numerous children lost siblings and other close kin to the 1918 flu, and this bereavement often left deep emotional scars. Margaret Young, for example, had strong memories of her father’s death in the pandemic. When asked years later about the effect his death had on Young’s life, she responded:

he was the one that made more fuss of me than what my mother did... And he always called me muffin, I don't know why. And I remember one time my mother called me muffin for, you know, just not thinking, and I told her not to do that again. And she, I remember she never did that again.⁹¹

Margaret Young’s story was not unique; approximately 8,500 Pākehā and Māori youth under the age of 20 lost at least one parent to the pandemic.⁹² Seven-year-old ‘Daddy’s Pet’ shared her own grief in a letter sent to Dot during early December 1918: “I am very sorry to tell you that my dear daddy is dead, and we miss him very

⁸⁷ Williams and Williams, interview.

⁸⁸ Savage, interview.

⁸⁹ ‘Toby Rock (Wairekiki)’, DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.62.

⁹⁰ Rice, *Black November*, p.24.

⁹¹ Young, interview.

⁹² Rice, *Black November*, p.238.

much. I am still going to keep my N.D.P. [nom de plume], as I know my daddy would still like me to be his pet if he were here.”⁹³

Many younger children reacted keenly to the mass fatalities caused by the flu pandemic, even when they had not been personally bereaved. ‘Billy Oakland’ noted at the end of 1918 that “[w]e are having a lot of holidays just now – first with the ending of the war and now for the influenza. One of the boys in my class lost his mother with it last week. It is so sad.”⁹⁴ Intriguingly, some younger children appear to have had a stronger emotional response to the large number of flu-victims than to the mass casualties resulting from the First World War. Vivian Robertson lived through both the conflict and pandemic, and she recalled in her oral history interview that:

you’d hear the strains of the band of the death march that played at any particular funeral, that was, it seemed to be the same thing happened ... when the people were dying with the influenza ... I think they called it the death march, and that’s what used to fill us so full of fear was the very word death, we had a great fear of that you see we didn’t understand that you see, we knew it was something that was tragic, and possibly more so then the war because I didn’t really understand what the war was about, [although] I knew there was a war on.⁹⁵

New Zealand’s war-related deaths had overwhelmingly taken place on battlefields far away. Some younger children were significantly affected by these fatalities, especially when they involved combatant-relations, but many had little understanding of the realities behind long casualty lists in newspapers. Death on such a large scale was an abstract concept, rather than a lived experience. By contrast, the pandemic resulted in numerous victims who died in New Zealand itself. Younger children may have thus been more emotionally affected by the flu due to their immediate proximity to its consequences. Whether or not they truly fully understood the concept and reality of death itself, however, was another matter.

Influenza: Traumatic or Dramatic?

Younger children strongly engaged with the 1918 influenza pandemic. After all, it would have been difficult to do otherwise. Schools were shut, church services

⁹³ ‘Daddy’s Pet (Dunedin North)’, DLF, OW, 11 December 1918, p.56.

⁹⁴ ‘Billy Oakland (Hedgehope)’, DLF, OW, 4 December 1918, p.56.

⁹⁵ Robertson, interview.

were limited, and youth were often isolated at home. Adults and children alike also took various antidotes to ward off the flu. Unfortunately, preventative and curative measures largely proved to be ineffective and people across New Zealand became sick with this virus. Many died as a result of secondary complications and several children thus lost relations and friends to the pandemic. Youth up to the age of 12 actively tried to situate themselves in this changed context. Children's writings and oral histories reveal that youth had strong emotional reactions to the pandemic, and were often forced to respond to challenges presented by the flu such as familial illness. Younger children, however, simultaneously demonstrated mixed feelings about the constraints the pandemic placed on their lives. Although quarantine and curative procedures were undoubtedly put in place to protect children, some youth resented these measures. Indeed, it appears that several younger children saw the flu as an irksome episode rather than a traumatic event.

Some children up to the age of 12 disliked their enforced participation in flu-prevention measures. Vivian Robertson was well aware of the virus' potentially fatal implications. Nonetheless, she strongly resented her flu-time experiences in public treatment facilities, recalling that "the idea I should say was to inhale the friars balsam in the steam ... and I didn't like the idea of going in with my clothes on either, because they were always wet and horrible – horrible feeling!"⁹⁶ Contagion measures taken during the pandemic also generated antipathy amongst younger children. Eleven-year-old 'Dolly Dingles' commented in late 1918 that "Otautau is very quiet these days, for everybody is laid up with the influenza. I don't think we are going back to school for a good while owing to the influenza.... I have nothing to do these days, and I think I would far rather be at school."⁹⁷ 'Freckles', also 11 years old, expressed similar frustration with the pandemics' interference in youth concerns and priorities. Dunedin-based 'Freckles' was a great reader and consequently resented the temporary closure of the local Public Library.⁹⁸ Youth became easily bored with their seclusion from the outside world during November

⁹⁶ Robertson, interview.

⁹⁷ 'Dolly Dingles (Otautau)', DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.57.

⁹⁸ 'Freckles (Dunedin)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

and December. Two months seemed like a long time for young children and they understandably resented having to put their lives on hold.

Age may have been a protective variable that maintained some younger children's psychological wellbeing during the pandemic. A large number of youth recognised that the 1918 flu was something to be avoided. Some children, however, did not fully comprehend the danger this event posed to their family members' and their own lives. Marion Williams, as detailed earlier, had to care for both her parents when they were struck ill by the pandemic. Nonetheless, she later remembered "I don't ever remember being frightened about it. I wasn't frightened um 'cause I sort of suppose I didn't ... have any fear of knowing you know what it could be, what could happen to them."⁹⁹ Even when presented with damning evidence to the contrary, some children still believed that the pandemic was not a serious threat. Francis Fitzgerald, ten years old in late 1918, recalled that during the pandemic:

Joe and I, we used to, we used to run behind, they used to wrap up their corpses up in canvas and just put them on lorries. They couldn't cope with them ... and us, Joe and I, used to run behind the lorries and hanging onto the back of them, they weren't going very fast. And all these corpses on them and they'd [go] down the town hall and there was the fumigation there and we used to run through this fumigation and out again and we thought it was great fun.¹⁰⁰

Many younger children clearly did not understand the spectre or reality of death. Eight-year-old Jack Bull remembered being told by his mother in late 1918 that his friend would no longer visit Jack because he had died during the pandemic. Yet, although Jack recalled feeling sad, he also noted that the concept of death did not really mean anything to him at that stage.¹⁰¹

Variations in Impact

Younger children's close geographic proximity to the 1918 influenza pandemic resulted in intense youth engagement with this event. Unfortunately, this engagement was often the result of negative experiences. In stark contrast to the war period, children in flu-stricken New Zealand had little opportunity to be

⁹⁹ Williams and Williams, interview.

¹⁰⁰ Francis Patrick (Frank) Fitzgerald, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 8 October 1991, OA 84, WA.

¹⁰¹ Bull, interview.

involved in exciting events such as fundraisers and pageants. Children, however, were not universally affected or traumatised by the pandemic. Some children and their families were spared from catching the virus, and others did not fully comprehend the danger that they faced in late 1918. As a result, numerous youth were equally or more affected by other events in their lives during this period.

Younger children faced the end of the First World War as well as the influenza pandemic in late 1918. As demonstrated earlier, the conflict had a significant impact on the lives of many children less than 12 years of age, and this was particularly the case for those with combatant-relations. Some youth saw the return of their soldier-relatives from overseas as more important than the pandemic, especially when their lives had been minimally impacted by the flu. 'Maggie Bell' was in Standard II in 1918 and, at the end of the year, she wrote that "[w]e have a week's holiday owing to the influenza. I have two uncles at the war, but now the war is over they will be coming back soon."¹⁰² Unfortunately, several younger children were directly affected by both of these tragic events. Ten-year-old 'Bonny' informed Dot in late December that:

[s]ince I last wrote to you my brother who was fighting in France has been killed. We are expecting my other brother home soon, as he has been sick, and the sick and wounded get home first. I have not had the influenza yet, but my father and sister and two brothers have had it.¹⁰³

The war and the flu could have equally devastating effects on the lives of some youth. Six-year-old 'Tinker', for example, faced a double bereavement in 1918 when his soldier-uncle died of wounds in October and his aunt died during the pandemic.¹⁰⁴

Children's worlds in the late 1910s, however, were not solely affected by the Great War and the 1918 influenza pandemic. War-effort activities, conflict-related absences, quarantine measures and mass fatalities may have overshadowed children's lives, but they did not suspend them. Youth also faced other significant events unrelated to either the conflict or the pandemic during this period. One of Florence Ralph's key childhood memories was her near death experience with diphtheria at age eight. Ralph recalled that, in 1916, her mother:

¹⁰² 'Maggie Bell (Maungatua)', DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.56.

¹⁰³ 'Bonny (Colac Bay)', DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.56.

¹⁰⁴ 'Tinker (Lovell's Flat)', DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.56.

saved my life, 'cause I was screaming "couldn't swallow" and she went next door ... [and] asked them if they had any linseed meal, and they had some and mother heated it up, she put this hot linseed meal poultice around my throat and I, she looked down my throat, she said you could just see a pinhole. When, you know, when after she had the linseed meal on ... began to ease off that, but then of course I was taken to hospital.¹⁰⁵

Donald Williams' early years were similarly affected by a personal life-changing event. His father died while driving Donald's Gran to Plimmerton during the pandemic. He remembered that "they never got up halfway before dad ... had a heart attack, car ran back over the edge ... she [Donald's grandmother] had a broken leg, broken wrist and there she stayed for 12 hours in the freezing cold ... dad was killed straight outright."¹⁰⁶ It is important to recognise that these individual experiences did not shape world history but they were key moments in these peoples' lives. The First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic did not comprise the total sum of younger children's existence between 1914 and 1918.

Conclusion

Younger children's responses to the conflict and the 1918 influenza pandemic were heavily determined by the extent to which these events interfered with their priorities and concerns. Despite mass youth participation in war-effort activities and being targeted by conflict-focussed discourses, many younger children were reasonably disengaged from the Great War. Youth with soldier-relations were more likely to be emotionally connected to the battlefield throughout their relatives' military service. These children thought more deeply and wrote more extensively about the war than their peers who lacked such ties to the warfront, most likely reflecting the greater engagement of their entire household with the conflict. By contrast, the flu's immediate geographic proximity posed a direct threat to the vast majority of youth and their families. Numerous children caught the virus themselves, and others had to take on the role of caregiver for adult relations struck down by the flu. Many children lost family members and friends through secondary bacterial complications. Generally speaking, younger children's lives were more severely disrupted by the pandemic than by the First

¹⁰⁵ Florence Ralph, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 27 June 1991, OA 570, WA.

¹⁰⁶ Williams and Williams, interview.

World War, and surviving evidence shows that they responded accordingly. Numerous youth up to the age of 12 reacted strongly to the flu, often seeing this event as more tragic than the conflict that preceded it. Proximity, however, was not the only variable that affected children's reactions to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic. As demonstrated in the following chapter, age played a crucial role in shaping youth responses to these significant world events.

Chapter 3: Older Children

This chapter examines the experiences of children aged between 12 and 20 years living in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand. While they were subject to numerous societal expectations promoting particular responses to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic, adolescents exercised agency in their behavioural and emotional reactions to these events. Domestic, educational, community-based, and work-related activities were highly valued between 1914 and 1918. Like youth up to the age of 12, adolescents interacted with the conflict and the pandemic primarily when they intersected with older children's spheres of interest.

Adolescents' lives, however, were more dramatically shaped by these international events. Age-related differences meant that older children were particularly vulnerable to the pressures inherent in New Zealand's war-driven and flu-stricken society. Older children's proximity to those eligible for military service and widespread participation within the paid workforce directly exposed them to both the conflict's and flu's traumatic consequences. Broadly speaking, older children were also more psychologically capable of understanding the mass fatalities incurred through these events. As a result, adolescents tended to engage more deeply with the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic than their younger counterparts.

Older Children's Lives, 1914-1918

Older New Zealand children's lives were not completely dominated by the conflict and the 1918 Pandemic. Comments regarding local community events, for instance, permeate older correspondents' letters to the 'Dot's Little Folk Page' (DLF) in the *Otago Witness* between 1914 and 1918. Sixteen-year-old 'Maheru' noted matter-of-factly in February 1918 that "I was at the Tapanui Agricultural Show, and I intend [on] going to the Flower Show if it keeps fine weather."¹ Like younger children, older youth maintained their interest in the people, activities, and contexts that comprised their worlds during the mid-to-late 1910s. Youth priorities

¹ 'Maheru (Pomahaka)', 'Dot's Little Folk' (DLF) page, *Otago Witness* (OW), 27 February 1918, p.56.

and spheres of interest, however, were not static across childhood, and these differences are readily apparent in the topics adolescents chose to write about throughout this period.

School was a key part of many older children's worlds, albeit not the majority. Attendance was compulsory for New Zealand children aged up to 14 years, and fewer than 30 percent of pupils went on to secondary education.² Nonetheless, these adolescents wrote extensively about their schoolyard experiences. Thirteen-year-old 'Cabbage Tree Ned' had three letters published in the DLF during late 1918, all of which mentioned school. This correspondence noted that 'Cabbage Tree Ned' was in Standard V, and that his teacher had to walk 6 miles to school and taught 10 pupils.³ Upcoming inspector's visits were also commented on, alongside his school's closure due to the flu.⁴ 'The Wild Irish Rose', 13 years of age in 1915, similarly recorded a great deal of information about school throughout her correspondence. At the beginning of 1916, for example, she noted that school had started up again, much to her delight.⁵ School was understandably important to ambitious older children, and this was particularly the case for youth from less wealthy backgrounds. Youth who reached a certain academic standard could attain free secondary schooling. 'Maheru' noted in late 1918 that "[o]ne of my sisters has gained her proficiency, and is going to Gore at the end of November to sit for the Junior National Scholarship.... The exam. [sic] lasts two or three days. Another of my sisters sat for the scholarship last year, and obtained a free place."⁶ Scholastic success could facilitate access to further education that may have otherwise been unattainable, thus making primary school a priority for several older children who wished to learn at a higher level.

² Colin McGeorge, 'Childhood's Sole Serious Business: The Long Haul to Full School Attendance', *New Zealand Journal of History (NZJH)*, Vol. 40, no. 1, April 2006, p.32; Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack and E. P. Malone, 'Introduction: The Great War and New Zealand Memory', in Jock Phillips, Nicholas Boyack and E. P. Malone (eds.), *The Great Adventure: New Zealand Soldiers Describe the First World War* (Wellington: Allen & Unwin/Port Nicholson Press, 1988), p.8.

³ 'CabbageTree Ned (Arthur's Point)', DLF, *OW*, 23 October 1918, p.56.

⁴ 'Cabbage-Tree Ned (Arthur's Point)', DLF, *OW*, 20 November 1918, p.63; 'Cabbage Tree Ned (Arthur's Point)', DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.56.

⁵ 'The Wild Irish Rose (Slope Point)', DLF, *OW*, 16 February 1916, p.75.

⁶ 'Maheru (Pomahaka)', DLF, *OW*, 23 October 1918, p.56.

Older children's letters reveal a variety of educational opportunities taken by youth in the mid-to-late 1910s. Fifteen-year-old 'Gipsy Belle' left school by 1917, yet the following year wrote that "[t]he technical classes here are taking up next week, and I am taking a couple of subjects. Everybody says that if you don't learn while you are young you regret it when you are old; so I am going to take no chances."⁷ From the 1880s, a technical education movement developed in New Zealand that led to the establishment of both day and night classes in various subjects and vocational areas.⁸ The 1900 Manual and Technical Instruction Act provided these schools with additional resources and permitted them to teach almost any subject.⁹ Technical college classes in specialities such as dressmaking were sometimes integrated into traditional school curriculum but were also themselves an alternative means of education for adolescents who had left school.¹⁰ 'Peg O' My Heart' left school at age 14 in 1917 and intended on going to Technical School the following year.¹¹ Some older youth attended other educational classes alongside, or instead of, those provided by secondary or technical schools. Sunday schools were open to children up to the age of 14, and adolescents often continued their religious instruction through Bible Classes.¹² Fourteen-year-old 'A Soldier's Nurse' recorded in 1916 that she and her sisters attend Sunday school every week, and 19-year-old 'Linnet' wrote that she knew some girls in her new Bible Class at Mosgiel.¹³

New Zealand adolescents wrote extensively about their participation in the workforce between 1914 and 1918. Many youth who left school were involved in

⁷ 'Gipsy Belle (Gore)', DLF, *OW*, 17 October 1917, p.57; 'Gipsy Belle (Gore)', DLF, *OW*, 24 April 1918, p.57.

⁸ Louise Shaw, 'More than the Ordinary Domestic Drudge: Women and Technical Education in Auckland 1895-1922', *History of Education Review*, Vol. 38, no. 1, 2009, pp.3-4.

⁹ Noel Harrison, 'Riley, Arthur Dewhurst – Biography', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/2r22/1>, accessed 20 October 2011.

¹⁰ It is important to note, however, that children from a range of socio-economic backgrounds attended these schools; although free places were offered, most students were required to pay fees. See the following for more detail: Shaw, pp.3-4.

¹¹ 'Peg O' My Heart (Oamaru)', DLF, *OW*, 25 April 1917, p.63; 'Peg O' My Heart (Oamaru)', DLF, *OW*, 27 March 1918, p.64.

¹² Hugh Morrison, "'Little vessels" or "little soldiers": New Zealand Protestant children, foreign missions, religious pedagogy and empire, c.1880s-1930s', *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 47, no. 3, June 2011, p.307.

¹³ 'A Soldier's Nurse (Papatotara)', DLF, *OW*, 30 August 1916, p.61; 'Linnet (Mosgiel)', DLF, *OW*, 28 April 1915, p.75.

unpaid domestic labour or employed to work outside of their homes. These jobs were often significant parts of adolescents' lives in the mid-to-late 1910s as both kinds of work were important to family economies. 'Nurse Ella' wrote in 1917, for example, that "I am still in the shop at Balclutha, but I find it very cold some mornings. It is generally about 9 o'clock when I get home at night, as it is half-past 7 when the evening papers arrive here."¹⁴ Adolescents clearly saw their participation in the workforce, like their involvement in educational activities, as key to their identity. Work 'statuses' littered older correspondents' introductory letters to Dot; 17-year-old 'Leola' commented in mid-1915 that "I have left school, and am working at home."¹⁵ Fourteen-year-old 'English Lassie' similarly noted in 1916 that she had left school to go out working, and she liked employment very much.¹⁶ Changes in adolescents' working situations were painstakingly recorded, further demonstrating the significance of employment activities to older youth. Fifteen-year-old 'Oak Tree' noted that they had left their place of work and returned home in August 1918. 'Oak Tree' then updated this information three months later, writing "I am out working again, and like it alright.... I milk two cows at night. I am keeping house for a few days, as my mistress is away for the week-end."¹⁷

Families and home contexts were also a key concern for older youth. Like younger children, adolescents regularly mentioned their relatives and living situations throughout their letters. Despite this common focus, however, younger and older correspondents' comments on these topics diverged. Educational and employment opportunities sometimes necessitated adolescents moving away from their family homes, and these youth wrote at length about their alternative living situations. Sixteen-year-old 'White Violet' recounted in 1916 that "I am now working at Winton.... There are three girls where I am working now, and two of them go to school. We had four little pups, but sold two and have two left. We milk 17 cows in the morning and 15 at night."¹⁸ Adolescents continued to value their relationships with family members even when they lived apart from them. Despite

¹⁴ 'Nurse Ella (Balclutha)', DLF, *OW*, 25 July 1917, p.56.

¹⁵ 'Leola (Waikaia)', DLF, *OW*, 30 June 1915, p.77.

¹⁶ 'English Lassie (Lochiel)', DLF, *OW*, 28 June 1916, p.69.

¹⁷ 'Oak Tree (Fortification)', DLF, *OW*, 28 August 1918, p.56; 'Oak Tree (Benmore)', DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.57.

¹⁸ 'White Violet (Winton)', DLF, *OW*, 26 April 1916, p.71.

living away from home, 'White Violet' informed Dot that her little sister was in hospital in 1918.¹⁹ Age-related life changes also meant that discussions of family members could differ between older and younger DLF members. Several adolescents in 1910s New Zealand were married and chose to write about their spouse alongside other family members. Nineteen-year-old 'Midnight Star' noted in 1918 that "my husband will be going on "home service" soon. I shall most likely live with my people till he comes back. He is expecting to be sent to Samoa on garrison duty."²⁰

The home and family contexts depicted in older children's letters illustrate significant diversity amongst the lives of youth aged between 12 and 20 years. Yet, despite these differences, it is clear that various forms of education, employment situations, domestic circumstances, and families were all important to older children. New Zealand adolescents, however, lived in a society under significant pressure between 1914 and 1918. Unfortunately, older children could not afford to be protected to the same extent as their younger counterparts during this period. Adolescent concerns and priorities were strongly affected by New Zealand's involvement in World War One and the 1918 influenza pandemic. For many youth, these events consequently assumed paramount importance.

World War One

Proximity and Engagement

The First World War significantly disturbed multiple spheres in adolescents' lives, and this infringement evoked strong responses from older children. Schools were particularly affected by the conflict, and teachers encouraged war-effort activities amongst older as well as younger pupils. The war, however, demanded more from secondary school pupils than from primary school students. Soldier enlistment and recruitment practices drained workforces across the country and adolescents were called upon to make up the deficit. School authorities were asked

¹⁹ 'White Violet (Centre Bush)', DLF, *OW*, 23 October 1918, p.57.

²⁰ 'Midnight Star (Oamaru)', DLF, *OW*, 31 July 1918, p.63.

to help with labour shortages that emerged as early as 1915.²¹ Wellington College pupils were thus informed that:

the reason the [1918 Speech Day] ceremony was taking place earlier in the year than usual was that the National Efficiency Board had sent a request that, if it could be at all arranged, the term holidays might be shortened and the mid-summer holidays lengthened, so as to enable the bigger boys, at all events, to do something in the way of helping the farmers during this period of stress and strain.²²

Wider societal expectations meant that older youth often had little choice in whether or not they sacrificed their education in order to support the war-effort. Katarina Te Tau, aged 15 years at the outbreak of war, recalled bitterly that the conflict resulted in her having “a hard working life, because you see, my elder brother ... he was enlisted into the war, [and] my dad was growing wheat by the acre, acres and acres of it ... so I gave up school, I was the eldest one you see so I had to give up school and help dad.”²³ Te Tau and many other youth resented the conflict due to its encroachment upon adolescent priorities and concerns.

Older children already in the workforce were also impacted by the Great War. Employment experiences between 1914 and 1918 were shaped by New Zealand’s status as a home front society. The conflict resulted in new demands being placed on both adult and adolescent workers. Tom Brough, for instance, was 17 years old when he began working in dining cars on the North Island’s railway system in 1916. One of his strongest memories from that period was one morning when “we’d had no warning ... and in comes an officer with a warrant. Two hundred breakfasts! ... They [the soldiers] ate everything on the train. At Te Kuiti we had to put a message out to stock up at Frankton so we could lunch them.”²⁴ Adolescent participation in the workforce meant that older children were more exposed to the war’s impact on the lives of strangers. Charles Harling was a 15-

²¹ James Watson, ‘Patriotism, Profits and Problems: New Zealand Farming During the Great War’, in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds.), *New Zealand’s Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War* (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007), p.543.

²² *The Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXVII, no. 1, June 1918, p.9.

²³ Katarina Whararuaruhu Te Tau, interview with Judith Fyfe, 27 January 1983, Oral Archive (OA) 220, Wairarapa Archives (WA), Masterton.

²⁴ Tom Brough, ‘Tom Brough’ in Colleen Christie (ed.), *Back Then: oral history interviews from the Birkenhead Public Library collection, Volume One* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Birkenhead City Council, 1988), p.41.

year-old errand boy in 1917 and, decades later, he still remembered delivering one particular telegram:

I didn't know what was in it ... and I heard a hell of a scream and I looked around and the woman fell down to the ground and I didn't know what the hell to do and I rushed like hell back to the post office and I told the post master and ... he [?] went to say that her husband had been killed in action, and from then on the postmaster had to take all the serious or Killed in Action – KIA they used to call them – as I hated going.²⁵

The war's infiltration into New Zealand workplaces often resulted in undesirable consequences for older children as it could expose adolescents to stressful and potentially traumatic situations.

The First World War evoked the most intense reactions from adolescents when it impinged upon older children's familial and social spheres. Youth above the age of 12 were well aware of the war's massive casualty rates. Yet, despite this awareness, adolescents were understandably shocked and emotionally devastated when they lost their own loved ones on the battlefield. Fifteen-year-old 'Peg O' My Heart' recorded in March 1918 that "[w]e had word a few weeks ago that my brother, who had just won the Military Cross, had made the supreme sacrifice. It was a terrible shock to us, and came when we least expected it."²⁶ Indeed, sometimes older children did not fully comprehend how destructive the war was until they were personally affected by it. Doreen Jamieson was 12 years old when she heard about New Zealand's announcement of war in late 1914. Years later, however, she remembered that she did not fully absorb what this meant until her cousin enlisted: "I knew that it was a terrible thing, but it wasn't until of course my cousin went off at 16, put his age [forward] ... and no sooner he went over there he was sent back to England into hospital, he had been gassed ... and then my uncle [thought] he must get over to his son Bob, so he put his age back."²⁷ Luckily, both appear to have survived the war, but Jamieson's oral history clearly demonstrates that she found her uncle and cousin's entanglement in the conflict distressing. Adolescents, like younger children, tended to be more emotionally engaged with the First World War when they had personal links to the Front.

²⁵ Charles Harling, interview with Adrian Hart, 28 November 1995, NOH-AAA-0101, North Shore Oral History Project, Takapuna Library, Auckland.

²⁶ 'Peg O' My Heart (Oamaru)', DLF, *OW*, 27 March 1918, p.64.

²⁷ Doreen Jamieson, interview with Myra Ballantyne, 7 August 1985, OA 714, WA.

Both older and younger children with soldier-relatives wrote more extensively about the conflict than their peers without such military connections. For these youth, the outcome of the war was invested with personal significance. Fifteen-year-old 'White Violet' wrote in September 1915 that "I do wish this war would come to an end as there are so many dying of wounds and getting shot. My brother was wounded between August 6 and 7, and we have not heard any word about where he is wounded ... you can imagine how anxious one would get."²⁸ Soldier-relatives' health and military activities were incredibly important to all children, and youth relayed this information extensively to one another throughout their correspondence. Thirteen-year-old 'Hawkshaw the Detective' wrote after the Gallipoli landing that "I had a cousin killed at the war. He was the youngest sergeant-major who volunteered for the front. He went with the Main Body. His brother was on the train with him, but he was called off."²⁹ Older children, however, reflected on the fate and activities of their combatant-kin at even greater length than their younger counterparts. In February 1916, 17-year-old 'Leola' wrote that her brother:

has been in the hospital, laid up with rheumatism. He had it very severe, too, all through his body, from the tips of his fingers right down to his toes. He is now out of the hospital, and in a convalescent home. He is getting on fairly well. Sometimes he says it takes him all his time to walk.³⁰

The absence of soldier-relatives between 1914 and 1918 appears to have particularly affected adolescents. Families in 1910s New Zealand were often characterised by significant age gaps between some siblings and thus many young children may not have ever really known their combatant-relations. By contrast, older children had usually grown up with their soldier-brothers, and they actively sought to maintain these relationships throughout the war. Fourteen-year-old 'A Soldier's Nurse' noted in October 1916 that "I have been expecting a letter from my brothers this long while. We should never wait for them to write, but keep on writing to them, as it cheers them up to get a letter from home. And they have not much time to write."³¹ Correspondence sent from overseas was highly valued by

²⁸ 'White Violet (Balfour)', DLF, *OW*, 29 September 1915, p.77.

²⁹ 'Hawkshaw the Detective (Miller's Flat)' to DLF, *OW*, 29 September 1915, p.77.

³⁰ 'Leola (Waikawa)', DLF, *OW*, 16 February 1916, p.75.

³¹ 'A Soldier's Nurse (Papatotara, Woodlands)', DLF, *OW*, 25 October 1916, p.58.

adolescents. Seventeen-year-old 'Nurse Ella' noted in early 1918 that "[w]e got quite a number of letters from my three brothers at the Front on Saturday, and it was quite a treat."³² Letters from the Front not only connected older children to their soldier-relations overseas, but also reassured adolescents of their safety. 'Island Girl' made regular mention of her brother's letters and their status when writing to Dot during the conflict; at the end of 1916, for instance, 'Island Girl' noted that she had received a letter and a Christmas card from her brother who was keeping well in France.³³ Unfortunately, combatant-relatives were not the only people older adolescents had to worry about during the conflict.

Adolescents experienced close relational proximity to the First World War. While younger children had a limited number of potential connections to the Front, this was not the case for older youth. The war posed a threat not only to adolescents' brothers, cousins, uncles, and fathers, but also to their boyfriends, husbands, friends, and peers. Twenty-year-old 'M. I. M.', for instance, wrote in June 1917 that "[m]y husband has been away over a year now, and is still safe. I have a little baby girl; she was born three months after her father sailed, and she is such a comfort to me."³⁴ Older children's social circles were often decimated as large numbers of men left New Zealand to fight overseas. Due to their age, adolescents interacted closely with men later targeted by enlistment and conscription movements. Sixteen-year-old 'Strawberry Leaf' noted as early as November 1914 that "I know three or four who have gone away to it [the war], and we all hope it will come to an end soon."³⁵ These relationships further exposed older children to the realities of war, emotionally tying adolescents even more strongly to developments on the battlefield. As 'Pineapple' poignantly wrote in mid-1915, "[i]t makes it [the conflict] seem so much nearer our homes when we have friends who have been either killed or wounded at the front."³⁶

The war also targeted male adolescents themselves. As illustrated in Chapter One, war-time discourses asserted that young men would inevitably

³² 'Nurse Ella (Kakapuaka)', DLF, *OW*, 27 March 1918, p.64.

³³ 'Island Girl (Stewart Island)', DLF, *OW*, 27 December 1916, p.61.

³⁴ 'M. I. M. (Invercargill)', DLF, *OW*, 27 June 1917, p.63.

³⁵ 'Strawberry Leaf (Port Chalmers)', DLF, *OW*, 25 November 1914, p.75.

³⁶ 'Pineapple (Balclutha)', DLF, *OW*, 26 May 1915, p.75.

experience military service overseas. Older boys were increasingly viewed as future combatants between 1914 and 1918, and many youth responded strongly to this societal assumption. Indeed, numerous adolescents expressed a desire to become soldiers immediately. 'Daddy's Pet' noted in 1917 that her brother would like to become a soldier but could not as he was only 17 years old.³⁷ Legal constraints did not stop a number of older boys from attempting to sign up for military service during the conflict. 'H.M.S. New Zealand' informed Dot that "I have three brothers at the front, and am going to try to get away myself. I have already been fined for enlisting under age; but better luck next time."³⁸ Administrative attempts to prevent underage boys from serving overseas, however, varied in intensity, and there was significant diversity in how recruitment centres across the country determined eligibility for enlistment.³⁹ Male adolescents across New Zealand successfully lied about their age, or obtained parental permission, in order to serve on the battlefield. 'Remembrance' from Auckland, for example, wrote in late 1915 that "[m]y brother has gone to the war, although he has only turned 19, and he has been away over a year now."⁴⁰ Unfortunately, many paid a high price for their determination. Eruera Kawhia and Potene Tuhoro were brothers from Rangitukia on the East Coast who joined the First and Second Māori Contingents respectively. Upon enlistment, 15-year-old Eruera claimed he was 21, and 16-year-old Potene said he was 19. Both had died overseas by January 1917.⁴¹

Underage enlistment was motivated by a number of different factors. Some adolescents enlisted due to social prestige attached to the role. 'Guy' noted in late August 1914 that, in Westport, "[t]erritorials are always in uniform, and everywhere one meets soldiers. It is funny to see the conceit of some of them. They go along

³⁷ 'Daddy's Pet (Dunedin)', DLF, *OW*, 30 May 1917, p.57.

³⁸ 'H.M.S. New Zealand (Momonā)', DLF, *OW*, 25 July 1917, p.56.

³⁹ The Defence Department initially ignored underage enlistees however became "less indulgent" after the publication of Colonel Mackesy's letter from Gallipoli requesting men rather than boys in August 1915. Nonetheless, throughout the war there were significant regional variations in rejection rates for conditions such as under-height and under-weight measurements. See the following for more detail: Paul Baker, *King and Country Call: New Zealanders, Conscription and the Great War* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1988), pp.57, 115.

⁴⁰ 'Remembrance (Auckland)', DLF, *OW*, 24 November 1915, p.75.

⁴¹ Auckland Museum, 'Eruera Kawhia', <http://www.aucklandmuseum.com/?t=832>, accessed 1 February 2012.

the street as if the safety of the kingdom depended on them.”⁴² Older boys also could have volunteered out of a sense of adventure. The main locales of fighting were far away from New Zealand and enlistment thus resulted in a free excursion overseas. This rose-tinted interpretation of military service appears to have persisted throughout the conflict, despite ample evidence to the contrary. By December 1918, for instance, ‘Shining Sunbeam’ had lost one brother at war, and another served for three years overseas during the conflict. Nonetheless, not all members of her family were pleased that the war ended when it did. She wrote “[m]y youngest brother, ‘Tommy Burns,’ is still in Trentham. He enlisted with the Forty-fourth Reinforcements, but managed to get no further than camp. He was rather disappointed too, as he was expecting a trip over to France.”⁴³

Most male adolescents, however, asserted that they wanted to become soldiers so they could help fight enemy nations. In his introductory letter to Dot, ‘Marconi’ wrote that he “will be 19 soon, and then I will be able to enlist, with the intention, if I pass, to knock out a few of those square-headed Germans.”⁴⁴ ‘Postman Henry’ attempted to enlist underage for similar reasons in 1915 – his friend ‘Broncho Billy’ reported to Dot that ‘Postman Henry’ wanted to go to the Dardanelles so that he could give the Turks “beans.”⁴⁵ It is difficult to discern the extent to which older boys enlisted due to a genuine desire to help the war-effort. Male adolescents most likely signed up for combat for multiple reasons, and simply articulated the most socially acceptable ones when questioned. Nonetheless, it is clear that some older boys were deeply passionate about supporting the war in a military capacity. ‘Ivanhoe’, for example, wrote in May 1915 that he soon:

hope[s] to be in Trentham, as I have enlisted.... Things are getting very serious, and I am afraid it will be months before the war is over. The Germans are pretty strong, and will take some crushing. They are terrible brutes when they resort to the use of gases. They have no principles.⁴⁶

Adolescents also tried to assist New Zealand’s military endeavours from afar during the conflict. Older boys and girls alike were heavily involved in war-effort

⁴² ‘Guy (Westport)’, DLF, *OW*, 26 August 1914, p.71.

⁴³ ‘Shining Sunbeam (Fairfax)’, DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56.

⁴⁴ ‘Marconi (Castle Rock)’, DLF, *OW*, 26 June 1918, p.65.

⁴⁵ ‘Broncho Billy (Timaru)’, DLF, *OW*, 24 November 1915, p.75.

⁴⁶ ‘Ivanhoe (Oamaru)’, DLF, *OW*, 26 May 1915, pp.75-6.

activities conducted on the home front. Male pupils at Wellington College responded with “enthusiasm and energy” to a school movement promoting vegetable cultivation for patriotic purposes, and students at Waitaki Boys’ High contributed £1050 to the Belgian Relief and Patriotic Funds in the first 15 months of the war alone.⁴⁷ Adolescents additionally contributed their time and energy towards war-effort activities outside of school environments. ‘A Soldier’s Friend’ noted in 1916 that she had made a flannel for her local Red Cross Society group, and there is significant evidence that suggests other adolescents were extensively involved in similar community-based volunteer organisations during this period.⁴⁸ ‘A True Patriot’, for example, was a key member of the Otago Women’s Patriotic Association during the first few years of the conflict, ultimately being given a gold brooch in recognition of her service in December 1916.⁴⁹ Considering the significant, and often negative, impact the First World War had upon older children’s lives, it is entirely understandable that trying to help end this conflict became a key priority for countless adolescents between 1914 and 1918.

Reflections on the Conflict

Adolescents reflected on the conflict extensively within their writings between 1914 and 1918. Several school magazines in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand were produced by older students themselves, and these works constantly examined the First World War throughout its duration. Also, although children of all ages often referred to the First World War within their correspondence, the conflict was discussed to a far greater extent in adolescents’ letters than in those of their younger counterparts. ‘A True Patriot’, for example, ruminated at length on the war in early 1917: “still we find ourselves in the midst of this terrible war. Still we find our soldiers fighting with a heroism not less true and with a course not less noble than that which was delivered at Gallipoli, each and everyone eager to ‘do his bit’ to help oust the ruthless Huns.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *Wellingtonian*, Vol. XXVI, no. 1, May 1917, p.8; *The Waitakian: The Magazine of the Waitaki Boys’ High School (Waitakian)*, Vol. XI, no. 1, April 1916, p.89.

⁴⁸ ‘A Soldier’s Friend (Kelso)’, DLF, OW, 29 March 1916, p.71.

⁴⁹ ‘A True Patriot (Dunedin)’, DLF, OW, 27 December 1916, p.61.

⁵⁰ ‘A True Patriot (Dunedin)’, DLF, OW, 25 April 1917, p.63.

Many older children's lives were seriously disrupted by the conflict, and they understandably sought to reassure themselves and their friends that any sacrifices made for the war were inherently meaningful. 'Gwen' reflected in mid-1918 that "[m]any of our comrades have crossed the Great Border, including Peg o' My Heart's and Canadale Lassie's brothers, but they died happy, fulfilling the sacred heritage of our ancestors – for fighting for the highest ideals and protecting the weak."⁵¹ Many correspondents to the *Otago Witness* personally knew at least one of the 17,000 New Zealand soldiers killed overseas between 1914 and 1918. Sixteen-year-old 'English Lassie' noted in June 1918 that "[s]ince [last] writing to the page another of our district's young soldiers has made the supreme sacrifice. He was a very nice young fellow."⁵² Rhetoric concerning the validity of war-time sacrifice proved to be a useful framework for older children trying to give meaning to these mass casualties.

Older children deployed war-talk that explained and justified New Zealand's participation in the conflict throughout their written work. Germany and her allies were demonised in older children's contributions to school magazines, and particularly in those produced by boys' colleges. J. H. Parr informed his peers at Waitaki Boys' High School in December 1914 that:

[t]he motives which have inspired the German nation to foment the Armageddon of to-day have become of necessity the subject of endless investigation. To an unbiased mind, the Teutons' deliberate and cold-blooded provocation of an almost invincible combination of hostile Powers borders on the insane.⁵³

Many adolescents explicitly blamed Germany for beginning the war and constantly reiterated the need for the British Empire to challenge this aggressive behaviour. E. Corcoran of Timaru Boys' High School asserted in 1917 that "since this war has been forced upon them it behoves the Allies, as the champions of liberty and democracy, to wage it as vigorously as possible, and by bringing it to a speedy finish lessen the amount of suffering and distress which must always accompany war."⁵⁴ Such

⁵¹ 'Gwen (Takapau)', DLF, *OW*, 26 June 1918, p.63.

⁵² Gary Sheffield, 'Britain and the Empire at War 1914-18: Reflections on a Forgotten Victory', in Crawford and McGibbon (eds.), p.41; 'English Lassie (Lochiel)', DLF, *OW*, 26 June 1918, p.64.

⁵³ *Waitakian*, Vol. IX, no. 3, December 1914, p.163.

⁵⁴ *The Timaruvian: The Magazine of the Timaru Boys' High School*, Vol. XII, no. 1, December 1917, p.14.

editorials clearly illustrate that adolescents sought to understand the conflict for themselves, even though they may have drawn on war-talk generated by adults to do so.

Adolescents also drew on wider societal rhetoric to develop their own discourses concerning appropriate responses to the conflict. Intriguingly, some of these child-created dialogues deliberately challenged adult restrictions on youth behaviour. Underage enlistment was illegal and numerous authorities explicitly discouraged this practice. Dot, for instance, informed 'Pontiac' in 1915 that "I think it is a mistake to enlist too young, and am glad you were rejected."⁵⁵ Nonetheless, it is clear that several older DLF correspondents encouraged underage enlistment. 'Paperboy Bertie' thought it was a pity when his friend's initial bid for military service failed merely because 'Postman Henry' was underage.⁵⁶ This dialogue, however, was not one-sided as not all adolescents appreciated attempts by their peers to pressure them into enlisting. 'Navigator' complained about such behaviour in December 1916, querying "[d]o you think it is right for a D.L.F. girl friend to say to you that you should be away to the war instead of letting other men do the fighting for you? Well, that's what I was told, Dot, from one of the best friends I have had."⁵⁷ Despite widespread adolescent support for the war-effort, many older children were sceptical about rose-tinted depictions of military service. After 'Postman Henry' finally succeeded in enlisting at age 20 in 1918, 'Canadale Lass' noted "I suppose Postman Henry will now be revelling in the life which he has long wished to lead; but I doubt whether he will find it as he wished."⁵⁸

Older children did challenge war-related rhetoric and censorship when they deemed it inapplicable. Adolescents paid close attention to the war's consequences, and they did not hesitate to voice their sometimes critical observations. 'Grant' wrote in April 1917 that:

[m]y uncle, who has returned [from the Front], is anything but well. He says his arm is never free from pain. It is all shrunken away to almost nothing. Above the elbow is just as thick as your wrist, as all the muscles have been blown away.... What a difference it was to see him when he

⁵⁵ 'Pontiac (Invercargill)', DLF, *OW*, 25 July 1915, p.68.

⁵⁶ 'Paperboy Bertie (Timaru)', DLF, *OW*, 25 January 1916, p.75.

⁵⁷ 'Navigator (Riversdale)', DLF, *OW*, 27 December 1916, p.60.

⁵⁸ 'Canadale Lass' (Katea)', DLF, *OW*, 27 February 1918, p.56.

came home to when he went away. It does seem a pity, does it not? to see the fine sturdy men going away, and coming back cripples; but it can't be helped – someone has to go.⁵⁹

While the war's validity remained unquestioned, some older children openly challenged some governmental responses to the conflict. Conscription evoked particularly strong reactions from youth who felt that their families had already given their fair share of men. Fifteen-year-old 'Ginger Mick' agreed that the conflict was "terrible" in May 1917 yet went on to write "I have four brothers at the war, and my other brother was drawn in the ballot, but I hope he does not go, as I think four out of any family is enough."⁶⁰ Youth responded angrily when they thought their loved ones were being mistreated by war-time authorities. 'Remembrance' asserted that "I think it is a shame the way they are treating the boys who are fighting, don't you? They are not getting their letters or parcels. We sent a birthday cake and some presents to my brother, but he has not said that he received them."⁶¹ Older children's writings produced during this period clearly demonstrate that many adolescents were supportive, but not uncritical, of the First World War.

Cessation of War

In late 1918, older children across New Zealand greeted the news of peace with a mixture of elation and relief. The end of the conflict constituted a key moment in older children's lives and, as they did with the war itself, adolescents engaged deeply with this event. Like their younger counterparts, older children participated heavily in New Zealand's peace celebrations. Fifteen-year-old 'Duke of Kyeburn' recalled in late November that "[w]hen peace was declared it stirred up most of us, with the result that a picnic was held in the afternoon and a dance at night, and between 9 and 10 o'clock they lit a bonfire."⁶² Sixteen-year-old 'Gipsy Belle' similarly relished local end-of-war festivities in Gore, writing "[t]here has [sic] been some good demonstrations here. My word, the people were excited; and the Kaiser [bonfire] did burn lovely."⁶³ The end of the war, however, was more than an

⁵⁹ 'Grant (Pukerau)', DLF, *OW*, 25 April 1917, p.63.

⁶⁰ 'Ginger Mick (Invercargill)', DLF, *OW*, 30 May 1917, p.57.

⁶¹ 'Remembrance (Auckland)', DLF, *OW*, 24 November 1915, p.71.

⁶² 'Duke of Kyeburn (Kyeburn)', DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.57.

⁶³ 'Gipsy Belle (Gore)', DLF, *OW*, 20 November 1918, p.64.

excuse for multiple festivities. While rejoicing in the Armistice and subsequent military truces between warring nations, many adolescents recognised that the cessation of hostilities had significant and lasting ramifications. ‘Gipsy Belle’ went on to note in her aforementioned letter that “[t]hank goodness the war has come to an end. Very, very few people – in fact, I don’t think any of us – can realise what it means yet.”⁶⁴

Older children explicitly linked the end of the war with their loved ones’ return from overseas. Many adolescents had multiple connections to the Front and thus a deep personal investment in cessation of hostilities. Sixteen-year-old ‘Tharlerie’ wrote in late December 1918 that “I am waiting on the Forty-second Reinforcements to come back, as I know more in that lot than in any other.”⁶⁵ Despite recognising that declarations of peace meant the return of New Zealand’s armed forces, many older children admitted that they had difficulty processing this fact in late 1918. ‘Treakle Pot’ acknowledged “[i]t seems so hard for one to realise that the war is actually over, and now we can look forward to all our dear boys coming home to us. I am quite looking forward to having my uncle home now, as he went away with the Tenth Reinforcements.”⁶⁶ For many youth, the war had become so entwined with the absence of friends and family that they felt like they could only believe that hostilities had ended when the troops returned. Despite describing at length the peace celebrations held in Nightcaps, ‘Toddie’ reflected that “it is hard to realise the war is over, and it will only be when the boys come home that the fact will be brought home to us in New Zealand that peace once more reigns on the earth.”⁶⁷

Adolescents largely had mixed feelings about the end of the war. Although older youth did eagerly anticipate the return of their loved ones from overseas, many had also lost friends and family to the conflict. Sixteen-year-old ‘Queen’s Rocket’ acknowledged in late 1918 that:

[a]t last we say, “Peace, perfect peace,” when all arms are laid aside and our brave “boys” return to the peace and quietness of their homes. The

⁶⁴ ‘Gipsy Belle (Gore)’, DLF, *OW*, 20 November 1918, p.64.

⁶⁵ ‘Tharlerie (Slope Point)’, DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.57.

⁶⁶ ‘Treakle Pot (Lindis Crossing)’, DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

⁶⁷ ‘Toddie (Wairaki)’, DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, pp.62-3.

pen cannot describe the joy, but, although many return, many lie in a soldier's grave. We all have someone whom we have lost, so I sympathise with all such.⁶⁸

'Shining Sunbeam' was one of many who experienced strong conflicting emotions at the cessation of hostilities. While greatly anticipating the return of one soldier-brother in December 1918, 'Shining Sunbeam' simultaneously mourned the loss of another.⁶⁹ Older children were not oblivious to other New Zealanders' grief in the wake of the conflict. 'Kelvin' and his family appeared to have emerged from the war largely unscathed. Nonetheless, he recognised that:

[w]hen the boys begin to return the hardest part will come for those who see the other boys gladly welcomed home by their friends, and know that their own have found a nameless grave in a far-away battle field. One can hardly imagine that there is no war, and yet I suppose that in a year or two people will settle down into the old routine of life, as it was four years ago, although there will ever remain the memory of the trouble and hardship of those years.⁷⁰

Older children were very aware that the conflict had left deep scars upon countless New Zealanders. After all, the First World War deeply impacted many adolescents' own lives during this period.

Between August 1914 and late 1918, New Zealand children lived in a nation at war. Youth both above and below the age of 12 were involved in home front activities until the cessation of hostilities. Many young children and adolescents also lost soldier-relations to battlefronts overseas, sometimes permanently. Despite these common experiences, however, the First World War infiltrated older children's lives to a greater extent than those of their younger counterparts. Younger children were shielded from a great amount of the trauma and logistical difficulties associated with the conflict. By contrast, adolescents were often drawn out of school to help with the war-effort, and their involvement in the workforce could expose them to the conflict-related tragedies of others. Additionally, older children endured the absence of friends, peers, boyfriends, and even husbands due to their proximity to those eligible for military service. Furthermore, male

⁶⁸ 'Queen's Rocket', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.56.

⁶⁹ 'Shining Sunbeam (Fairfax)', DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56.

⁷⁰ 'Kelvin (Port Chalmers)', DLF, *OW*, 20 November 1918, pp.63-4.

adolescents were themselves targets of strong societal expectations concerning their future enlistment into New Zealand's armed forces.

Older children were not passive victims of war-time New Zealand. Instead, adolescents actively engaged with the First World War, reacting strongly to the multiple consequences this conflict had upon their lives. The war's infringement on older children's schooling and working endeavours often evoked negative emotional responses. Youth sought to maintain contact with loved ones overseas, and sometimes defied legal constraints to support the war in a military capacity. Although adolescents relied on adult-articulated discourses during World War One, older children used these dialogues to construct their own understandings of the conflict. Ultimately it is clear that, despite the very real pressures they faced in this period, New Zealand adolescents exhibited agency in their responses to the First World War. The Great War, however, was not the only event that adolescents had to face between 1914 and 1918.

The 1918 Influenza Pandemic

Overlapping Events

Adolescents quickly realised that they had emerged from a home front society only to face a world plagued by the flu. Older children explicitly commented on this chronological overlap. 'A Girl of the Limberlost' informed Dot in early December that:

[s]ince I last wrote a letter to the page everything would have been very bright if this terrible plague had not been sent down on us in the midst of the armistice... since then [the peace day celebrations] I have been nurse to dad, mother, and two sisters, who have been pretty bad with the flu.⁷¹

Unlike their younger counterparts, adolescents paid close attention to the temporal proximity of these two events, often identifying causal links between them. Ella Smith was 19 years old at the end of 1918, and she later recalled "we had the celebrations and singing in the streets and one thing or another, [and] then we went home. There was nothing heard of us for a long time. A lot of us got this flu."⁷² Many older children recognised that New Zealand's peace day celebrations

⁷¹ 'A Girl of the Limberlost (Wellington South)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

⁷² Ella Ruby Smith, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 20 August 1991, OA 615, WA.

facilitated the influenza virus' transmission across the country. 'Willochra', for instance, explicitly insisted that she caught the flu at the celebratory concert and dance she attended after peace was declared.⁷³

The First World War clearly informed older children's written responses to the 1918 flu. 'Treakle Pot' asserted that "[t]he influenza epidemic has caused a great deal of anxiety throughout the Dominion, and now that we have completed fighting the Germans, we are now fighting the germs."⁷⁴ The conflict provided an obvious point of reference for older youth grappling with the flu's devastating impact on New Zealand. Fourteen-year-old 'A Prairie Girl' noted in late November that "[t]he influenza that is going around is terrible, and it will kill more people than the war has if it keeps on much longer."⁷⁵ 'Gwen' also commented on the fatalities these events caused, recognising the flu and war both inflicted widespread grief.⁷⁶ Adolescents drew on consolatory discourses created during the Great War in order to cope with the pandemic. Several older correspondents envisioned the flu as a type of 'war' that, like the conflict, necessitated resilience and hope. 'True Patriot' wrote in December that:

"when the bells of peace are ringing" there is a war raging with sickness. One day everyone was smiling and rejoicing over the Allied victories, and now all is sorrow and depression over this terrible epidemic ... Surely all will yet come right, and "hope" is shining through the darkness, beaming in the distance as our "beacon light," and all we can say is, "Hope for the best."⁷⁷

War-time experiences, however, could only cast so much light on the 1918 flu. The second wave of the 1918 H1N1 virus posed a direct threat to adolescents living with New Zealand itself, and this epidemic ultimately impacted older children's lives to an even greater extent than the preceding conflict.

Adolescents and the Flu Pandemic

The influenza pandemic profoundly affected older youth living in late 1910s New Zealand. Countless adolescents experienced the 1918 flu first-hand, and many had to do so away from the support of their families. Sixteen-year-old 'A Hieland

⁷³ 'Willochra (Enfield)', DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.63.

⁷⁴ 'Treakle Pot (Lindis Crossing)', DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.57.

⁷⁵ 'A Prairie Girl (Tuturau)', DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.56.

⁷⁶ 'Gwen (Takapau)', DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.63.

⁷⁷ 'True Patriot (Dunedin North)', DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56.

Belle' recorded in December 1918 that "I am home for a week's rest before starting work again. I was in bed for a fortnight with influenza before I came home, so the matron gave me a week before starting work again."⁷⁸ Numerous youth above 12 years of age caught the flu, and this 1918 H1N1 strain was particularly virulent. Ella Smith was entirely incapacitated by the virus. Years later, Smith remembered that:

I was unconscious most of the time ... the people that I boarded with, were very good, they looked after me, fed me and I wasn't fit to go home until 2 or 3 days before Christmas - it was ... the 1st of November rather when we got it... I don't even remember much about it, at all... I was a month at least that I didn't know what they were talking about or anything.⁷⁹

It was not uncommon for adolescent flu-victims to be seriously ill for long periods of time. Twelve-year-old Reg Laurie from Waitakere was sick with the "black plague" for six to seven weeks before finally recuperating.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, not all older youth recovered from the flu; at least 273 New Zealand adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age died from the virus itself or secondary complications arising from this condition between October and December 1918.⁸¹

Older youth sought to limit their exposure to the 1918 flu virus whenever possible. Like their younger counterparts, many adolescents engaged in quarantine measures during the pandemic. Parents and guardians often insisted that their children at home remain indoors for their own safety. Fourteen-year-old 'A Prairie Girl' noted in December that:

[n]one of us has the influenza yet, and when it was fairly bad in Matura we were not allowed to go out very often, and, of course we did not know how to amuse ourselves. We got up a concert among us, and as we have a big loft, we went there to practice in the afternoon. It was great fun.⁸²

Although many youth became bored with staying inside, older youth still advocated confinement measures. 'Treakle Pot' asserted that "I think it is advisable to stay at home at this time, as there is so much influenza going about, and everyone seems to be getting it."⁸³ Adolescents appear to have been very aware of the danger the

⁷⁸ 'A Hieland Belle (Te Wae Wae)', DLF, OW, 25 December 1918, p.57.

⁷⁹ Smith, interview.

⁸⁰ Reg Laurie, interview with Pauline Vera, 4 October 1983, WOH-1040-10, Glen Eden Oral History Project (GEOHP), JT Diamond Archive (JTDA), Waitakere Central Library, Henderson.

⁸¹ Geoffrey W. Rice with assistance from Linda Bryder, *Black November: The 1918 influenza pandemic in New Zealand*, 2d ed. (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2005), p.222.

⁸² 'A Prairie Girl (Tuturau)', DLF, OW, 25 November 1918, p.56.

⁸³ 'Treakle Pot (Lindis Crossing)', DLF, OW, 4 December 1918, p.57.

flu posed to their wellbeing. Some adolescents even instituted their own measures to minimise contagion. Sixteen-year-old 'Gipsy Belle' delayed the next meeting of her local DLF club in Gore in November "as it seems advisable to wait until the influenza epidemic has cleared away a bit."⁸⁴ Regrettably, despite these precautions, the flu entered many older children's houses in late 1918.

Families also deployed quarantine measures when the pandemic infected one of their own. People who contracted influenza were frequently separated from others to minimise contamination within households. Evelyn Patten was a 14-year-old living in Birkenhead during the epidemic, and she later recalled that "Mother had it and the two eldest sisters.... The ones that had the flu had the bedroom and Dad ... [t]ook us all into the lounge and he put beds down on the floor and we lay there. We weren't allowed into the rooms where the sick folk lay."⁸⁵ During the pandemic, adults and adolescents alike focussed on protecting younger kin from the flu. 'Grant' demonstrated particular concern for her infant cousins in late 1918, noting in early December that "[m]y auntie (Hazel) is here just now with her three small children, all being under three years old, and as they have not had the flu, we are trying to keep out of it as much as we can. If any of us did take it we are going to put them in isolation."⁸⁶ Such attempts to shield children from the flu, however, were often foiled when multiple family members succumbed to the virus.

Many adolescents still at home in late 1918 were put in the position of having to look after their relations during the epidemic. 'A Girl from the West' recorded in December that "[m]y mother, father, sister, and four brothers were all down with it [influenza] together, and I had to nurse them. My mother was very bad, but she is now much better."⁸⁷ Parents, siblings, and other close kin could fall victim to the flu in quick succession, leaving older youth little choice but to become caregivers. Some adolescents understandably felt overwhelmed by this responsibility, including 14-year-old Eileen Cragg who herself came down with influenza. Cragg remembered that "the whole family had it, but I was able to get

⁸⁴ 'Gipsy Belle (Gore)', DLF, *OW*, 20 November 1918, p.64.

⁸⁵ Evelyn Patten, 'Evelyn Patten' in Colleen Christie (ed.), *Back Then: oral history interviews from the Birkenhead Public Library collection, Volume Two* (Birkenhead, Auckland: Birkenhead City Council, 1988), p.61.

⁸⁶ 'Grant (Pukerau)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

⁸⁷ 'A Girl from the West (Gore)', DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.57.

out of bed and make a cup of tea and do something like that.... And there was no organisation to cope, you couldn't get help, mum was very ill and I just did the best I could because I was not as sick as the others."⁸⁸ Luckily, not all adolescents lacked support. Flu-effort activities were prevalent across New Zealand, albeit characterising some communities more than others. Ruth Nobbs, a 19-year-old living in Glen Eden during the pandemic, recalled that "[w]e used to have people to come around I more-or-less looked after my own family.... People would come and advise us on what to do, and what to take, gargle with. It seemed to clear up."⁸⁹ Adolescents' lives during this period, though, were not restricted to their home environments.

Work commitments forced numerous older children to venture outside their places of abode throughout late 1918. Although schools across New Zealand swiftly closed as the flu epidemic increased in severity, many organisations remained open for business. Emily Forster had strong memories of her employment in Masterton at age 17 during the pandemic. Forster recalled that, although the flu epidemic "was a bad one, ... we had to work through that, I was at the WFCA [Wairarapa Farmers' Co-operative Association] then, and we had to go to work each day and go into a, a chamber in the town hall ... to keep us free from the flu."⁹⁰ Statistical analyses examining the occupational distribution of flu-related fatalities in New Zealand strongly suggest that workers who frequently came into contact with members of the public were more likely to become victims of the pandemic than those who did not.⁹¹ Employment in the wider community would have undoubtedly increased older children's chances of contracting the influenza virus, especially when compared to those of younger youth who remained at home. Although Forster never caught the flu, other workers were not quite so lucky. Nineteen-year-old Edna Herrick became infected with influenza while working as a chemist's apprentice in Takapuna. Herrick remembered that "one of them [a flu-victim] came in to Eccles and I served her. I was the first one who went down. She gave it to me, I

⁸⁸ Eileen Cragg, interview with Myra Ballantyne, 23 July 1985, Oral Archive 711, Wairarapa Archives, Masterton.

⁸⁹ Ruth Nobbs, interview with Pauline Vela, 14 September 1983, WOH-1040-17, GEOHP, JTDA.

⁹⁰ Emily Forster, interview with Helen Dailey, 18 August 1986, OA 424, WA.

⁹¹ Rice, *Black November*, p.228.

suppose. It was on the money really. On the change, probably.”⁹² Certain occupations carried a greater risk than others, and adolescents working with medical and healthcare providers were particularly vulnerable to the flu pandemic.⁹³

Adolescent participation in the workforce not only exposed youth to the flu virus but also to its devastating impact upon their wider communities. Older children’s interactions with co-workers and customers during late 1918 were continually marred by the pandemic. Charles Harling remembered that, at 16 years of age, he:

was very friendly with the stoker on the sea [steamer] because it was my job then ... I had to put the mail on and I got to know them all pretty well ... I went to put the mail on [in the afternoon] and he wasn’t there ... I’d seen him in the morning and ... I went “where’s so and so” and they said “oh he dropped dead, he had the flu but he was trying to shake it off and he dropped dead at lunchtime.”⁹⁴

Through their jobs, many adolescents directly witnessed how the flu affected the lives of complete strangers. When he was 18 years old, Ivan Gray worked as a driver for Fly & Young. In his oral history, Gray recalled “taking two lanes of coffins down to the [Featherston Military] camp, they were dying like flies there. It was so congested you see at the camp ... they [the deceased soldiers] must be young, fine youngsters.”⁹⁵ These workplace encounters gave meaning to the pandemic’s local morbidity and fatality rates, granting adolescents a deeper understanding of the tragic nature of this event.

Adolescents across New Zealand were also involved in flu-effort activities throughout the pandemic. Some households became affiliated with local organisations that provided community-based support for influenza victims in late 1918. Twelve-year-old Clarence Campbell and his family were isolated on their Wairarapa farm during this period yet, as he later recalled, they still “cook[ed] sponges and different things like that, take them out to the road and the hospital authorities or whoever, the health authorities used to come up, pick them up and

⁹² Edna Herrick, ‘Edna Herrick’ in Christie (ed.), *Volume One*, p.107.

⁹³ Rice, *Black November*, p.231.

⁹⁴ Harling, interview.

⁹⁵ Ivan Gray, interview with Judith Fyfe, 19 January 1983, OA 546, WA.

take them into town.”⁹⁶ Other families ignored the risk associated with exposing themselves to the virus in order to help their neighbours and friends. Jessie Cockroft was also 12 years of age during the pandemic, and her father:

was on what they called the ambulance and it was getting the dead because, you know, the undertaker couldn't cope. And my mother would go all round the neighbourhood doing what she could for different people ... and I had my job to do, two doors down, just making drinks and getting the milk and luckily we didn't get the flu which was nice because we were all kind of helping somebody.⁹⁷

Older children were more likely than their younger counterparts to become involved in relief work within their wider districts. Many adolescents, after all, did not live at home during this period, and were thus not subject to parental quarantine measures or they were considered old enough to respond to appeals for relief-workers. Members of Boy Scout troops in 1910s New Zealand, for example, tended to be between 12 and 16 years of age and, as described in Chapter One, these adolescents were explicitly targeted by flu-relief recruiting drives.⁹⁸

Boy Scout troops across New Zealand responded strongly to these appeals. Newspapers published in late 1918 recorded numerous instances wherein local and national authorities praised widespread scouting involvement in flu-relief work. The Minister of Health proclaimed in late November that:

[a]mong the workers who have done yeoman service in fighting the epidemic are the Boy Scouts.... These fine lads have done a vast amount of work in carrying messages and food, visiting houses, and generally assisting the health authorities and the volunteer organisations, and I feel that the Government is under a deep debt of gratitude to the Scouts.⁹⁹

Boy Scouts were continually depicted as enthusiastic participants in flu-effort activities throughout these sources. An account of flu-relief measures undertaken in Berhampore, Wellington asserted that the local Boy Scouts had been “untiring as messengers, [and] also in visiting sick homes daily for orders as to requirements,

⁹⁶ Clarence John Campbell, interview with Trudy Campbell, date unknown, OA 478, WA.

⁹⁷ Jessie Cockroft, interview with Jan McLaren, 1 May 1983, OA 251, WA.

⁹⁸ S. G. Culliford, *New Zealand Scouting: The First Fifty Years, 1908-1958* (Wellington: The Boy Scouts Association of New Zealand, 1958), p.18.

⁹⁹ *Evening Post (EP)*, 26 November 1918, p.7.

and later on delivering them.”¹⁰⁰ The *Ohinemuri Gazette* similarly portrayed Boy Scout volunteers as willing and cheerful volunteers.¹⁰¹

Engagement in flu-effort activities, however, could be traumatic as well as gratifying. Katarina Te Tau recalled that she “thought I was going to be a nurse or a doctor or something when I was going around ... but it was very sad.... Being on me own, and going thinking oh yes old Earle ... I suppose he’s alright, I got some soup for him ... and go in there ... and he’s dead.”¹⁰² For countless youth, including Te Tau, the pandemic was the first time that they had personally encountered death. Experiences incurred during the 1918 influenza pandemic often constituted key moments in adolescents’ lives.

Reflections on the 1918 Flu

Writing continued to be a popular medium for adolescent engagement with key events in their lives after the First World War. Although the publication of most school journals was suspended during November and December 1918, older children still wrote at length about New Zealand’s second H1N1 flu epidemic in their correspondence during this period. The rapid transmission of this virus across the country evoked much commentary amongst older DLF correspondents. ‘Island Girl’ recorded in mid-December that “[t]he influenza is spreading rapidly. I don’t think there is one house in Winton and the surrounding districts where someone has not been ill.”¹⁰³ Several older children fervently hoped that their districts, and themselves, would be unaffected by the virus. Twelve-year-old ‘Fair Aliza’ noted that the flu had not yet reached her district of Raurekau in early December and that she hoped that remained the case.¹⁰⁴ Adolescent anxieties about the flu would have undoubtedly been deepened by their knowledge that the pandemic had already thwarted preventative measures undertaken by both national and regional authorities. ‘Duke of Kyeburn’ wrote ruefully in late November that the flu continued to spread quickly despite the precautions taken by the Health

¹⁰⁰ *EP*, 29 November 1918, p.7.

¹⁰¹ *Ohinemuri Gazette*, 29 November 1918, p.2.

¹⁰² Te Tau, interview.

¹⁰³ ‘Island Girl (Oreti)’, DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.62.

¹⁰⁴ ‘Fair Aliza (Raurekau)’, DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.57.

Department.¹⁰⁵ Gipsy Belle made similar comments about the pandemic that same month, asserting that “Gore has escaped pretty well so far, but one never knows how soon it will swoop down on us. Even the best precautions seem of very little use.”¹⁰⁶

Older children thought deeply about how the 1918 flu virus impacted their local communities. Regional morbidity and fatality rates received a great deal of attention from both younger and older youth. Seventeen-year-old ‘Shining Sunbeam’ noted that “[d]ances, shows – in fact, everything – have been post-poned on account of the ‘flue.’ There are a good many cases in this district [Fairfax], and several have succumbed to it.”¹⁰⁷ Children of all ages diligently recorded the closure of local institutions during the pandemic. Thirteen-year-old ‘Cabbage Tree Ned’ wrote in late December that his school was currently shut due to the flu.¹⁰⁸ Adolescents, however, also commented on how the pandemic impacted individuals as well as institutions throughout their wider communities. Older children regularly documented instances where locals deviated from their typical behaviour during the flu. ‘Brown Eyes’ informed Dot that “[h]ere in Invercargill, there are dentists going round with the milk, and everyone who can is helping with the nursing of the sick people.”¹⁰⁹ Some adolescents similarly recognised that local medical personnel faced a great deal of pressure during the pandemic; ‘Vanity Fair’ noted in late 1918 that doctors and nurses were rushed off their feet in Oamaru.¹¹⁰

Adolescents overwhelmingly interpreted the pandemic as a deeply tragic event. Many older children were themselves personally bereaved due to the flu. Fourteen-year-old ‘Jim’s Chum’ grieved that:

[w]e have all had the influenza, and Longwood Blossom [an old DLF correspondent] was the last to take it. This Christmas will not be a very merry one for us, as we no longer have Longwood Blossom. I regret to say that Longwood Blossom departed this life on November 20, in her twenty-seventh year. Dear Dot, it was a dreadful shock to have her taken away so soon.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ ‘Duke of Kyeburn (Kyeburn)’, DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.57.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Gipsy Belle (Gore)’, DLF, *OW*, 20 November 1918, p.64.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Shining Sunbeam (Fairfax)’, DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Cabbage Tree Ned (Arthur’s Point)’, DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.56.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Brown Eyes (Invercargill)’, DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56.

¹¹⁰ ‘Vanity Fair (Oamaru)’, DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.56.

¹¹¹ ‘Jim’s Chum (Mataura)’, DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.56.

Even those who came through the pandemic unscathed were troubled by the huge loss of life throughout New Zealand at the end of 1918. Reflecting on six weeks of incessant fatalities, 'The Heroine of Brookleigh' expressed a deep wish to her fellow DLF correspondents that nothing like the flu would happen again for many years.¹¹² Adolescent writings indicate that older youth were particularly unsettled by the deaths of parents and children. In mid-December, 'A Maid of the Mountains' wrote "I suppose you heard that Eileen Allanah died in Tapanui with the influenza, also her brother, sister, and father. It is very sad, isn't it Dot? ... The influenza is terrible. Men, woman, and children all go with it. I believe it is worse than the war."¹¹³ Although youth above 12 years of age had significant experience facing mass combatant casualties, the war had not prepared them for large-scale civilian fatalities.

Older youth constructed explanations to account for the pandemic's tragic ramifications. The flu's immediate presence in New Zealand meant that many children witnessed this virus in action. 'Grant' recounted that "[o]ur ploughman was taken to the isolation camp yesterday. He was raving like anything all the afternoon, and when the car arrived he was unconscious.... It is surprising how quick it takes them."¹¹⁴ Adolescents drew on discussions at home and in the wider community to make sense of this troubling phenomenon. 'Grant' went on to assert "[t]hey say also now that it is not influenza, but a Mediterranean fever. It may be so, as the people have very high temperatures."¹¹⁵ The 1918 influenza pandemic, however, gave adults little opportunity to produce coherent discourses explaining this event and, in the absence of such rhetoric, many older children created their own. As noted earlier, many adolescents believed that peace time celebrations helped transmit the virus across New Zealand. Youth between the ages of 12 and 20 also drew conclusions about who was most likely to fall victim to the flu. Hugh (George) Steffert was 14 years old during the pandemic. He later remembered thinking that "[m]ost of the people that got it [influenza], were fairly big people, plump, very plump people ... they seemed to get it more than anyone else, you

¹¹² 'The Heroine of Brookleigh (Invercargill)', DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.62.

¹¹³ 'A Maid of the Mountains (Crookston)', DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.61.

¹¹⁴ 'Grant (Pukerau)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.56.

¹¹⁵ 'Grant (Pukerau)', DLF, *OW*, 4 December 1918, p.56.

know the, the thin featured person never seemed to get it so much.”¹¹⁶ Nineteen-year-old Katarina Te Tau, on the other hand, thought alcoholism was responsible for influenza fatalities in her district.¹¹⁷ As they did with the First World War, adolescents attempted to make sense of the pandemic’s devastating impact upon their worlds.

Variations in Impact

The influenza pandemic constituted a dramatic episode in many older children’s lives during the late 1910s. It is important to recognise, however, that a number of factors influenced the impact the flu had upon older youth. The 1918 flu, like the First World War, did not affect New Zealand children in a homogenous manner. Adolescent awareness of the epidemic’s severity depended on variables that included personal and household illness, involvement in quarantine measures, employment commitments, and engagement in flu-effort activities. Some youth were able to escape the pandemic relatively unscathed while others lost their lives to it. These differences in flu-related experiences resulted in variations amongst older children’s reactions to the epidemic during November and December.

For some adolescents, the flu was an inconvenient rather than traumatic event. Several older children focussed more on the restrictions placed on youth activities during the pandemic rather than the grief caused by this virus. This was particularly the case for children who evaded personal contact with the flu and did not know any of its victims. ‘Tea Rose’ wrote in late November that:

[a] good few people have died in Mosgiel, but compared with the number of deaths in Dunedin, we are getting off lightly. I was rather disappointed to find that our proficiency examination is not to be held, as we are to be judged according to our year’s work.¹¹⁸

The 1918 pandemic hit some regions in New Zealand harder than others, and it is not surprising that older children who lived in largely unaffected areas demonstrated little emotional engagement with the tragic nature of this event. ‘Rose of Sharon’, for instance, noted in mid-December that “[i]t is a lovely day today, and I am sorry that there is no Sunday School. It is closed on account of this

¹¹⁶ Hugh George (George) Steffert, interview with Alyson Thomsen, 31 July 1991, OA 604, WA.

¹¹⁷ Te Tau, interview.

¹¹⁸ ‘Tea Rose (East Taieri)’, DLF, *OW*, 11 December 1918, p.56.

epidemic which is at present raging. There are several cases about Fortrose and Waimakaka [sic], but I thing [sic] that there is only one in Otara.”¹¹⁹

Some older children viewed the 1918 influenza pandemic as a non-event in comparison to the war that preceded it. ‘Tighnabruiaich’ expressed such sentiments in her DLF retirement letter published at the end of December. She wrote:

I am glad to say this frightful epidemic has not visited us so far. A few Maoris [sic] died in the back country, but none in this district. Isn't it delightful to think that the fighting is practically over. It was great here the day peace was declared. I think we nearly went mad with joy.... Next year, I hope, will see all the boys returned to their homes, and things settled down to their normal state again.¹²⁰

Many older children were still recovering from the conflict long after the cessation of hostilities. Youth continued to grieve for the loss of combatant-relations and friends throughout the pandemic. Indeed, 15-year-old ‘Queen Elma’ made no mention of the flu pandemic in her correspondence from late 1918. She chose instead to inform Dot that “[w]hen my brother was in France he sent us some French clover seeds, which he gathered on No Man’s Land, and they are growing splendidly. I am very sorry to say that he has been killed in France in action since then. My other brother is still in Palestine.”¹²¹

Regrettably, the 1918 influenza pandemic did not pass by the lives of most adolescents. Several adolescents suffered the worst of both the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic. Eileen Cragg lost her combatant-father to the conflict and then had to look after her family in Masterton while sick with the flu herself during the pandemic.¹²² ‘Piper of the Clans’ endured a similar set of circumstances in Southland, reflecting in mid-December 1918 how:

[e]very-one thought how lovely it would be when the war was over and the boys coming home again, but this great epidemic has come and stirred the world up nearly as bad as ever. We all had the influenza except my brother, but we are all right again.... To-day we received word of the way my brother was killed. He and one of his friends were walking down the line slightly wounded when a stray shell came and killed them both instantaneously.¹²³

¹¹⁹ ‘Rose of Sharon (Otara)’, DLF, *OW*, 27 November 1918, p.57.

¹²⁰ ‘Tighnabruiaich (Waima)’, DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.56.

¹²¹ ‘Queen Elma (Colac)’, DLF, *OW*, 25 December 1918, p.56.

¹²² Cragg, interview.

¹²³ ‘Piper of the Clans (Orawia)’, DLF, *OW*, 18 December 1918, p.62.

The chronological overlap between the end of the Great War and the arrival of the 1918 flu virus in New Zealand resulted in more than four years of stress for many adolescents. Largely speaking, however, the 1918 influenza pandemic created more disruption and instability in older children's lives than the war ever did. The intersection of geographical proximity, relational/emotional proximity and age-related expectations proved to be a devastating combination for adolescents living in flu-stricken New Zealand.

Conclusion

Adolescent reactions to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic were determined by the extent that these events interfered with youth priorities and concerns. Unlike their younger counterparts, older children's lives were severely disrupted by the conflict. Youth aged between 12 and 20 years were often drawn out of school to help with the war-effort and they regularly encountered other peoples' conflict-related tragedies through their employment in the wider community. Male adolescents additionally met with strong societal expectations that they would enlist when they reached military age. Older children had to face the absence of family members, friends, peers, and romantic partners during the war due to their multiple relationships with those eligible for military service. Tragically, many youth endured numerous bereavements during this period. Although the main locales of conflict were located far away overseas, the war had a very real and immediate presence in New Zealand adolescents' lives.

Older children responded strongly to these war-time pressures. Youth continually sought to maintain contact with their loved ones overseas and to support them. Adolescents engaged themselves deeply in home front activities and many defied legal constraints in order to serve in a military capacity. As the war progressed and casualties mounted, children above 12 years of age drew heavily on adult-articulated discourses in order to make sense of the impact this conflict had upon their worlds. The First World War finally came to a close in November 1918. Unfortunately, New Zealand adolescents had little opportunity to relish the cessation of hostilities as peace celebrations across the country were marred by the arrival of the 1918 flu virus.

The influenza pandemic permeated older children's worlds even more deeply than the preceding conflict. Schools and other key institutions were closed across New Zealand, suspending adolescent educational, leisure, and religious activities during November and December. Youth priorities were furthermore affected by the flu's infiltration into children's homes and workplaces. This geographical proximity to the epidemic not only exposed adolescents to its tragic consequences, but it also put them at very real risk of contracting this deadly influenza strain. Many older youth fell ill with the flu themselves, and some sadly did not recover. As was the case during the war, older children were more greatly exposed to the tragic consequences of the flu than their younger peers due to their employment in the wider community. Many youth also engaged themselves in flu-effort activities to support others during this crisis. Adolescents actively sought to understand this catastrophic event, and they reflected on the flu extensively in order to do so.

The First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic were dissimilar events that manifested themselves in vastly different ways. Nonetheless, both events significantly impacted the lives of adolescents living in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand.

Conclusion

The First World War has long been conceptualised as a crucial moment in early twentieth-century history. Academics have conducted extensive research on how this conflict shaped the lives of its contemporaries, using numerous lenses to illuminate people's differing experiences on home and battle fronts around the world. Yet, despite drawing on notions of gender, class, and nationality, war historians have overwhelmingly neglected age as a legitimate category of analysis. Children's experiences between 1914 and 1918 have largely been marginalised within mainstream historiography, presumably due to assumptions that: youth responses were synonymous with, or overly influenced by, those of their adult counterparts; that children's voices from the past were impossible to uncover; or that youth were not legitimate historical subjects. Such suppositions, however, have recently been challenged by an increasing academic insistence that children in past societies were historical actors in their own right.¹ This thesis has examined a wide range of sources to investigate New Zealand children's responses to two early twentieth-century crises.

New Zealand children lived in a society at war between 1914 and 1918. For more than four years, youth encountered numerous conflict-related discourses and behavioural expectations in schools, churches, the media, and at home. This war-talk was shaped by adults for their young audiences, depicting the First World War and its consequences in a child-friendly manner that evaded the darker realities of combat through exciting descriptions of warfare and reassuring portrayals of death. War-talk imparted by teachers and older family members was shaped by differing motivations and sets of priorities. Teachers in the community sought to minimise youth dissent concerning the conflict by emphasising the just and important nature of New Zealand's participation within the war. Adults at home, however, were more preoccupied with maintaining the innocence of younger relations through the dispersal of evasive and tourism-focussed information from the front. Regardless of

¹ Joseph M. Hawes and N. Ray Hiner, 'Hidden in Plain View: The History of Children (and Childhood) in the Twenty-First Century', *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth (JHCY)*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp.43-49; Mary Jo Maynes, 'Age as a Category of Historical Analysis: History, Agency, and Narratives of Childhood', *JHCY*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp.114-124.

these slight differences, both groups of adults actively sought to shape children's responses to the war through these discourses. Boys and girls alike were encouraged to support New Zealand's engagement in the conflict through war-effort activities prominent in the wider community and at home.

Numerous newspaper articles, magazines, letters, and oral histories clearly indicate that the First World War was not the only significant global event that children encountered during this period. The second deadly wave of the 1918 influenza pandemic swept across New Zealand just as hostilities were concluding late that same year. Surprisingly, despite their temporal proximity, the conflict and the 1918 flu have rarely been examined in relation to one another. The intersection of these events in the New Zealand context resulted in an elongated period of escalating tension; while the pandemic was much briefer in duration than the First World War, the 1918 flu was particularly stressful for those living on the former home front. Adults tried to protect children as much as possible from this deadly H1N1 variant, and these interventionist measures often constituted explicit restrictions on youth behaviour. While local community leaders and older family members contented themselves with merely attempting to influence children's responses to the war, they actively sought to control youth reactions to the 1918 influenza pandemic.

Youth up to 12 years of age did not automatically respond to either the First World War or the 1918 influenza pandemic in the manner expected of them. Younger children may have listened to vast quantities of war-talk and been extensively involved in war-effort activities, but many were still emotionally detached from the conflict itself. Some youth even resented adults' attempts to shape their responses throughout the conflict and, later on, during the flu. These events did constitute important moments in global history, but younger children's lives did not stop merely because of New Zealand's belligerent status or involvement in a worldwide health crisis. Youth continued to prioritise their personal interests, families, education, religious activities, and local community events throughout this period. Younger children's engagement with key events was effectively determined by the extent to which they interfered with youth, rather than adult, concerns.

Evidence presented in this thesis demonstrated that proximity was crucial in mediating children's exposure and responses to international crises. The First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic varied greatly in terms of their geographical propinquity and, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, this dissimilarity clearly manifested itself within how these events impacted youth priorities. The 1918 flu permeated younger children's worlds far more deeply than the preceding conflict, and this infiltration evoked correspondingly strong responses from New Zealand youth. While the conflict and the pandemic were both profoundly tragic events, youth up to 12 years of age often reacted more keenly to flu-related fatalities at home than to war-time casualties that occurred overseas. These broad trends, however, were not impervious to other proximity-related variables. Close relationships with persons directly affected by the conflict or the flu tended to further engage young children with that event. Youth with combatant-relations were thus more likely to be emotionally connected to the war throughout their relatives' military service than their peers who lacked such ties to the battlefield.

These findings illuminate and confirm suspected differences between home front societies. As asserted by Bart Ziino, New Zealand and Australia's experiences of the First World War diverged from those of their European allies.² After all, Britain was far closer to the war theatres that all three of these countries participated in, and France was not only a military ally but also a main battleground during the conflict. This thesis demonstrates that New Zealand's geographical remoteness not only shaped adults' reactions to the First World War but also those of its youngest citizens. Unlike their counterparts at the Somme or in Belgium, New Zealand youth were not subject to the deprivation, dislocation, and devastation associated with living upon or near the front line.³ This differential impact meant that younger New Zealand children could more easily be disengaged from the conflict as they were rarely forced to confront the realities of warfare.

² Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2007).

³ Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau, 'French Children as Target for Propaganda', in Hugh Cecil and Peter H. Liddle (eds.), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced* (London: Cooper, 1996), pp.767-779; Peter Scholliers and Frank Daelemans, 'Standards of living and standards of health in wartime Belgium', in Richard Wall and Jay Winter (eds.), *The Upheaval of War: Family, Work and Welfare in Europe, 1914-1918* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.139-158.

New Zealand children's experiences also differed significantly from those of British youth during the First World War, despite both countries being separated from key battlefields by large bodies of water. Many British and New Zealand men left their loved ones to partake in military service, but this separation was far starker for families based in the southern hemisphere. As Rosalind Kennedy rightly recognises, the absence of British fathers and brothers was periodically interrupted as these soldiers were able to visit their immediate families while on leave.⁴ New Zealand children, by contrast, could go years before reuniting with their combatant-relatives who survived the war. Returning home whilst on leave was unfeasible for New Zealand and Australian soldiers, and these lengthy absences impacted both children's relationships with loved ones overseas and their understandings of the conflict itself.

Age also played a key role in varying children's experiences between 1914 and 1918. Like their younger counterparts, adolescents exercised agency in the way they responded to both the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic. As established in Chapter Three, however, these events impacted older children's concerns and priorities far more heavily than those of children less than 12 years of age. Adolescents' schooling and working lives were often significantly disrupted due to increased demands from their home front society. Older boys faced particular pressure during the conflict, finding themselves the targets of strong expectations regarding their 'inevitable' enlistment into New Zealand's armed forces. Adolescents' proximity to those eligible for military service also resulted in older children enduring multiple absences, including those of relations, friends, peers, boyfriends, and even husbands. Older children reacted strongly to the war-related disturbance of key spheres within their lives, engaging with the conflict emotionally, behaviourally, and discursively. For many adolescents, the First World War was an intensely personal event that necessitated both discussion and justification.

Adolescent reactions to the First World War are more fully understood when examined within the wider context of children's lives in mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand. Children's voices from this period indicate that although adolescents

⁴ Rosalind Kennedy, 'The Children's War: British children's experience of the Great War', Ph.D. thesis (Goldsmiths College, University of London, 2006), p.43.

heavily engaged with the conflict, they did not necessarily endow this event with the same degree of significance commonly assumed amongst historians. As noted earlier, John Crawford and Ian McGibbon recently asserted that “[t]he Great War was undoubtedly the most traumatic event in New Zealand’s history”, yet it is clear that many adolescents saw the 1918 influenza pandemic as constituting an even more traumatic moment in their lives.⁵ Older children were particularly exposed to this deadly H1N1 virus because of the ways in which their lives were structured. Unlike their younger counterparts, many older children did not have the option of staying at home during the pandemic. Employment obligations not only forced adolescents to witness the tragic consequences of this event but also placed them at greater risk of contracting the virus itself. Whilst geographical and relational proximity were key in shaping youth reactions to international crises throughout this period, age undoubtedly aggravated the impact these events had on children’s lives. Ultimately, this thesis asserts that New Zealand children responded to the First World War and the 1918 influenza pandemic in multiple, complex, and sophisticated ways.

As Martha Saxton argues, “the history of childhood and children destabilizes traditional assumptions about what counts as history and who gets counted in making that history. When historians take children and childhood into consideration, new questions and perspectives demand attention.”⁶ Youth-centred analyses and investigations effectively grant greater depth to historiographical narratives, even to those areas as thoroughly investigated as the social history of mid-to-late 1910s New Zealand.

⁵ John Crawford and Ian McGibbon, ‘Introduction’, in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds.), *New Zealand’s Great War: New Zealand, the Allies and the First World War* (Auckland: Exisle Publishing, 2007), p.16.

⁶ Martha Saxton, ‘Introduction’, *JHCY*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Winter 2008, p.2.

Appendix 1: Regular 'Dot's Little Folk' Correspondents, 1914-1918

Nom De Plume	Location(s)	Age	Duration of Correspondence	Correspondence Dates and <i>Otago Witness</i> Page References
A Poor Little Rich Girl	Greymouth	11yrs	February 1918 – December 1918	27 February 1918, p.57. 27 March 1918, pp.64-5. 31 July 1918, p.65. 28 August 1918, p.56. 18 December 1918, p.61.
A Prairie Girl	Mataura; Tuturau	14yrs	March 1918 – December 1918	27 March 1918, p.64. 29 May 1918, p.57. 27 November 1918, p.56. 25 December 1918, p.56.
A Soldier's Friend	Kelso	15/16-18yrs	March 1916 – December 1918	29 March 1916, p.71. 31 January 1917, p.59. 30 May 1917, p.56. 18 December 1918, p.62.
A Soldier's Niece II	Naseby	8/9-10yrs	July 1917 – November 1918	25 July 1917, p.56. 26 September 1917, p.56. 31 July 1918, p.65. 13 November 1918, p.57.
A Soldier's Nurse	Papatotara; Tuatapere	14-15yrs	August 1916 – April 1918	30 August 1916, p.61. 25 October 1916, p.58. 28 February 1917, p.58. 24 April 1918, p.56.
Aster	Haka Valley; Hakataramea	9yrs	March 1918 – December 1918	27 March 1918, p.65. 23 October 1918, p.57. 13 November 1918, p.57. 18 December 1918, p.63.
Billie Muggins	Maerewhenua	13-13/14yrs	August 1916 – April 1917	30 August 1916, p.61. 27 September 1916, p.66. 25 April 1917, p.64.
Billy Oakland	Hedgehope	8-9yrs	September 1917 – December 1918	26 September 1917, p.56. 17 October 1917, p.56. 27 March 1918, p.63. 4 December 1918, p.56.
Blush Rose	Wakapatu	10-11yrs	June 1915 – May 1916	30 June 1915, p.78. 29 December 1915, p.75. 24 May 1916, p.67.
British Lion II	Otara	8-8/9yrs	September 1916 – April 1917	27 September 1916, p.66. 31 January 1917, p.58. 25 April 1917, p.63.
Cabbage-Tree Ned	Arthur's Point; Waianakarua	13yrs	October 1918 – December 1918	23 October 1918, p.56. 20 November 1918, p.63. 25 December 1918, p.56
Captain Moss	Middlemarch	10yrs	July 1918 – December 1918	31 July 1918, p.63. 28 August 1918, p.57. 25 September 1918, p.64. 18 December 1918, p.61.

Charity	Levels; Timaru	9-13yrs	September 1914 – June 1918	16 September 1914, p.71. 25 November 1914, p.75. 26 May 1915, p.75. 21 July 1915, p.77. 29 September 1915, p.77. 24 November 1915, p.75. 26 June 1918, p.63.
Chiddy	Timaru; Tycho	9-11yrs	July 1915 – October 1917	21 July 1915, p.77. 25 August 1915, p.75. 25 January 1916, p.75. 17 October 1917, p.56.
Crimson Rambler II	Waipahi	8-9yrs	August 1917 – December 1918	29 August 1917, p.56. 26 September 1917, p.56. 28 August 1918, p.57. 4 December 1918, p.56.
Daddy's Pet	Dunedin; Dunedin North	7-8yrs	May 1917 – December 1918	30 May 1917, p.57. 27 March 1918, p.64. 26 June 1918, p.65. 11 December 1918, p.56.
Duke of Kyeburn	Kyeburn	15yrs	September 1918 – November 1918	25 September 1918, p.64. 23 October 1918, p.57. 27 November 1918, p.57.
Dulcie	Makaretu	7-7/8yrs	December 1917 – May 1918	26 December 1917, p.57. 27 February 1918, p.57. 29 May 1918, p.57.
English Lassie	Lochiel	14-16yrs	June 1916 – August 1918	28 June 1916, p.69. 27 March 1918, p.64. 26 June 1918, p.64. 28 August 1918, p.56.
Frolic	Edendale	18-20yrs	November 1914 – December 1916	25 November 1914, p.75. 24 February 1915, p.75. 27 December 1916, p.61.
Gipsy Belle	Gore	15-16yrs	October 1917 – November 1918	17 October 1917, p.57. 24 April 1918, p.57. 20 November 1918, p.64.
Grandmothers Girl	Waimumu	9/10-11yrs	February 1917 – December 1918	28 February 1917, p.58. 28 November 1917, p.56. 31 July 1918, pp.63-4. 11 December 1918, p.57.
Hawkshaw the Detective	Miller's Flat	13-14yrs	May 1915 – June 1916	26 May 1915, p.75. 29 September 1915, p.77. 28 June 1916, p.67.
Henry VIII	Mandeville	10yrs	May 1918 – December 1918	29 May 1918, p.57. 25 September 1918, p.63. 18 December 1918, p.63.
Highlander	Mornington	9yrs	May 1915 – August 1915	26 May 1915, p.75. 30 June 1915, p.77. 25 August 1915, p.75.
Hope	Tuapeka West	11- 13/14yrs	September 1916 – December 1918	27 September 1916, p.67. 28 March 1917, p.56. 25 July 1917, p.56.

				18 December 1918, p.63.
Inquisitive Girlie	Milton	14yrs	February 1917 – April 1917	28 February 1917, p.58. 28 March 1917, p.57. 25 April 1917, p.63.
Island Girl	Stewart Island; The Neck; Invercargill; Oreti	15/16- 18yrs	March 1916 – December 1918	29 March 1916, p.72. 30 August 1916, p.60. 27 December 1916, p.61. 31 January 1917, p.58. 29 August 1917, p.56. 28 August 1918, p.56. 18 December 1918, p.62.
Lady Enid	Wairio	11yrs	January 1915 – May 1915	27 January 1915, p.71. 28 April 1915, p.75. 26 May 1915, p.76.
Lady Peggy	Port Molyneux	17-19yrs	February 1915 – June 1918	24 February 1915, p.75. 21 July 1915, p.77. 26 April 1916, p.71. 28 February 1917, p.59. 26 September 1917, p.56. 26 June 1918, p.65.
Leola	Waikawa	16- 18/19yrs	June 1915 – May 1917	30 June 1915, p.77. 24 November 1915, p.75. 16 February 1916, pp.75-6 27 December 1916, p.60. 30 May 1917, p.57.
Linnet	Mosgiel; Port Molyneux	19-20yrs	February 1915 – April 1916	24 February 1915, p.75. 28 April 1915, p.75. 29 March 1916, p.72. 26 April 1916, pp.71-2
Little Betty	Kerrytown	8yrs	May 1918 – November 1918	29 May 1918, p.56. 31 July 1918, p.64. 13 November 1918, p.57.
Little Miss Muffet	Maungatua	12yrs	March 1918 – December 1918	27 March 1918, p.63. 28 August 1918, p.56. 11 December 1918, p.57.
Little Miss Neddy Coat	Waikawa Beach	17-19yrs	April 1916 – March 1918	26 April 1916, p.71. 30 May 1917, p.56. 17 October 1917, p.57. 27 March 1918, p.65.
Lord Glenconner	Colac Bay	8-9yrs	July 1918 – December 1918	31 July 1918, p.63. 25 September 1918, p.64. 11 December 1918, p.56.
Maheru	Pomahaka	15- 16/17yrs	January 1917 – October 1918	31 January 1917, pp.58-9. 27 February 1918, p.56. 23 October 1918, p.56.
Mother's Youngest	Tycho	7-9yrs	March 1917 – November 1918	28 March 1917, p.57. 25 July 1917, p.57. 17 October 1917, p.56. 27 November 1918, p.57.
Mountain Daisy II	Nokomai	8-11yrs	March 1916 – December 1918	29 March 1916, p.71. 28 March 1917, p.56.

				25 July 1917, p.56. 27 February 1918, p.56. 4 December 1918, p.56.
Mountain Lily	Glenorchy	10-13yrs	May 1915 – July 1918	26 May 1915, p.76. 20 October 1915, p.75. 31 July 1918, p.63.
Myrtle Spray	North Forest Hill; Browns	8-12yrs	August 1914 – September 1918	26 August 1914, p.71. 30 August 1916, p.61. 29 August 1917, p.56. 25 September 1918, p.63.
No. 5	Balfour	9-10/11yrs	November 1916 – January 1918	8 November 1916, p.58. 25 July 1917, p.56. 30 January 1918, p.56.
Nurse Ella	Kakapuaka; Balclutha	14-17yrs	January 1915 – March 1918	27 January 1915, p.71. 25 July 1917, pp.56-7. 27 March 1918, pp.63-4
Oak Tree	Tokanui; Fortification; Benmore	12-15yrs	July 1915 – November 1918	21 July 1915, p.78. 28 August 1918, p.56. 27 November 1918, p.57.
Pear Blossom	Roxburgh	11- 11/12yrs	November 1917 – February 1918	28 November 1917, p.56. 26 December 1917, p.56. 27 February 1918, p.56.
Peg O' My Heart	Oamaru	14-15yrs	April 1917 – April 1918	25 April 1917, p.63. 27 March 1918, p.64. 24 April 1918, p.57.
Postman Henry	Timaru	17-20yrs	January 1916 – December 1918	25 January 1916, p.75. 29 March 1916, p.71. 27 December 1916, p.60. 28 March 1917, p.56. 30 May 1917, p.56. 26 December 1917, p.56. 27 February 1918, p.57. 27 March 1918, p.64. 18 December 1918, p.61.
Puss in Boots	Alton	11- 13/14yrs	September 1915 – December 1917	29 September 1915, p.77. 26 July 1916, p.67. 31 January 1917, p.59. 26 December 1917, p.57.
Queen of Thorns	Hakataramea; Haka Valley	10yrs	May 1918 – December 1918	29 May 1918, p.57. 23 October 1918, p.56. 25 December 1918, p.56.
Queen's Rocket	Tawanui	12-16yrs	March 1915 – December 1918	31 March 1915, p.76. 26 May 1915, p.75. 25 August 1915, pp.75-6. 16 February 1916, p.75. 30 January 1918, p.56. 4 December 1918, p.56.
Queenis	Tuamata	11- 12/13yrs	October 1916 – January 1918	25 October 1916, p.59. 31 January 1917, p.58. 30 January 1918, p.56.
Saddler	Milton	10-	November 1917 –	28 November 1917, p.56.

Tommy		10/11yrs	February 1918	30 January 1918, p.56. 27 February 1918, p.56.
Shining Sunbeam	Limehills; Winton; Fairfax	13-17yrs	October 1914 – December 1918	28 October 1914, p.65. 30 June 1915, p.77. 11 December 1918, p.56.
Silver King	Middlemarch	7-8yrs	July 1918 – December 1918	31 July 1918, p.63. 28 August 1918, p.57. 25 September 1918, p.64. 18 December 1918, p.61.
Sister Anne	Woodlands; Invercargill	13-15yrs	March 1915 – January 1917	31 March 1915, p.75. 27 September 1916, p.66. 31 January 1917, p.59.
Strawberry Leaf	Port Chalmers	16- 19/20yrs	November 1914 – March 1918	25 November 1914, p.75. 24 February 1915, p.75. 21 July 1915, p.78. 27 March 1918, p.63.
Tarewai	Otakou	15-16yrs	December 1917 – November 1918	26 December 1917, p.56. 27 March 1918, p.63. 13 November 1918, p.57.
The Link of Love	Slope Point	6-9/10yrs	April 1916 – August 1918	26 April 1916, p.71. 24 May 1916, p.67 29 August 1917, p.56. 28 August 1918, p.56.
The Wild Irish Rose	Slope Point	13-16yrs	August 1915 – October 1918	25 August 1915, p.76. 24 November 1915, p.75. 16 February 1916, p.75. 29 March 1916, p.71. 26 April 1916, p.71. 27 June 1917, p.63. 29 August 1917, p.57. 27 March 1918, p.64. 23 October 1918, p.56.
Toby Rock	Wyndham; Wairekiki	11yrs	May 1918 – December 1918	29 May 1918, p.57. 20 November 1918, p.63. 4 December 1918, p.57. 18 December 1918, p.62.
Tulip	Riversdale	8-12yrs	September 1914 – July 1918	16 September 1914, p.71. 30 December 1914, p.71. 26 May 1915, p.76. 31 July 1918, p.63.
Victoria's Flower	Maitland; Gore	11yrs	October 1918 – December 1918	23 October 1918, p.56. 13 November 1918, p.56. 18 December 1918, p.62.
White Violet	Invercargill; Balfour; Winton; Centre Bush	15-18yrs	January 1915 – October 1918	27 January 1915, p.71. 29 September 1915, p.77. 26 April 1916, p.71. 23 October 1918, p.57.
Woodbine	Dashwood; Blenheim	10/11- 13yrs	January 1915 – September 1917	27 January 1915, p.71. 31 March 1915, p.76. 29 December 1915, p.75. 26 September 1917, p.57.

Yellow Banksia	Greymouth; Brighton; Tiromoana	12-15yrs	September 1915 – September 1918	29 September 1915, p.78. 25 January 1916, p.75. 25 September 1918, p.64.
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Notes for Appendix 1:

Age ranges have been extrapolated from the evidence available in correspondents' letters, such as information concerning birthdays, across the duration of their correspondence.

Information concerning slight variations in individuals' nom de plumes – such as 'Cabbage-Tree Ned' and 'Cabbage Tree Ned' – has been excluded from this table.

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