



Clare F. Ashston

The emotional lives of children during the Great War, clues from Mary Truby King's papers.

Mary was ten years old in 1914 and fourteen when the war ended. What we know about New Zealand's young people at the Great War is largely from the juvenile literature of the time. Research in the United Kingdom demonstrated that girls felt rather left out of the children's stories of the time as they could not identify with the action like the boys. But in a photograph taken at Seacliff near Dunedin during the war Mary was lined up with the boys. New Zealand children were far removed from the action but many families were disrupted by the war with fathers and brothers absent for years, some of whom died a world away. Mary Truby King's diaries for 1917-18 survive and she listed the forty-three titles she had read in 1918; almost all were grown-up fiction. Children were not static during the war; they grew up with the war.