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Level 2 History 2020

91234 Examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society

2.00 p.m. Wednesday 25 November 2020
Credits: Five

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society.	Examine, in depth, how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society.	Comprehensively examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

You should write ONE essay in this booklet.

If you need more room for any answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–11 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.

High Excellence

TOTAL

08

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INSTRUCTIONS

Write an essay on ONE significant historical event that has affected New Zealand society, using the essay question below.

Your essay must include an introduction and a conclusion, and use detailed supporting evidence.

You should provide context for your discussion by adding a concise paragraph describing the historical event.

Write your chosen historical event in the box below.

Plan your essay on page 3. Begin your essay on page 4.

ESSAY QUESTION

Examine how the social, political, and/or economic impacts of a significant historical event affected New Zealanders over time.

Historical event: _____

PLANNING

You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than 4–5 pages. The quality of your writing is more important than the length of your essay.

Begin your essay here:

Minnie Dean is a hugely significant character in our country's history. While it is easy to blame this significance on the fact that she was the first - and only - woman to be executed by the state in New Zealand's history, there are actually many more elements^{to her story} which aid in validating this idea. Was she a mercenary, sadistic murderer or a woman fallen victim to ~~the~~ local hysteria and made a scapegoat for the hypocrisy and lack of love in nineteenth century society? Regardless, the crimes and trial of Minnie Dean resulted in a multitude of effects on social and political fronts in particular. From the inauguration of an Act which is now thought of as one of the most considerable advancements in child welfare legislation in New Zealand history, to an incessant presence in Southland folklore, these effects of the crimes and trial of Minnie Dean have been felt for over a century and continue to demonstrate her infamy and significance to New Zealand. //

On the 12th of August 1895 the infamous Williamina (Minnie) Dean became the first and only woman to receive the death penalty in New Zealand. While this is the commemorative date that many know of, her story actually begins up to 10 years earlier. Since the late 1880s, Minnie had been looking after children in her Winton home known as *The Larches*. This business came as a result of the Deans falling upon hard times. To make ends meet her husband Charles turned to keeping pigs instead of innis, while Minnie kept unwanted children. According to *NZ History*, concern arose when a six-month-old infant died in her care in 1889, and two years later, a six-week-old baby. The question, then as now, is whether the children who passed away in Minnie Dean's care did so because of premeditated homicide, or because of the staggeringly high

infant mortality rate of the era? Either way, it was clear that Minnie Dean's work was heavily influenced by the monetary gain she received from it considering she furtively continued taking in children even after years of police surveillance and investigation. However, according to historian *Bronwyn Dolley*, this backfired and only resulted in her looking more suspicious. Conclusively, it wasn't the police that disclosed Minnie Dean but Mr. Nicol, a railway newsagent who noticed Minnie Dean boarding the Winton to Milburn train on the 3rd of May 1895 with a ~~box~~ hat box and a baby, but oddly leaving with only the hat box. This missing baby was one-month-old Eva Hornsby and with this new development an investigation closed in quickly. When Minnie Dean could not produce or explain where little Eva had gone, police searched her garden and unearthed the bodies of Eva, one-year-old Dorothy Edith Carter, and a four-year-old boy. While the cause of death for the boy was undetermined, it was found that the girls passed away from suffocation and an overdose of laudanum, an opiate Minnie Dean frequently used to quieten babies. This was alluded to by Minnie Dean herself in her final statement which is held at the *National Archives in Wellington*. She said, "I know I am the cause of the child Carter's death, that I gave her an overdose of laudanum but with no intention of causing her death, and God knows I have been punished for my negligence." The trial of Minnie Dean opened at 10:00am ~~on~~ on the 18th of June 1895 and she was defended by renowned lawyer, Alfred Hanlon. It took the jury only half an hour to find her guilty of the murder of Dorothy Edith Carter. Although Minnie continued to proclaim her innocence until the last, at 7:57am on the 12th of August 1895, she hung from the gallows. According to *NZ History*, her last words were "Oh God let me not suffer". Minnie Dean was dead, but her story certainly wasn't and little did anyone know that she would

continue
to #

have such a profound influence on New Zealand. //

In order to truly understand the effects of the crimes and trial of Minnie Dean and their significance, it is important to consider the circumstances which lead up to them occurring. One of the leading causes for the events surrounding Minnie Dean was the prevalence of traditional Victorian values in nineteenth century New Zealand. Society had the overwhelming belief that respectability ruled and that the price of respectability was chastity. If a child was born out of wedlock society demanded that it vanished in the best interests of maintaining familial decorousness. The options for parents who found themselves in this predicament were incredibly limited considering abortions were illegal, any form of contraception was virtually non-existent, and if a mother did choose to raise her illegitimate child, she was threatened with the prospect of being ostracized. According to the book *The Vote, The Pill and The Demon Drink* by Charlotte MacDonald, it wasn't rare in nineteenth century New Zealand to see newspaper reports announcing the deaths of women, single, pregnant and victims of suicide or abortion. This confirms the notion that many women would rather die than bear the shame placed upon them of having a child out of wedlock. Furthermore, these ideas enforce the fact of while baby-farming was objectionable work, somebody had to do it, as the women who took in these children for some form of payment, as Minnie Dean did, were one of the only alternative options in reach for these desperate mothers. //

Politically, the crimes and trial of Minnie Dean resulted in one clear effect in particular which has had a profound impact on New Zealand society over a long period of time. The notoriety and disturbance caused by Minnie Dean's actions prompted an

understandable public fear of infanticide which was commonly referred to as "the fearful slaughter of the innocents" as according to multiple newspapers throughout the 1870s - 1900s. These included *The New Zealand Herald*, *The Otago Daily Times* and *The Taranaki Herald*. This widespread hysteria acted as a catalyst for government attention and action which was presented in the form of the *Infant Life Protection Act* which was originally passed in 1893 but was tightened further in 1896 as a direct response to the trial of Minnie Dean. According to *Minnie Dean; Her Life and Crimes* by Lynley Hood, the Act required people who cared for one or more children under two years of age for more than three consecutive days to register themselves and their homes annually. They also had to allow for regular inspections of their homes and charges. One of the amendments made in 1896 was raising this upper age limit to four-years-old. While the inauguration of the *Infant Life Protection Act* came with the best of intentions and there were many positive aspects to it, it also had some large, underlying flaws which impacted its overall efficiency. One of these being that many people could avoid registering under it, making it rather counterproductive. As referenced in *Minnie Dean; Her Life and Crimes*, in 1893 only 83 women throughout Otago and Southland registered, and Minnie Dean was not one of them. The likelihood of her crimes and those similar (for example, the 1923 Newlands baby-farming case involving Daniel and Martha Cooper) could have been drastically reduced if this system was enforced to a higher degree. Despite the proposed inefficiency of the *Infant Life Protection Act* it is still thought to have had a profound, long-term, positive impact and is known as one of the most considerable advancements in child welfare legislation in New Zealand by historians such as James Belich and Bronwyn Dalley who described its inauguration as catapulting nineteenth century New Zealand ahead in this field, ~~in comparison to other countries~~

Socially, an effect of the crimes and trial of Minnie Dean can be displayed in the way the opprobrium of her wrongdoings has resulted in her ~~having~~ gaining an incessant presence in folklore which has consequently had an impact on the way people past, present and future perceive or will come to perceive her. Featuring recurring motifs that range from dead babies, hat boxes and hat pins, to trains, plants and graves, a barrage of bizarre and gruesome tales have circulated up and down the ~~country~~ country over the past 125 years and have played a major role in Minnie Dean securing the title of "Southland's best-known citizen" as according to Minnie Dean; *Her Life and Crimes* by Lynley Hood. The *Ballad of Minnie Dean* is one of the most popular secondary sources in relation to Dean's presence in folklore. This is because it was written by singer-songwriter, Helen Henderson who grew up in Invercargill and based the song off the stories she was told as a child. She said, "Minnie Dean was the bogeyman of our town when I was a kid. If you were giving cheek to your mum or being naughty, it was like, 'you better watch out or I'll send you off to Minnie Dean's farm and you'll never be heard from again'." While stories of this nature are still ubiquitous, they have no proof of containing verifiable, incontestable facts and are one of the variables which has aided in the long-term vilification of Minnie Dean. This has been further accentuated by the way the emerging sensationalist media of nineteenth century New Zealand portrayed her as the epitome of the beldam archetype, often portraying her in the most negative light possible which is understandable considering what they believed her actions to be. One example of this can be seen in the newspaper, *The New Zealand Truth* in 1922 when they described her as being "callous, cold and heartless". Words of this nature would have had a profound impact on the way society viewed Minnie Dean in both the short-term and the long-term. In the 1890s and even subsequent decades it was not unusual to see newspapers with

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rather hostile, dramatic titles such as "The Winton Horror", "How Mrs. Dean Faces Her Doom" and "Minnie Dean, Child Murderess; Callous, Cold and Heartless". Again, words of this nature would have ~~severely~~ severely impacted people's view of Minnie Dean and assisted in instilling fear into the New Zealand population, especially when publicised on the front page of newspapers up and down the country and in addition to the folktales and rumours circulating. Overall, it is clear that the media of the nineteenth century portrayed only one side of the case, the side revolving around the scandal. Because we form our opinions based on the information that is readily available to us, society's opinions on the crimes and trial of Minnie Dean were influenced by the heavily biased views of the sensationalist media presenting and publicly branding Minnie Dean as a villain and nothing more. N

A further social effect can be seen in the way sources have begun portraying Minnie Dean in a progressively more sympathetic light which has also had an impact on the way people view and will continue to view her crimes and trial. It could even be described as an attempt to rehabilitate Minnie Dean's reputation through the process of historical revisionism, although altering the widely accepted societal perspective of her that has been formed and influenced by the sensationalist media of the past and the ⁹⁰¹⁶⁰⁰¹² folktales centering around her would be difficult. ~~From~~ As historian Bronwyn Dalley said, "there is a power in the stories people use to explain things, and to guard things, or to make them special, and no end of truth will change that". Examples of this more sympathetic and humbling portrayal can be seen in Lynley Hood's novel, *Minnie Dean; Her Life and Crimes*. Portraying Dean

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with sympathy meant that Hood had to write about the tragedies and hardships of Minnie's life - an early loss of her mother and sisters, emotional abandonment from her father, and further abandonment by a first love who left her to navigate pregnancy and the difficult journey from Scotland to New Zealand on her own. While the crimes Minnie Dean committed are horrific, inexcusable and morally wrong under any circumstances, having an understanding of the events which lead her to be in such a predicament makes it easier to empathize with her, her position, the societal circumstances of the age, and the lengths that she felt like she had to go to in order to live her life and, albeit questionably, support the lives of others in a time when the morality of society made that almost impossible. The quantity and popularity of sources which convey this perspective or one similar has certainly grown over the past thirty years, with examples being seen in *The Day She Cradled Me* by Sacha De Batin and *Minnie Dean; The Verse Biography* by Karen Zelas. The result of this increase in popularity being the likelihood ~~that~~ of the wider New Zealand public being exposed to alternative viewpoints surrounding the Minnie Dean case also presumably increasing. The benefits of this being a greater understanding of the social, cultural, emotional and intellectual ^{settings} ~~things~~ which have shaped peoples lives; from ~~that~~ that of Minnie Dean herself, to ~~those~~ those of the wider New Zealand public, from 115 years ago, up until the present day. //

In conclusion, the crimes and trial of Minnie Dean were a horrific series of events which were incredibly significant back in the 1890s when they occurred, but ~~also~~ as time has progressed. They

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resulted in a myriad of effects, particularly on social and political fronts, which have had a profound impact on New Zealanders. ~~It~~ While looking back at the *Infant Life Protection Act*, it may seem lacking and insignificant compared to the laws we have currently, the establishment of it ~~put New Zealand~~ catapulted New Zealand forward in the field of child welfare legislation proving it has international significance too. ^{Furthermore,} Minnie Dean's well-known presence in media and folklore has not died out despite 125 years passing which is yet another demonstration of her significance and a sign that her infamy will continue to live on into the future. After all, the question still stands; was she a mercenary, sadistic murderer or a woman fallen victim to local hysteria and made a scapegoat for the hypocrisy and lack of love in nineteenth century society? Nobody truly knows her motives, so who really was Minnie Dean?

- and the speculation surrounding her crimes, and trial
- various forms of

E8

Excellence Exemplar 2020

Subject	L2 History	Standard	91234	Total score	08
Q	Grade score	Annotation			
1	E8	<p>The candidate explains the event and its background, offering analysis and clearly linking their knowledge and understanding to the essay question, namely the political and social impacts over time.</p> <p>The candidate comprehensively examines the impacts and the links to the event, including micro / macro and past / present.</p> <p>Explanation, historiography, and evidence supporting and sustaining key ideas, often beyond the immediately obvious, is used effectively.</p> <p>Insightful links, judgements, and conclusions are made, including discussion related to key historical concepts, e.g. time, continuity, and change.</p> <p>The candidate writes with clarity, conviction, and cogency.</p>			