Scottish Women
A Documentary History, 1780–1914

Esther Breitenbach, Linda Fleming, S. Karly Kehoe & Lesley Orr

A sourcebook illustrating the experience of Scottish women from 1780–1914

Drawing on a wide range of source materials from across Scotland, this sourcebook provides new insights into women’s attitudes to the society in which they lived, and how they negotiated their identities within private and public life.

Organised in thematic chapters, it moves from the private and intimate experiences of sexuality, health and sickness to Scotswomen’s migrations across the British empire, illustrating many facets of women’s lives – domesticity and waged work, defiance of law and convention, religious faith and respectability, political action and public influence. A range of fascinating and rich source material sheds new light on the lives of women across Scotland throughout the long nineteenth century, demonstrating the pervasiveness of discourses of appropriate feminine behaviour, but also women’s subversion of this. It raises challenging questions for researchers about the identification of women’s voices, where these have been muted by class, religion, or ethnicity, while at the same time providing a methodology for uncovering these.

Thought-provoking and innovative, this text will prove an invaluable resource for students, teachers and researchers. It will enable them to discover new ways of understanding the Scottish past and serve as a guide to redressing the gender imbalance of historical narratives.

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