



Doing What the Day Brought: An Oral History of Arizona Women

Mary Logan Rothschild, Pamela Claire Hronek

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"I've seen many changes during the years," says Irene Bishop, "from horse and buggy to automobiles and planes, from palm leaf fans to refrigeration. . . . They talk about the good old days but I do not want to go back. I'd like to go back about twenty years, but not beyond that. Life was too hard." Drawing on interviews with twenty-nine individuals, *Doing What the Day Brought* examines the everyday lives of women from the late nineteenth century to the present day and demonstrates the role they have played in shaping the modern Arizona community.

Focusing on "ordinary" women, the book crosses race, ethnic, religious, economic, and marital lines to include Arizona women from diverse backgrounds. Rather than simply editing each woman's words, Rothschild and Hronek have analyzed these oral histories for common themes and differences and have woven portions into a narrative that gives context to the individual lives. The resulting life-course format moves naturally from childhood to home life, community service, and participation in the work force, and concludes with reflections on changes witnessed in the lifetimes of these women. For the women whose lives are presented here, it may have been common to gather dead saguaro cactus ribs to make outdoor fires to boil laundry water, or to give birth on a dirt floor. Their stories capture not only changes in a state where history has overlooked the role of women, but the changing roles of American women over the course of this century.

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