



Road workers in Wanganui, 1900s (detail). Photographer, Edith Williams. Photo neg. 24403¹/₁

featured in New Zealand's illustrated magazines. She was introduced to photography in 1914, when her uncle presented her with a box camera which he had won in a competition.¹¹ Christchurch-born, she lived in that city all her life and was a constant supporter of the Christchurch Photographic Society. Her photographic interests covered pictorial work, natural history and photomicrography, an interest fostered by work for the Cawthron Institute and the Canterbury Museum.¹² Her work was published and displayed internationally, and was distinguished by numerous awards at international photographic exhibitions as well as an associate membership of the Royal Photographic Society and a fellowship of the Royal Society of Arts. A trip to Cape Kidnappers produced a photograph of two gannets which was published in *Photograms of the Year; 1939* with the comment that 'Nothing but photography could produce anything in the nature of an equivalent; and in a thing of this kind it stands supreme.'¹³ In addition to her own photography Thelma Kent played an important role in popularising the art through her radio talks and magazine articles in the 1930s.¹⁴ Her collection, comprising some 3000 negatives and a considerable number of prints, was donated to the Library in 1948.

Another prominent photographer active at this time was Eileen Deste, who was in business in Wellington from about 1933 until 1944, and was the official photographer for the New Zealand Centennial Exhibition of 1939-40. The negatives of this event were