



Heads above Water: Gender, Class, and Family in the Grand Forks Flood

Alice Fothergill

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An in-depth exploration of women's lives after a natural disaster.

Heads above Water tells the stories of women and their families who survived the Grand Forks, North Dakota, flood of 1997, one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history. This book describes the challenges women faced and explores the importance of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability in their disaster recovery. The women found themselves face-to-face with social and familial upheaval, emotional and physical trauma, precarious economic and social status, and feelings of loss and violation. By exploring the experiences of these women, author Alice Fothergill contributes to broader sociological discussions about women's changing roles, the stigma of needing and receiving assistance, family relationships under stress, domestic violence, downward mobility, and the importance of "home" to one's identity and sense of self. *Heads above Water* offers poignant insight into women's everyday lives in an extraordinary time.

"...makes a major contribution to the growing literature on gendered impacts of disaster, both at the scale of the individual/the body and at a larger community scale ... This book makes for very compelling reading. Fothergill weaves together individual women's own stories with a deft hand. Her empirical observations and theoretical insights would be of value to feminist geographers, as well as to those interested in natural disasters and planning. Her book should also inspire further geographical analysis of the gendered impacts of disaster." — *International Feminist Journal of Politics*

"Alice Fothergill has performed a great service by reporting about events often overlooked, glossed over, or discounted as fiction that resulted from the 1997 Grand Forks, North Dakota, flood and its impact on local women." — *Great Plains Quarterly*

"...does much to advance what is known about women's experiences in a natural disaster." — *Teaching Sociology*

"[Fothergill] charts the physical, psychological, social, and economic effects of the flood on 40 women and their families, using evidence gathered primarily from oral interviews ... Fothergill is an engaging writer, and she incorporates the voices of her 40 women frequently in the text. The book provides an important new perspective for a growing field of scholarship." — *CHOICE*

"This is the first book of its kind based on the experience of women in disaster. It is an interesting read, and at the same time it has a strong theoretical grounding. This is a rare combination." — Betty H. Morrow, Florida International University

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doing of that time.

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