

# Reviews



***HIV Survivors in Sydney: Memories of the Epidemic,***  
**Cheryl Ware**

London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 247 pages. \$84.99  
(hardcover). ISBN 978-3-030-05101-3.

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Oral historians have long been attuned to the presence of emotion in oral history interviews. As Alistair Thomson pointed out in the last issue of *Oral History Australia Journal*, this phenomenon can be traced back to the beginning of the oral history movement and, more specifically, to the oral historians who were interested in the emotions linked to the events of World War Two. The challenge for contemporary oral historians boils down to how they interpret emotions, and what meaning can be made from these interpretations.

In *HIV Survivors in Sydney: Memories of an Epidemic*, Cheryl Ware has not only identified complex emotions in the oral history testimonies of her narrators, but

has interpreted these emotions with the utmost attention to detail. While this book is not explicitly a history of emotion, the emotions and perspectives that Ware has been able to elucidate from these interviews is an important contribution to the history of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Australia. Read alongside Geraldine Fela's oral history work that explores the memories and emotions of nurses who worked in HIV wards in Australia, Ware's history can be seen as part of a burgeoning body of research that reveals the impact that the HIV and AIDS epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s had on the personal, intimate, and everyday lives of individuals. This centering of the intimate and personal experience is particularly groundbreaking as much of the literature has thus far focussed on the ways that activists had publicly responded to the epidemic.

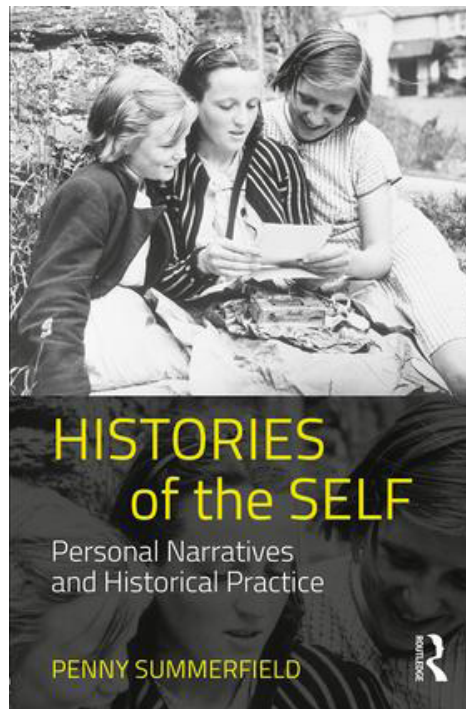
Ware examines oral history testimonies of twenty-five Sydney based gay men who were impacted by HIV and AIDS. At times their testimonies could detail contradictory experiences, but Ware has carefully crafted a history that places these complex narratives alongside each other, examining each testimony with a measured tone. The only instance when Ware's measured analysis falters is when she discusses a narrator's recollection of the film *Dallas Buyers Club*: Ware asserts that Thomas' recollection of the film had departed from the plot. While Ware had given a description of the protagonist, Ron Woodroof, I found that this description did not reflect this character's story arc, nor did it provide a succinct summary that proved that Thomas' recollection had departed from the film's plot and story. However, I want to stress that this is a minor criticism. Ware's ability to examine twenty-five testimonies by paying close attention to emotion, tone, narrative construction, volume, speech patterns and non-verbal communication is highly commendable. For example, Ware was able to pick up on the way that a narrator slapped their thigh intermittently throughout the interview, observing that this behaviour occurred when the narrator recounted an uncomfortable memory. It is this close attention to detail that is a real strength of Ware's work.

Ware has identified the importance and potential that her interviewees saw in the thriving gay community in Sydney, which then paved a clear foundation for the events and themes that are explored later in the book. The chapters of Ware's book

are divided chrono-thematically, and while there is an overlap between the 1980s and 1990s in some of the chapters, Ware has constructed a clear progression through the epidemic. After establishing a sense of place, Ware discusses the complexities around testing and disclosure, the negotiations around safe sex practices, concern over visible symptoms, and coping with death and loss in the community. The narrative ends with the introduction of HAART (highly active antiretroviral therapy), and draws to a close with reflections on the interviewees' motivations for participating in this research.

Ware has acknowledged that Aboriginal men are underrepresented in existing histories about HIV and AIDS in Australia, and has made some strides to rectify this. Testimonies of two Aboriginal men, Tony and Evan, were included, and Ware specifically addressed oral histories around safe sex campaigns that were designed specifically for Aboriginal audiences and communities. Ware does not shy away from the more discriminatory aspects of Sydney's gay community, tackling the racial discrimination that Tony had both experienced and witnessed.

This book is well written, engaging, and deeply moving. The emphasis of this history on oral testimonies has been supplemented by the inclusion of additional primary and secondary sources. It is aimed at both a general and academic audience. The testimonies and insights in this book would interest those who are both familiar with the pre-existing scholarship and those who are new to this history.



***Histories of the Self: Personal Narratives and Historical Practice, Penny Summerfield***

Routledge, London, 2018. 202 pages. \$73.99  
(paperback). ISBN 9780429487217

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Penny Summerfield's *Histories of the Self* is an excellent book, targeted at students and researchers, revealing how historians and scholars from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and creative writing use personal testimony in different forms. This is a book written by a formidable expert in her field. Students, scholars and writers have much to learn from this text on the practice, art, interpretation and writing of life stories.

This book is timely, published at a historical moment when so many historians, writers and creative practitioners are using life stories to think about and represent the past and present world. Life histories have burgeoned in popularity as sources

among historians, especially new social historians and microhistorians, over recent years, and it is important to have authoritative guides like this one to help us navigate their different forms. We learn much from Summerfield's own work in oral history as well as her excellent synthesis of the work of others, about how private lives can illuminate broader global processes as well as historical method, analysis and craft.

The book is carefully and precisely structured around different forms of testimony and it is directed at students and researchers of these different forms. Summerfield's many years of teaching in the field revealed gaps in knowledge this text has been designed to fill. There are several excellent books on theoretical approaches to the use of personal testimony, but Summerfield's students told her that they wanted more case studies and examples of historians working through the various issues involved in using personal testimonies so that they might learn something from their example and practice. The reader moves through chapters on different forms of personal testimony including letters, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies and oral histories. Summerfield discusses each of these forms carefully and introduces us to the different ways in which historians have used them over time and in varied national contexts. We are also led lucidly and sensitively through debates about authenticity, reliability and representativeness. Summerfield shows us the limits and possibilities of what historians can learn about 'real people' and 'what actually happened' in the past from these sources. These are issues oral historians and other users of personal testimony have long been preoccupied with and some are better practiced at negotiating and articulating these than others.

In the introduction, Summerfield reveals how the analysis of personal testimony has been reframed by scholarship produced by the cultural turn, the history of emotions, feminism, post-colonialism and psychoanalysis. She works through these key intellectual developments over the past forty years and shows how the field has benefitted from debates over different terms and categories of analysis. I particularly enjoyed the discussion in the introduction of the contest over terms to describe personal testimonies including life stories, life narratives, life writing, personal narratives, testimony, and histories of the self, to describe different categories of personal testimonies. Summerfield settled on the terms 'histories of the self' and 'personal

narratives' because these are current among historians and she thinks they come with less baggage than others. She shows how practitioners have become much more careful with the claims they make using their evidentiary base and how work on the oppressed and marginalised in the past by feminist and post-colonial scholars using these sources have enriched our broader historical knowledge. She also hopes to hint at the creative and interpretive processes at work in the use and construction of stories about the self.

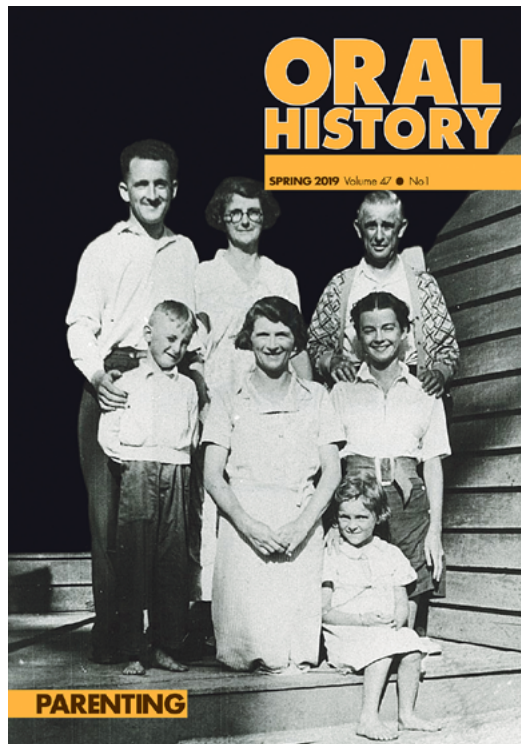
Many historians of Britain are very familiar with Summerfield's existing work on oral history, war and women's work. In this book she includes examples from a wide variety of case studies and historians' work, ranging from the fifteenth century to the present, in various forms. Chapter two focusses on how historians have used letters to reconstruct past social lives, on issues of accuracy, and how one can generalise from singular specific sources such as these. The third chapter works through how historians have used diaries in their varied forms. Summerfield reveals how historians have grappled with issues of composition, accuracy and the sense of empowerment that diary writing can provide authors. Chapter four discusses autobiography and memoir writing and how social, economic and cultural historians have used them. Here she suggests that genre is key and claims regarding truth telling are especially problematic because autobiographies are often believed to present true and accurate accounts of an author's past. Summerfield reminds us that this genre of personal testimony writing can be more selective than other examples in its account of the past. She also reveals the impact of the present on how this source is shaped. She argues that we need to pay particular attention to the construction of autobiographies.

Oral history is the subject of chapter five, prized as a historical method from the 1970s and 80s for opening up new fields and areas of history and for revealing details of private and intimate lives that are not captured by written archives. Summerfield introduces students to the debates over memory that have preoccupied oral historians over the past few decades. She argues that in its early years oral history was understood largely as 'recovery history' but recent theoretical debates have shifted practitioners' attention to issues of narrativity and subjectivity in interview testimony. No longer do oral historians see interviews as a window onto past lives but they are understood as

a product of many social and cultural interactions that deserve analysis in the process of analysing and using a life story. She suggests that it is important for oral historians to be reflective about their practice. Chapter six concentrates on how historians have considered issues of representativeness and their response to post-positivism. It discusses how oral historians have made different claims for the validity and legitimacy of their sources and scholarship and how useful some have found the idea of the 'exceptional normal' to combat issues of typicality. She suggests that all scholars and students need to understand the mediation of memory. Most historians who use personal testimonies have become more confident in their studies of the self. As a result, many more people understand how the use of personal accounts of past lives enables us to better understand broader historical change.

There is no doubt that scholars and students of personal testimonies in diverse national contexts will find this a valuable guide for many years to come.





**Oral History 'Parenting' Special Issue,  
Carla Pascoe Leahy and Alistair Thomson (eds)**

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This special issue of *Oral History* provides vital conceptual and methodological insights to historians working in the fields of oral history and histories of parenthood. Key interventions include contributors' novel attention to parenthood far beyond its early years, their deft demonstrations of a range of oral history methodologies, and their signposting of the largely untapped possibilities of archived oral history collections.

Taken as a whole, the volume invites historians to examine parenthood as an experience that lasts long after children have grown into adults. It poses a challenge to archival historians who frequently study the history of parenthood through literature and organisations that have addressed the parents of young children about issues such as infant health, childcare, and education. Indeed, as the authors in this volume make clear, the effects of parenting are felt across the life course. The volume's editors Carla Pascoe Leahy and Alistair Thomson acknowledge scholarly (and public) fascination with experiences of becoming a parent for the first time, which is 'one of the few identity shifts that a person will undertake after reaching adulthood, with profound implications for self-concept, relationships and lifestyle' (p.3). However, by taking a broader perspective on parenting, the volume reveals that its influence is virtually lifelong.

At the same time that it extends the parameters of the history of parenting, the volume equips historians with a range of methods to study its intergenerational and enduring effects. Through skillful interpretation of archived and original interviews, contributors delve into individuals' personal reflections on parenthood as one of the most intimate and vulnerable aspects of their lives. In so doing, these authors fulfil the journal's aim to demonstrate the 'special aptitude of oral history to better understand the changing nature of parenting across diverse places, cultures, and times' (p.3). For instance, the issue offers thoughtful examinations of interviewees' relationships with family members and the pride, affection, and guilt that emerged across their testimonies. It also highlights the ethical issues that arise when engaging with individuals' living memories of parenthood, and emphasises historians' responsibilities to approach oral histories of family with particular care and sensitivity.

Thomson provides a model example of the secondary analysis of archived oral history (in this case from the 'Australia 1938' project) and invites the adoption of new research methods among oral historians and archival historians alike. Thomson's history of fatherhood spans Australians' memories of childhood in the 1920s–30s; 'the time of telling' their stories during oral history interviews in the 1970s–80s; and the 2010s when Thomson completed his research (p.35). Thomson outlines both the distinct challenges of using archived interviews and the value of oral history to

enrich understandings of Australian family life in the interwar years. Specifically, he highlights gendered divisions of labour within families and interviewees' frank discussions about the 'disastrous consequences' (p.40) when fathers did not or could not fulfil the role of breadwinner. Thomson's compelling secondary analysis invites oral historians to revisit their methodologies and to consider the rich potential of existing oral history collections. His work also encourages archival historians to engage with oral history material and methods in order to explore intergenerational experiences and private lives in the past.

Angela Davis further showcases the possibilities of expert, ambitious secondary analysis in her examination of 40 archived interviews taken from four collections of Holocaust survivors' testimonies. Davis acknowledges ethical concerns about reusing and interpreting survivor testimonies. However, she convincingly argues that archived interviews provide insights into survivors' subjective experiences that are rarely accessible through other sources. For example, Davis' sensitive analysis identifies shared patterns in survivors' experiences of parenthood, their efforts to navigate their place within multiple families, and tensions between what she terms 'closeness and distance' (p.71). Davis simultaneously advances understanding of large-scale events—in this case, of surrogate families and forced separations during World War Two—and their intimate effects on women, their families, and their inner lives.

Philip Kirby's secondary analysis of interviews at the UK Dyslexia Archive elevates the voices of individuals whose actions and achievements are overlooked in written records. Kirby offers essential historical context to current debates over diagnoses of dyslexia among children and dispels depictions of dyslexia as a myth concocted by 'worried' middle class mothers. While Kirby's emphasis on tracing the history of the UK dyslexia movement means there is less focus on interpretation of oral history sources in his article, he offers important insights into mothers' public and private roles as educators and advocates for their children.

Miranda Francis and Katie Holmes take a different approach to reveal the analytical contributions of lengthy original interviews, especially when paired with rich contextual research. In their article, Francis and Holmes put one woman's life narrative in

conversation with evolving ideas about child development. They show how new theories of parenting provided different perspectives on Kathleen's (a pseudonym) decision to spend ten months apart from her two-year-old son during the early 1970s. These new ideas generated fresh personal distress and a 'powerful sense of maternal loss' (p.50), which manifested in silence and discomposure during Kathleen's oral history interview. Francis and Holmes highlight how some women's memories of motherhood continue to be silenced in a world of 'confessional narratives' (p.58). The authors also address historians' ethical obligations to engage with interviewees' testimonies while respecting and protecting the privacy of their families, the latter of whom may feature in the interviews but did not volunteer to share their stories.

Richard Hall extends the volume's insights about the interplay of public and private life through interviews with eight father-son pairs, and one pair of brothers whose father had died young. Hall's interviews revealed a 'bubbling continuity of feelings' about fatherhood and childhood that stretched 'from the remembered past to the present, sometimes in opposition to present-day norms' (p.65). Hall outlines the significance of the physical space in which interviews were conducted, many of which took place in interviewees' family homes. Narrators drew on material objects—including a shelf above the fireplace as evidence of one father's carpentry skills and performance of 1960s masculinity—as prompts to negotiate and convey their emotional histories as fathers and sons. Hall's reflexivity is a strength of the article. With Francis and Holmes' contribution, the article speaks to the role of interviews as 'sites of productive reflection for interviewees and interviewer alike' (p.69).

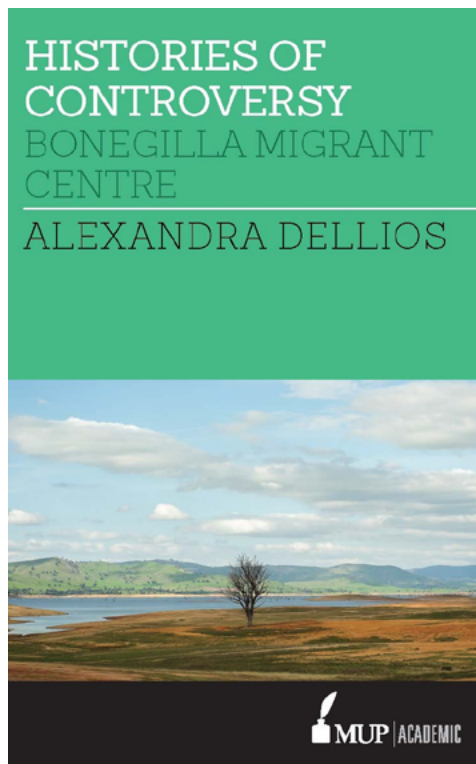
Anna Green underlines the volume's point about the lifelong experience of parenting by examining adult grandchildren's memories of their grandparents. Her essay identifies the significant connections and overlaps between histories of parenting and the analysis of family memory and genealogy, topics that are foundational to Maori history but underexplored in the Pakeha family past (p.82). By working in this gap, Green's research uncovers the vital role grandparents have played in the content, form, and longer-term impact of Pakeha family stories. Green concludes that grandparents shape how grandchildren identify with the history of their own families 'through the expression of emotional warmth, storytelling and as exemplars of moral

values' (p.90). She examines the ways that grandparenting (especially of young children) has produced strong 'sense memories'. These included the taste and smell of grandmother's baking, whose cookbook and other possessions offered a 'tangible continuity of sight, touch, and emotion' between generations (p.84). Like Hall, Green explores the value of (inherited) objects or photographs within interviewees' homes as narrative prompts, and emphasises the significance of intergenerational memories by interviewing multiple members of each family. Their articles highlight how oral history provides a space for interviewees to negotiate and articulate their emotional connections to the past and to consider how their memories of parenthood and grandparenthood inform their present lives.

Carla Pascoe Leahy concludes the issue by examining the significance of participant selection in oral history research. Her article makes an important intervention in oral history scholarship that treats participant selection as a pragmatic choice that can be 'relegated to appendices, footnotes or introductory asides' (p.105). Pascoe Leahy offers a thoughtful appraisal of several UK and Australian sociological and historical projects that employ qualitative interviews to explore parenthood and family. She examines the advantages and limitations of various sampling sizes ranging from large scale population studies to tightly focused cohorts that emphasise depth rather than representation. In doing so, she demonstrates how researchers' methodological decisions inform the parameters of a project and impact every subsequent stage from potential interviewees' openness and willingness to participate in a study to its research conclusions. The article invites oral historians to reassess the magnitude of their methodological decisions and offers a valuable guide for historians of parenting to analyse original and archived interviews as historical sources. Thomson and Pascoe Leahy's articles provide satisfying bookends to the volume by highlighting the necessity of analysing archived interviews (with close attention to the context in which they were produced), before showing researchers exactly how this can be done.

This special issue highlights the potential of oral histories of parenting to expand and reshape both the parameters and the methods of multiple fields of research. The volume brings together recent doctoral research and the current projects of some of the leading oral historians working in Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. The

volume's insights will benefit readers working on a wide range of topics including scholars working on histories of subjectivity and private life, and those who are keen to extend their skills in the creation of oral history interviews or the analysis of archived oral history material.



***Histories of Controversy: Bonegilla Migrant Centre,***  
**Alexandra Dellios**

Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2017. 202  
pages. \$49.99 (paperback). ISBN 9780522871616.

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*Histories of Controversy* provides compelling analysis of the histories and mythologies of Bonegilla Migrant Centre. Dellios' approach in revisiting Bonegilla is timely. There is a burgeoning interest in the sites and spaces of post-war migration throughout Australia, as those who experienced such centres firsthand sadly decline in number each year. These sites bear witness to the transformation of the Australian nation in the decades following World War Two, as migrants from across Europe arrived for work and the hope of a new life. As one of the most prominent of these sites, Bonegilla is often mythologised as providing a formative narrative for modern

multicultural Australia. Yet Dellios consciously seeks to disrupt this narrative of inevitable progress to contemporary cultural diversity. Instead, she uses the site to demonstrate how migrants contested the pervasive attempts to control their lives and the controversies that occurred as a result.

Dellios does not attempt to debunk post-war mythologies entirely, nor does she seek to replace them with eulogised narratives of migrants' time in Bonegilla. The book instead compellingly 'argues that Australia's migration history cannot be typified by either progress or continuity' (p.4). Dellios focusses on moments of tension and controversy, which reveal the complexity of historical moments from diverse perspectives. The strength of *Histories of Controversy* is in the author's compassion and careful empathy for those whom she is writing about. This book is a history of migrants' experiences in a place of containment and isolation, but Dellios is careful not to allow an institutionalised history of the site to overwhelm the voices of those who lived there. Her work is an important contribution to contemporary critical scholarship, and judiciously cites the key authors who research post-war migration, but the book is also a powerful example of reintroducing marginalised voices into the historical narrative.

Historians of the Bonegilla Migrant Centre are able to draw on voluminous archival materials derived from diligent post-war administrators. The site has also been the catalyst for a number of community-based projects which have generated local histories, exhibitions, and oral history projects. Dellios' work is notable in its effective synthesis of these written archival documents, extant oral histories, and new oral history material that she recorded as part of the project. While the latter are relatively few in number, they provide important insights for the reader. The book is a powerful exemplar for students seeking ways to understand how to integrate contradictory oral histories with complex written documents. The result is often confronting, such as Dellios' consideration of child deaths and residents' suicide, and forces the reader to pause and reflect on experiences too long silenced and oppressed.

*Histories of Controversies* provides compelling evidence of migrants' attempts to shape, and if necessary, oppose the control of Australian government departments. Dellios



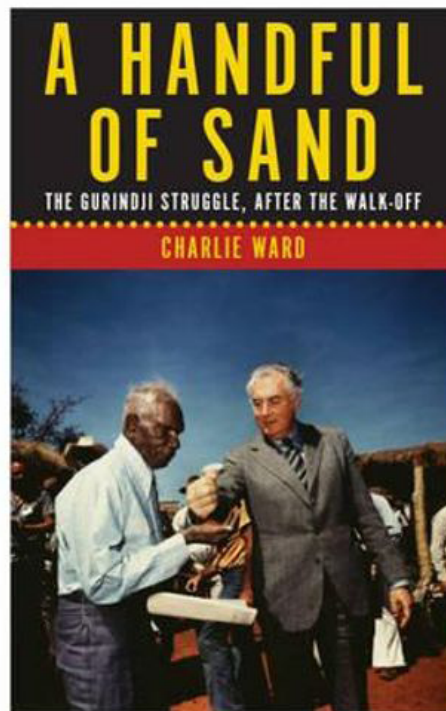
goes to considerable effort to articulate the Cold War context in which the centre operated, drawing our attention to how government fears of Nazi sympathisers in the immediate post-war moment shifted into officials' enduring concerns about the influence of communist parties. This includes important reflections on the influence of the Italian Communist Party, as well as its Australian equivalent. Yet, it is in the examples of migrants' everyday acts of situated defiance that the book is most compelling. Examples abound of migrants' anger at work opportunities and conditions at the camp. Dellios carefully guides the readers' attention not only to the cultural politics of the Cold War, but also to its gendered manifestation. One camp official's attempts to threaten a man, after his wife defiantly protested the quality of the food by casting it on the floor, remains a particularly disturbing attempt at intimidation.

The book provides an important contribution to scholarship relating to affect and post-war migration. It is in this regard that Dellios' synthesis of oral and written histories is at its strongest. Her background in History, but also in Critical Heritage Studies, is clear in her weaving of voice and place to recast migrants' affective responses to their situation. Her approach to what constituted care is a powerful example of this. There are moving histories of families' care for each other, often underpinning deeply personal stories of their determination to stay together in the aftermath of World War Two. There are also intriguing instances of more ephemeral care, as communities and relationships formed and dissipated based on shifting interests. As Dellios states, this is not a halcyon recollection of successfully overcoming misfortune, but a complex history of shifting circumstance and opportunity. There is a striking absence of any care or compassion for many of the individuals discussed, and instead a tremendous sense of loneliness as migrants went from hut to hut in search of adequate food to survive.

Dellios sets out to interrogate and destabilise the mythologies of Bonegilla through historical enquiry. Her use of oral histories conjures voice to challenge the benign attempts of officialdom to control the movement, workplaces, intimate lives, and families of new arrivals to the Australia in decades following the end of the war. At the same time, her work uses the words of government officials to reveal the human

decisions that underpinned the seemingly inexplicable conditions. Dellios uses these governmental documents to re-interpret carefully the institutionalised language of bureaucracy in a manner that demonstrates migrants' ongoing acts of agency. While administrators' attempts to correct the inadequacy of facilities are revealed, there are repeated examples of staggering official insensitivity and deliberate attempts to silence migrants' voices. The report into the death of one child, Marie, is breathtaking in its callousness.

While some have sought to raise the Bonegilla Migrant Centre to a place of national becoming that is akin to Eureka, it is clear that Dellios is troubled by such scholarship. Bonegilla is one among a myriad of places at which traumatised but determined migrants sought to sustain their lives. The extent to which they were controlled and corralled does give Bonegilla particular authority and historical insight. There is a remarkable array of archival sources associated with the centre, to which Dellios can only gesture in a work of this length. There is also a remarkable legacy of oral histories accrued over decades, to which the book is an important addition. I recall reading Glenda Sluga's oft-cited *Bonegilla: A Place of No Hope* as a migrant and international student in Australia at the turn of the millennium. The book was a revelation to me about Australia's post-war histories, and its continued legacies in the present. I hope Dellios' book provides similar moments of reflection on the intersection between past and present for emerging scholars today. Without doubt, her writing offers a powerful testament to those who passed through the camp's gates.



***A Handful of Sand: The Gurindji struggle,  
after the walk-off, Charlie Ward***

Melbourne, Monash University Publishing, 2016. 400 pages. \$29.99 (paperback). ISBN 9781925377163

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If white Australians can recall anything about the Gurindji walk-off and subsequent land rights struggle, the historic image of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pouring sand into the outstretched hands of local leader, Vincent Lingiari, in August 1975 must be a top contender. A reproduction of this photograph graces the front cover of Charlie Ward's new history of the Gurindji struggle. However, his well-researched and insightful contribution does much more than recount well-worn hagiography.

Rather, Ward's 'insiders' account, based on extensive oral histories conducted 'on-country', of this remote Northern Territory community's long, frustrated struggle for a measure of independence tells the story behind that picture. The symbolic

'handover' itself conceals a farcical reality: what was Lingiari to do with the sand? While Lingiari held on to the initial amount, letting it 'drift out of his hand', he was later handed a further quantity for the benefit of assembled camera crews. As two onlookers reflected in an interview with Ward, 'they could have given him a little box'.

While the Gurindji struggle is far from an unknown episode in Aboriginal history, it is told here in a down to earth, sympathetic style closer to communist author Frank Hardy's *The Unlucky Australians*, than the wealth of historical scholarship in which the walk-off features as but one milestone in the long march to rights. Hardy's book helped bring the Gurindji's struggle with absentee landlord Lord Vestey to national attention in 1968. But Ward's focus is on what happened after the initial walk-off as the Gurindji attempted to build their dream – a functioning cattle station that would provide subsistence on their sacred lands and a future for their children.

Far from a conclusion, the gift of a pastoral lease in 1975 was only the beginning of Lingiari's and his 'track mob's' struggle to make meaningful the newly consecrated ideal of self-determination, and what Ward dubs its 'emancipatory packaging'. The book is divided into three sections – the first covering the strike's lead up and responses from various conservative governments up until 1972. A second section chronicles the Whitlam and early Fraser government's seemingly honest commitment to empowering Indigenous groups, while the last chronicles the disillusionment of the latter Fraser and Hawke years, as their dream slipped further from reach. However, another chronology is just as important: roughly half the book is concerned with the period before the handover, and the latter with its varied ramifications.

This is a significant chronology in many ways. The Gurindji's ambitions had always relied at least in part on outsiders. Their initial 'walk-off' had been inspired by Aboriginal rights campaigners in Darwin and southern supporters (in the form of unionists and university students) provided basic necessities while government and Vestey's wavered and argued. After the handover, *kartiya* (white; the book is careful to use Gurindji language where possible) bureaucrats and assorted chancers largely replaced these earlier 'do-gooders', who had moved on to different causes. Stan

Davey, an early supporter of Gurindji ambitions, arrived back at the settlement in the 1980s to find not a spirit of resistance but of resignation.

Another way in which 1975 stands as a linchpin year for the Gurindji is how their independence aspirations moved from much vaunted cause to heavily restrictive reality. While self-determination promised an end to assimilative agendas, the way Whitlam and later Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's Department of Aboriginal Affairs handled the development of their property – named Muramulla – reeks of this earlier paternalism. 'Development' meant Westernisation – the running of a profitable cattle station (during a period of immense financial hardship for the industry as a whole) and the provision of services on a European basis – by bureaucrats in Canberra and Darwin who held the purse strings. The failure to develop local capability to manage these projects and finances, and their subsequent entrusting in a conga line of kleptocratic *kartiya* administrators is particularly chillingly told.

Ward's narrative is deeply personal – it is about Lingiari, the elders who sat alongside him and the new generation they looked upon with equal parts hope and scorn – told through interviews with walk off veterans and newer faces, as well as the Gurindji's outside supporters. Those hoping for a close engagement with the existing literature on Aboriginal rights, or with the Gurindji's place in the larger 'world' of Indigenous struggle, will be disappointed. The 'wider world' does appear via vignette: the 1967 Referendum, Tent Embassy, and events like Cyclone Tracey or the passage of Northern Territory self-government are not unimportant to Ward's story. And one of the most interesting aspects of his narrative is how the Gurindji's accommodation to 'white ways' in the form of rural cattle culture was challenged by the mechanisation of the industry via helicopter. But this remains a closely bracketed story, as perhaps a tale of this magnitude deserves.

The facts speak in *A Handful of Sand*, and the book is light on overt analysis of the leader's strategy, or that of their adversaries. Instead, Ward's implicit argument regarding the unfulfilled promises of self-determination are made by his cast of characters, many of whom take out their frustrations regarding the Settler-State's unwillingness to budge on real control over their lives by turning to the scourge

of alcoholism. While this book appeared a year prior to 2017's Uluru Statement from the Heart, it provides an important argument for continued focus on real Indigenous control, via constitutional amendment and a 'voice' to parliament, rather than entrusting such matters to bureaucrats 'for their own good'. As Ward concludes: 'against all the odds, Lingiari's legacy lives on', though that legacy is still very much uncertain.



***Remembering Migration: Oral Histories and Heritage in Australia*, Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (eds)**

Cham (Switzerland): Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. 357 pages \$90.70 (hardcover). ISBN 978-3-030-17750-8

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*Remembering Migration* provides an important contribution to the study of migration history and heritage in Australia, and a rich exploration of methodological issues around memory studies. To understand how migration is remembered, represented and commemorated is an essential scholarly enterprise in a multicultural and multi-ethnic nation like Australia.

Editors Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton note that oral histories of migration have become key to Australian historiography, yet diasporic memories remain understudied when compared to other areas of Australian national history, and continue to play a secondary role in migration history itself. The editors identify limitations

that have hindered this essential development, including difficulties in accessing the material, and the focus of many oral history and public memory projects on specific cultural ethnic groups over the complex and shifting identities around class, gender, sexuality, age, intercultural connections and intimacies. While this is a crucial argument, the book's many chapters devoted to particular ethnic groups demonstrates that an ethnic-specific focus is not necessarily incompatible with innovative approaches to migration history and memory. Importantly, the introduction and many of the chapters in the book identify the transnational and cross-generational nature of migration memories.

The book is divided into two parts, with part one focussing on oral history. This section opens with an essay by Alistair Thomson on gendered memories of migration as they emerge through the complex intertwining of photographs, letters, oral histories and autobiographical writings. By focussing on post-war displaced persons, Jayne Persian addresses a crucial question: what is the value of oral histories, not just to historical knowledge, but to migrants themselves? The answer emphasises tensions between the motivations and objectives of interviewees and those of historians, and how the centrality of agency, intimacy and family life can inform broader historical reflections on nationalism, diaspora and transnationalism. Shirleene Robinson demonstrates the important role oral history can play in both challenging the assumed heterosexuality of migrants, and in exploring the complex intersections between sexuality and migration. Anisa Puri reflects, through one particular story, on the importance of age as an analytical category for historians of migration, particularly through its intersection with gender and ethnicity. Kate Darian-Smith and Kyle Harvey note how mass migration and television have become intertwined phenomena in Australian history since at least World War Two, yet have remained stubbornly separated in historical accounts. They argue that migrants' experiences and memories of watching television provide a complex historical narrative around intimacy, family life, economic success, and cultural adjustment, but also reframe the history of television in Australia as a history of audience marginality and under-representation. Madeleine Regan focusses on Veneto Market gardeners in Adelaide between the 1920s and the 1970s, reflecting on the importance of developing digital platforms for interpreting this history. While potentially interesting, Regan does



not provide a clear argument; her approach seems closer to traditional community history or family memoir than to more nuanced and innovative approaches to migration history. Karen Agutter and Catherine Kevin use the history of unsupported mothers in post-war Australia as an example of the importance of historicising migration at the intersection of different forms of marginalisation. Their argument that oral history is ‘crucial but limited’ (p.107) requiring integration with historical documents suggests a rather superficial understanding of oral history as a discipline. Nevertheless, the chapter presents important, complex and valuable research on an understudied and crucial topic. Nathalie Huynh Chau Nguyen considers the effects of long family separation in the context of Vietnamese refugees’ history, a topic with great relevance to the enduring separation of migrant and refugee families in contemporary Australia and elsewhere. Andrea Cleland’s essay on Greek Macedonian migration focusses on the transmission of migration stories across three generations, arguing for the importance of oral history in the study of intergenerational family memories and their impact on ethnic identities. Atem Atem’s chapter on the South Sudanese in Western Sydney reflects on how forced migrants use memories of the past to make sense of their present. Importantly, Atem emphasises the complex relationship between individual and community memories, and how those South Sudanese who have not experienced war have learnt war stories, making them their own in an attempt to acquire legitimacy within their community. This highlights the complex positioning of community members who do not experience the trauma directly, but nevertheless contribute to its memory. Denise Phillips, through her chapter on Hazara refugees’ grief, highlights the important role that oral histories focussing on emotions can play in representing refugees as individuals, rather than just ‘as voiceless victims or a threatening mass’ (p.167).

Part two shifts the focus from oral history to heritage, media and digital representation. Andrew Jakubowicz’s autobiographical reflection explores how growing up in Sydney in a family of Holocaust survivors influenced his early work, including his 30-year social documentary project *Making Multicultural Australia*, and his contributions to documentary television. This is a beautiful personal reflection by a pioneer of migration studies in Australia. Andrea Witcomb’s chapter is notable for its critical reflection on how oral history is embedded in museum exhibitions.

Witcomb identifies four pedagogies of reading, looking, listening and feeling, critically analysing how each pedagogy may impact on the production of collective memory. Alexandra Dellios reflects on the inconsistency between the dominant rhetoric about multiculturalism and the scarce attention to migrant heritage. By applying a critical heritage framework, Dellios shows how personal memories made public, and heritage practices around buildings and monuments, can challenge prevailing discourse about migration and multiculturalism. Susannah Radstone provides a deeply personal and political psychoanalytical essay on her own experience of migration in relation to the violence and transgenerational trauma produced by settler violence. Moya McFadzean reflects on exhibitions produced at the Immigration Museum in Melbourne, analysing the complex, and at times contrasting, aims that inform and constrain the work of the Museum. Alison Atkinson-Phillips' chapter critically analyses a heritage and digital project relating to Melbourne's Enterprise Migrant Hostel between 1970 and 1991, emphasising the settler-colonial celebratory narratives that problematically shape this public memory project, while noting the opportunities for unexpected meanings that can emerge from it. Klaus Neumann then considers the National Library of Australia's collection policies relating to Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, emphasising the value of the Library's understanding of national memory, while reflecting on key limitations in its acquisition practice and collection accessibility. Felicity Collins' chapter discusses the cinematic and documentary representation of Child Migrant stories, suggesting that the Child Migrant is a particularly troubling figure in Australian national memory. Sukhmani Khorana then considers the role of memory in the representation of refugees in two documentaries, *Constance on the Edge* and *Villawood Mums*, comparing them to recent European productions to emphasise the importance of historicising the past by focusing on 'horizontal solidarities and mundane lives' (p.327). Sophie Couchman and Kate Bagnall's concluding chapter explores the memory practices of Chinese Australian families from Cantonese backgrounds, contrasting them to the national and familial tendencies of forgetting, and emphasising that new meanings can emerge from such practices.

This volume is to be commended for its attempt to bring together contributions from some of the most innovative Australian scholars of migration across different and often

stubbornly separated fields including heritage, museums, media, memory studies, and oral history. It is a large, dense, multilayered and rich volume, and it would be ungenerous to criticise it for some apparent gaps. Instead, we should see this volume as an opportunity to stimulate a broader debate, and to identify and pursue new avenues for research. First, only a few authors in the volume show an interest in contemporary theoretical and methodological developments beyond Australia, and almost none beyond the Anglosphere. While Australia has its historical specificity, and the focus on Australian histories and memories is perfectly legitimate, global scholarly development may suggest the applicability of innovative approaches to the Australian context. Second, while the volume is to be commended for bringing disciplines together, most of the individual chapters do not apply a transdisciplinary approach. We must acknowledge that most Australian public institutions, including granting bodies, have processes in place that penalise transdisciplinarity, ultimately shaping and influencing the work of scholars and curators. Third, the volume does not engage with the apparent institutional obstacles that have to date hindered the development of more fair and open approaches to the study of migration, including racism. The volume emphasises how complex migration narratives and memories are often subdued by assimilationist and nationalist narratives that prevail in the public arena. This is an essential point that certainly deserves further debate in Australia's history departments, libraries, archives and museums. But for that to be possible, the persisting dominance of Anglo-white scholars and curators needs to be acknowledged and urgently addressed.

*Remembering Migration* shows the potential of reframing public narratives and representations about Australia's migratory and multicultural history through a complex and multidisciplinary focus on memory. One can only hope that both scholars and institutions will embrace such potential more assertively. This seems particularly important at a time in which the re-emergence of openly populist, racist and white-supremacist ideologies calls for a renewed commitment to a critical, multilayered and fair understanding of our past, through the production of innovative cultural texts and the development of new ways of remembering together, and remembering forward.