

## From the Guest Editors

Welcome to the special issue of *Studies in Oral History* focusing on migration histories and the importance of collecting and sharing the diversity of voices in migrant, refugee and diaspora communities.

Our special edition begins with Mary Hutchison delving into these issues and more through the prism of her decades-long career as an oral historian. Beginning in the 1970s, developments in oral history practice and theory intersect with her creative and community-focused work. Hutchison found more creative forms (rather than the academic thesis) a better medium for communicating and making sense of the emotions and feelings captured through oral history. The community arts scene and activism also influenced her practice, and these experiences allowed her to experiment with sound in exhibition spaces, utilising oral histories as more than ‘add-ons’ in museums, leading to collaborative migration exhibition projects. We are grateful to Mary for sharing these reflections on her career as an oral historian working with migrant and ethnic minority communities.

Eureka Henrich returns us to the 1980s and the Ethnic Affairs Commission of New South Wales (EAC) Oral History Project, alongside a consideration of Morag Loh’s project with the Federation for Italian Workers and their Families (FILEF) from the late 1970s. Henrich’s meditation on ‘reusing’ or ‘reanalysing’ archived collections considers the implications of listening to and across collections containing migrant voices. Drawing too on Janis Wilton’s reflections on leading and managing the EAC project, Henrich reminds readers to carefully consider the circumstances in which oral history interviews were undertaken and archived, and how our contemporary

research questions influence the reuse of these interviews – in her case, questions about migrants’ encounters with the health system in Australia. Like Hutchison, her work endorses careful listening.

One place that has received attention as a commemorative locale for post-war migrant heritage is the immigration camp or centre. In her article, Gretel Evans draws on migrant (and military) voices invested in remembering Greta Migrant Camp, the second-largest post-war immigration camp run by the Australian Department of Immigration. Despite this, there are no tangible remains at the original site of Greta. Focusing our attention on the dynamic remembering processes occurring at and around the site of Greta camp, Evans explores migrant storytelling practices and the challenges to remembering that they’ve encountered.

Jeanette Mollenhauer calls for an immigrant dance archive, using oral history as a data collection method, which she argues is an ideal method for capturing somatic experiences and performative contexts. Oral histories do not just supplement the visual recording of dance; voices here are necessary to understanding and appropriately archiving a practice. We also return to the issue of representation of migrant and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in Australian archives and the galleries, libraries, archives, museums (GLAM) sector more broadly. And as Hutchison explores in her piece, Mollenhauer too hints at the potential of multi-modal narratives (the combination of oral, visual and performative data) to present migration stories.

Valerie Liddle also turns to dance – having accompanied a troupe of multi-generational Pontic Greek dancers on their return trip to Greece. Her oral histories with these subjects came to focus on the different forms of nostalgia towards the idea of ‘homeland’ expressed by first, second and 1.5 generations of migrants. Absence, loss and yearning are a part of these expressions, and are here explored as a means to highlight the range of emotions that the idea of ‘return’ can incite in a diasporic group with multiple generations.

Our reports and reviews this year reflect a myriad of projects and publications that continue the thread of representing and preserving migrant voices throughout this

edition. We extend our warmest thanks to editors Skye Krichauff and Carla Pascoe Leahy (and Reviews Editor Gemmia Burden) for their efforts in managing and editing such an array of contributions.

Barry York begins the reports section with an intimate piece reflecting on his significant career across four decades, recording hundreds of oral histories with migrants in Australia. Sparked very early on by a personal desire to connect and understand his own family beyond photographs and memories, York vividly recounts the many voices he has encountered along the way and shares his advice and lessons learned in creating interviews that provide a personal and lasting experience and dimension of history.

Also in the reports, Carol McKirdy shares advice around language awareness to enable agency with migrant interviewees; Linda Hunt looks at the natural relationship between and benefits of teaching oral history to family historians; and Birgit Heilmann creates a mini podcast series from existing interviews with British migrants in South Australia with a focus on the lesser explored topic of returning home to England.

Alexandra Pierce discusses the challenges and triumphs in locating and interviewing women protesters more than 50 years after their involvement in the Save Our Sons movement opposing conscription during the Vietnam War. Indira Chowdhury sensitively explores memories of an interviewee and his family's displacement and fragmentation after the 1941 Japanese invasion of Malaya forces them to leave their established life in Burma for their home country of India.

A report on the Greek Australian Archive Project, a partnership between UNSW and the State Library of NSW, examines capturing the experiences of Sydney's post-war Greek community across 100 oral history interviews, while writer Toni Palombi rounds things off with 'Something Almost Magical' – a creative piece composed from fragments of oral recollections by her father about his life as a child in post-war Italy and migration to Australia in the 1950s.

Finally, the reviews section showcases the breadth of recent scholarship in migration, with substantial use of oral histories and recordings. Titles explore the personal stories

of Chinese Australians who lived through the era of ‘White Australia’; the Partition of India; case studies of migrant representation from the eighteenth century to present day; oral histories of American and Australian veterans returning to Vietnam; an online exhibition celebrating the poems carved into the walls by former detainees of Angel Island detention centre; and oral histories from engineering patternmakers and industrial modelmakers in Australia.

We are grateful to Oral History Australia’s national committee and the support and encouragement of editors Skye Krichauff and Carla Pascoe Leahy in championing this special edition and providing a platform for the invaluable contributions and work of our authors, as well as Katie Connolly and Karen Wallis for their care and attention towards copy editing and layout respectively.

Oral history provides opportunities for marginalised voices to challenge and expand existing narratives about their own experience and communities. We hope the discourse in this special issue highlights the ongoing efforts to record these voices, the importance in broadening existing archives and the historical record, the stories we tell and receive, and the work that remains to be done in this space.

*Maria Savvidis and Alexandra Dellios*